



Safest People, Safest Places

Performance Committee

28 June 2022

Performance Report – Quarter Four 2021/22

Report of Director Community Risk Management

Purpose of report

1. This report presents a summary of organisational performance at the end of quarter four of the 2021/22 financial year.

Background

2. Both operational and corporate performance is monitored and managed internally via the monthly Performance and Programme Board (PPB) and Service Leadership Team (SLT) forums. Members of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) consider performance on a quarterly basis at meetings of the Performance Committee and the full CFA.
3. A comprehensive suite of performance indicators (PIs) is employed to measure both operational and corporate performance. Targets are set on an annual basis against SMART criteria and take account of longer-term trends and the potential for spikes in performance.
4. This robust approach to performance management enables action to be taken at an early stage if performance is not meeting expectations and provides assurance that resources are being directed towards the areas of greatest risk.
5. In addition to setting a target level for relevant PIs, the Service also employs a system of tolerance limit triggers that allow under or over performance to be highlighted to the PPB when the PI goes beyond set tolerances, which vary depending on the indicator. Each PI has a total of four tolerance limit triggers, two each for both under and over performance.
6. Performance is presented from two perspectives, by comparison against the annual target levels, and by comparison with performance at the same point last year.

Overview of performance across all indicator categories

7. An overview across both operational and corporate key PIs at the end of quarter four for 2021/22 shows 63% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 56% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.

Performance reporting by exception

8. The following sections of the report present details of specific operational and corporate indicators where performance was notably strong or where additional work is required to secure improvement. An explanatory narrative is provided for each PI group along with information about how performance compares to the annual target and the previous year.
9. It is worth noting that when comparing performance to the previous year, many indicators were affected by the Covid-19 (C-19) pandemic and the restrictions that were in place to manage the spread of the virus. In some cases, this resulted in lower-than-average figures during 2020-21 which can make comparison against current performance difficult. This is particularly noticeable in the 'Response' data which compared number of incident types attended this year to the previous year.

Prevention

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2021/22 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 01 – Deaths Arising from Accidental Fires in Dwellings	Down	1	0	-100%	1	0%
PI 02 – Primary Fires	Down	977	950	-2.8%	974	-0.3%
PI 03 – Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	208	208	0%	219	5%
PI 04 – Injuries Arising from Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	15	16	6.3%	15	0%
PI 05 – Total Secondary Fires	Down	3106	2108	-47.3%	2335	-33%
PI 07 – Number of Safe and Wellbeing Visits	Up	18832	18000	4.8%	4847	289.2%
PI 42 – Proportion of Safe and Wellbeing Visits to High-Risk People/Properties	Up	85.1%	80%	6.4%	61.8%	37.7%

PI01 – There were no fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) within the quarter. The one accidental fire death occurred on 11th April 2021 in in Seaham. This was a 71-year-old male, recently discharged from a lengthy stay in hospital into a warden assisted residential home. Cause of the fire was accidental ignition of a chair from smoking materials.

PI02 – There were a total of 977 primary fires which is slightly above both the target and last year's performance. 53% of all incidents are deliberate and 48% of all incidents involve road vehicles. Station plans on a page have been introduced to all 15 fire stations to improve risk-based working to reduce the number of primary fires attended. New analytical tools have been developed providing improved access to live data enhancing our approