

Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Service

## Human Resources Committee

16 September 2021

### Health and Safety Performance Quarter One 2021/22

#### Report of Area Manager Assets and Assurance

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present Members with a summary of the Service's health and safety performance for the first quarter of the 2021/22 reporting period.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1. The Health and Safety Team are positioned within the Assets and Assurance Section and are responsible for the health and safety within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS). Health and Safety performance is measured through four performance indicators (PI) which are outlined below:

- PI69 total number of accidents to personnel
- PI71 number of vehicle accidents classified as CDDFRS driver's fault
- PI73 number of local health and safety investigations incomplete after 28 days
- PI74 number of health and safety investigation actions overdue their specified completion date

- 2.2 A summary of performance for indicators PI69 and PI71 for the previous five years is outlined below. PI73 and PI74 are monthly indicators introduced in 20/21 and are not designed to be comparable year by year.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
PI 69 Number of Accidents to Personnel	10	11	23	17	12
PI 71 Number of Vehicle Accidents (CDDFRS Fault)	19	23	26	21	18

*Table. 1 Health and safety performance for the previous 5 years*

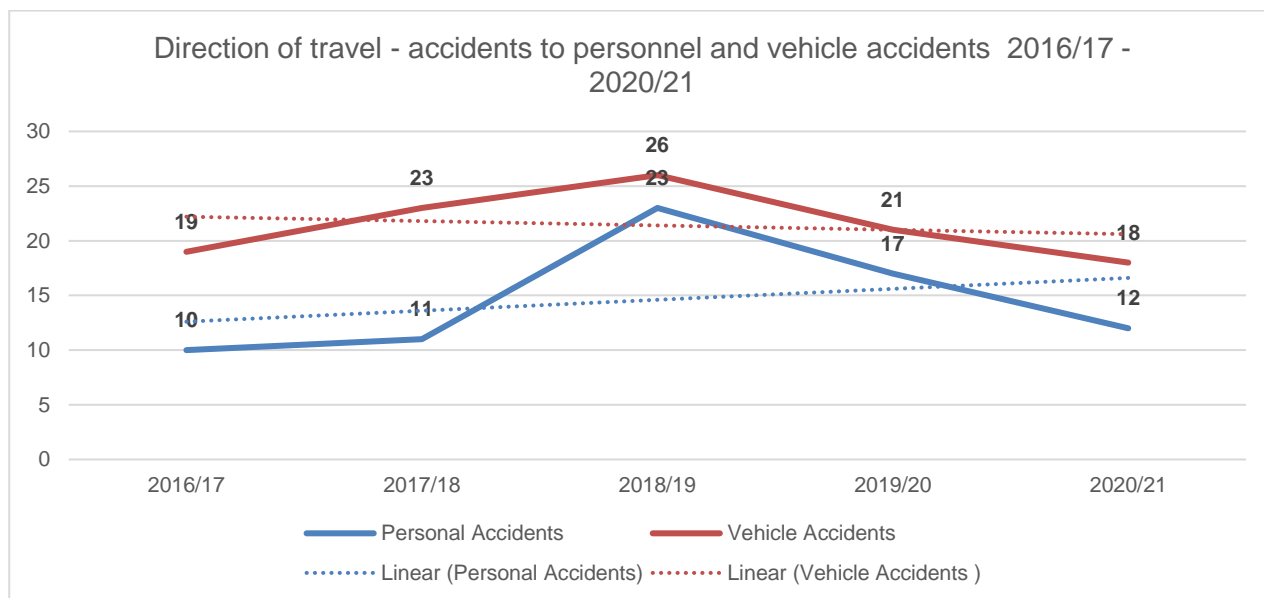


Figure. 1 direction of travel for accidents to personnel and vehicle accidents year end totals 2016/17 – 2020/21.

### 3. Current Performance

3.1. The current performance year to date (YTD) is as follows:

2020/21	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
PI 69 Number of Accidents to Personnel	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
PI 71 Number of Vehicle Accidents (CDDFRS Driver's Fault)	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
PI 73 Number of Health and Safety Investigations Incomplete after 28 days	1	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
PI 74 Number of Health and Safety Actions Overdue Their Specified Date	3	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3

Table. 2. Year to date performance (\*note PI73 and PI74 are not cumulative indicators)

### 3.2. PI 69 Number of Accidents to Personnel

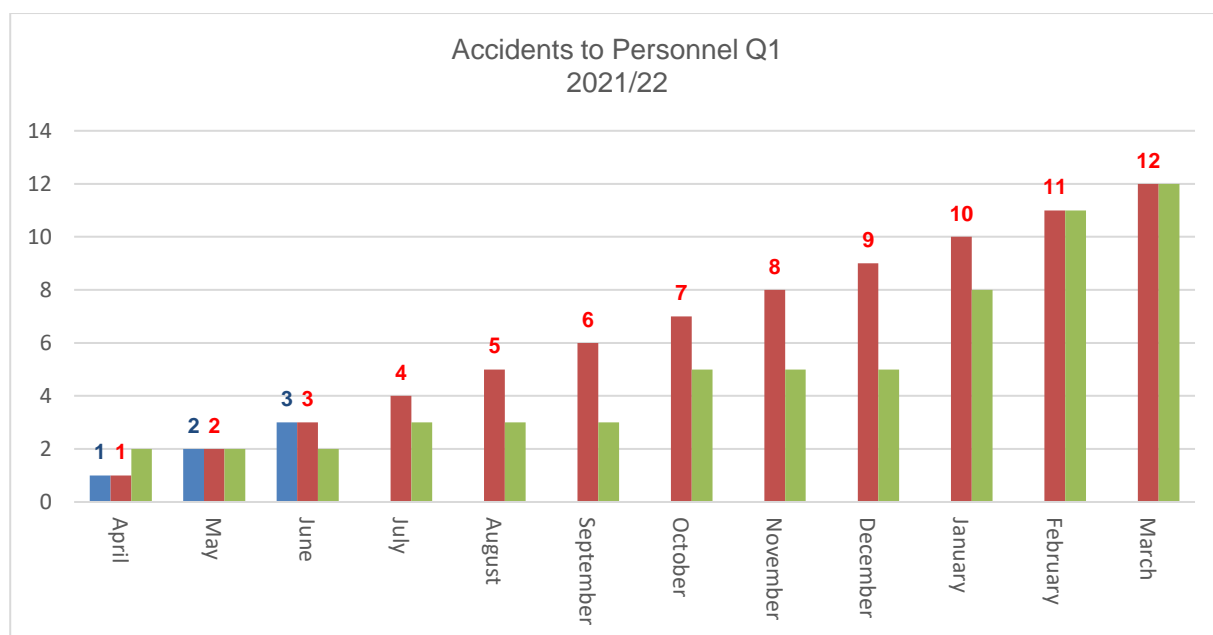


Figure. 2 number of accidents to personnel (running total) for the current year (blue) and the target (red) previous year (green)

3.3. Three accidents to personnel have been reported during the Q1 reporting period, this is in line with our target for the year 2021/22.

3.4. These incidents were recorded as.

- Injury to a firefighter whilst wearing Breathing Apparatus (BA) at a Persons Reported Trapped (PRT) – part of the ceiling came down resulting in a broken leg. This was a RIDDOR incident;
- Injury to a firefighter whilst conducting water training, came into contact with submerged rocks sustaining bruised ribs;
- Injury to a firefighter whilst taking part in Road Traffic Collision (RTC) training on station. A ram moved from its set position and struck the firefighter on their arm.

3.5. These incidents have all been investigated. The RIDDOR investigation is being discussed with the Training Section to feed into their input and the RTC investigation resulted in amendments to a LearnPro package.

### 3.6. PI 71 Number of Vehicle Accidents (CDDFRS Driver Fault)

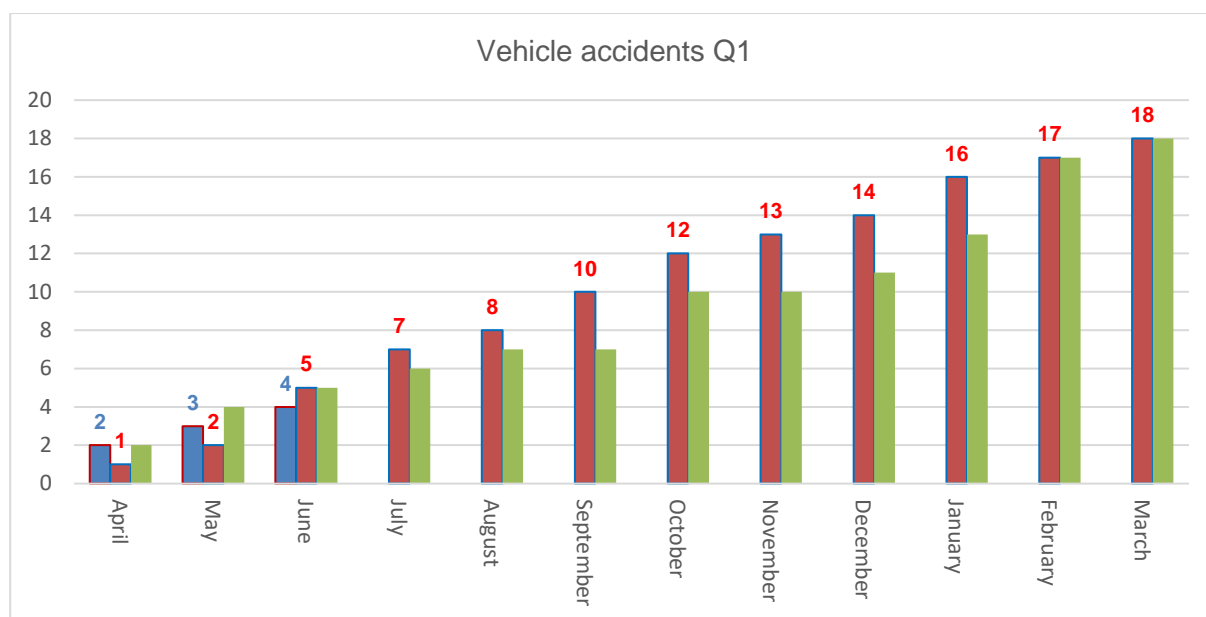


Figure. 3 number of vehicle accidents (running total) for the current year (blue) and the target (red) previous year (green).

### 3.7. Four vehicle accidents have been reported during the Q1 reporting period

- A fire appliance was being reversed into the appliance bay and the camber of the ground caused the appliance to move which resulted in contact with the appliance room wall and damage to CCTV cameras.
- An appliance negotiating its way through farm gates at slow speed and the camber of the route caused the appliance to meet the gate post.
- An appliance attempting to park in a street came into contact with a private motor vehicle bumper.
- Firefighters were conducting a manoeuvre with the multi drop vehicle on station, when removing one of the POD's the Suzie cable was not disconnected resulting in it snapping. Advice given to the crew by Driver Training.

### 3.8. The Health and Safety Team have identified an ongoing trend with vehicle accidents and slow speed manoeuvres and are working with the Driver Training Section to improve performance.

3.9. **PI 73 Investigations Incomplete after 28 days**



Figure. 4 number of investigations incomplete after 28 days.

3.10. For this quarter we have only had one investigation in April, that went past the 28-day completion time. This was due to leave of involved parties leaving the Investigating Officer unable to complete the investigation. The Health and Safety Team have worked closely with all assigned Investigating Officers to ensure that all assistance is given to ensure a full and speedy investigation is completed. A total of 17 investigations have been conducted in this quarter.

3.11. **PI 74 Number of Health and Safety Actions overdue their specific date**

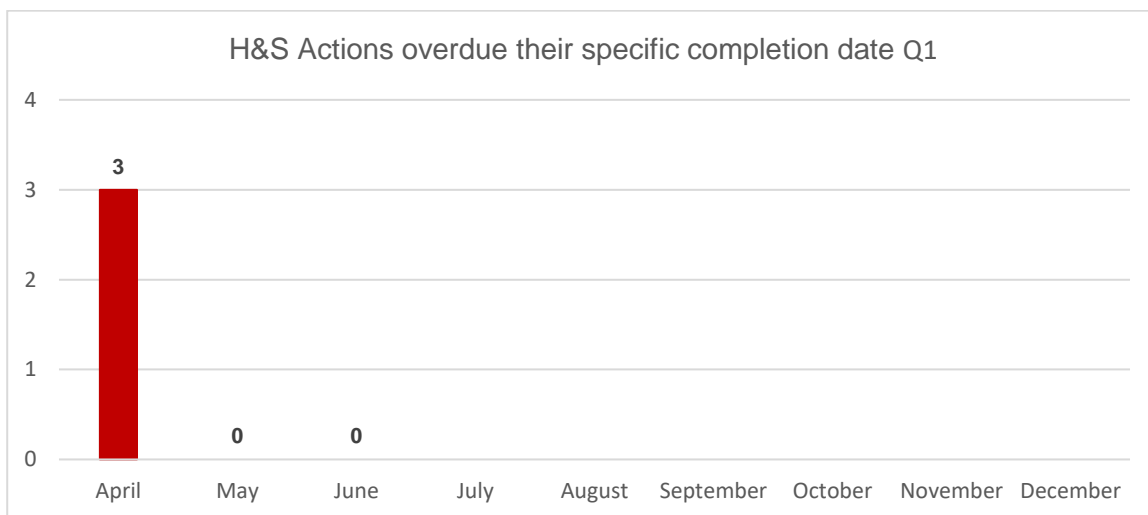


Figure. 5 Health and Safety actions overdue their specific completion date.

3.12. In the first quarter there were three outstanding actions from investigations. They were all related to the update of the RTC LearnPro package. The completion of these actions has not been possible as the action owners have had to wait for the LearnPro element of the National Operational Guidance (N.O.G) project to be completed. Action dates have been moved to reflect this.

3.13. Following the overdue actions we encountered last year, the Health and Safety Team have devised a new system that tracks all of the actions and owners, requesting regular progress reports and weekly updates on their completion and enquire if any assistance is required to ensure the allocated timescales are met.

3.14. **Near Misses**

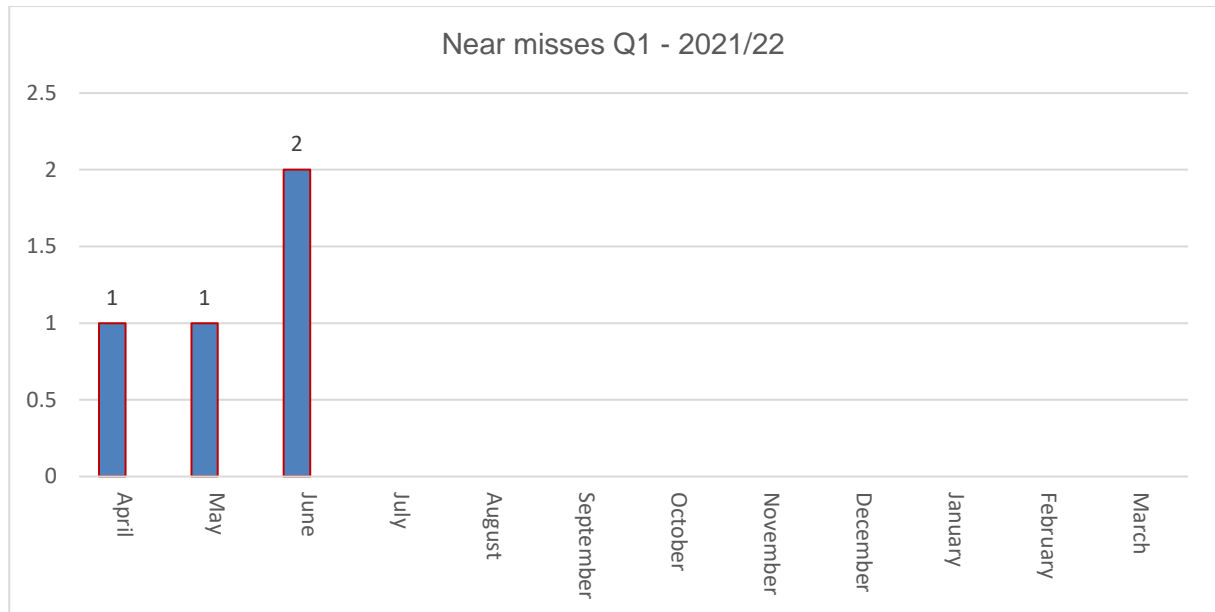


Figure. 6 cumulative near misses

3.15. We had two near misses in Q1 that were not a direct result of our staff:

- A scaffold board fell from the drill tower at Sedgefield whilst demolition was taking place. Interaction with the contractor has ensured this will not happen again.
- A pedal bike belonging to the Police was left in an area of Newton Aycliffe Station that was not designated for this purpose, the bike fell over just missing a cleaner. Feedback was given to the Police by the Watch Manager on the importance of good housekeeping.

### 3.16. Cause for Concerns

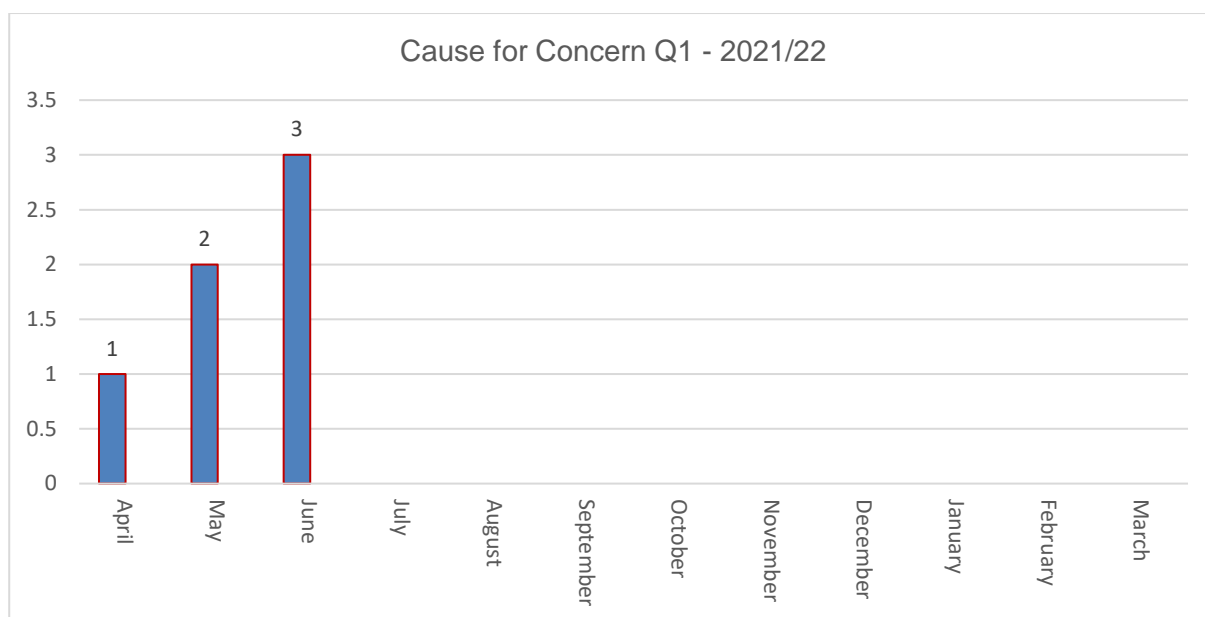


Figure. 7 cumulative cause for concerns

3.17 There have been three cause for concerns reported in Q1:

- The storage mechanism for a short extension ladder on an appliance was worn. This appears to be a one-off incident. The rest of the fleet has been checked with no other signs of wearing, although they will continue to be monitored by TSC.
- Hose inflation kit (water rescue) was highlighted as having failed at a coupling. A check of the equipment showed no signs of damage and appeared to function correctly when tested. The Health and Safety Team are monitoring to see if there is any recurrence with this type of equipment.
- A submission querying the staffing of the special rescue unit at Bishop Auckland. The degradation plan had been instigated due to leave and sickness. The person raising the cause for concern has been updated on the rationale within the degradation plan associated with the staffing of special appliances.

## 4. COVID-19 Update

- 4.1. When the pandemic commenced, a number of risk assessments were initially completed to ensure each of our premises and activities still being carried out were 'COVID-19 (C-19) secure'. As we moved through the pandemic milestones and recovery phases, we adjusted risk assessments where required and linked in with Pandemic Influenza Management Group (PIMG) to ensure that all sites and activities reflected the Service's position to maintain a C-19 safe environment.
- 4.2. The number of C-19 specific risk assessments now totals 45, some of which have been reviewed up to 10 times to ensure they comply with the more recent Public Health England (PHE), Government and National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance.

- 4.3. The premises risk assessments have been quality assured with a 'C-19 checklist', conducted by Divisional Managers and the Health and Safety Team. This process has continued to be undertaken periodically over the pandemic to ensure that the premises remain 'C-19 secure'.
- 4.4 The Service received on the spot inspections by a HSE officer at Headquarters and Station 06. A list of 12 questions were asked to ensure that we were providing a C-19 safe environment as the restrictions were relaxed. The Service had previously received seven spot checks by a subsidiary of the HSE.

## **5. Business as usual for the Health and Safety Team**

- 5.1 The Health and Safety Team have continued to deliver IOSH courses to ensure our staff have remained qualified. During Q1 the following were delivered:
- Initial 3-day course = 5 students qualified (in person course)
  - Refresher 1 day course = 25 students over 5 courses (in person courses)
- 5.2 From July 2021, the team restarted proactive health and safety visits to stations which have been positively received by crews. Information delivered included the importance of completing 'Decision Logbooks and Contemporaneous Notebooks' and the correct ways to complete these as well as the need for crews to submit near misses and cause for concerns as this is how we identify trends at local and national levels. 32 visits have been completed out of the planned 42. Sections visits will be carried out once the stations visits have been completed.
- 5.3 The Health and Safety Team are due to begin new qualifications in September 2021. One Health and Safety Officer is studying for their NEBOSH Diploma and the other a NEBOSH Diploma in Environmental Management. To improve resilience in the section a member of the team has also completed a Business Continuity course in Q1.

## **6. Contaminants Working Group**

- 6.1. The Health and Safety Team Chairs and coordinates the Contaminants Working Group (CWG). A main focus for the group currently is a trial for the washing of station BA sets and PPE following 'smoke' contamination at incidents. The trial started at Peterlee and Bishop Auckland where all fire kit and BA sets that had been used in structure fires or deemed contaminated by Supervisory Managers would go through the cleaning process.
- 6.2. The trial started in June and was upscaled in August to incorporate two further stations, it is anticipated for a Service wide roll out of the process to all stations later in the year. At present we have Peterlee, Durham, Darlington, Bishop Auckland and the Training Centre (instructors and all students attending fire related courses) operating to this new procedure.
- 6.3. Great feedback has been received from the participating stations with amendments to the system and ideas for better ways of operating added to the project for consultation at the next CWG meeting.
- 6.4. Consideration is being given as to how fire helmets can be given a total clean as with BA sets and PPE. The Service is working with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service as they have investigated using a helmet washing machine although this creates an issue with drying time. We are also in contact with Interspiro (healthy firefighters) who have worked



with Swedish Fire Departments on cleaning full kit to understand how they clean fire helmets and with the New South Wales Fire Department as they have alternative systems in place. With this extra research it should allow us to make a more informed decision on how we will tackle this issue for the Service.

- 6.5. We are currently working with HR and the new Service Occupational Health provider to consider a more in depth medical for our STC staff to check for any effects from continuous exposure to elevated temperatures and potential contaminants.

## **7. Summary**

- 7.1. It is pleasing to see that both vehicle accidents and accidents to personal have remained within our target set for the quarter.
- 7.2. Whilst it is disappointing to note the one accident to personnel which was classified as RIDDOR, all other accidents to personnel and vehicle accidents have been minor in nature.
- 7.3. After the poor performance of PI 73 (number of health and safety investigations incomplete after 28 days) and PI 74 (number of health and safety actions overdue their specified date) during 2020/21, the Health and Safety Team have provided extra support to staff this quarter, which has improved current performance.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1. Members are requested to:
  - Consider and comment on the content of this report;
  - Continue to support a positive health and safety culture in CDDFRS.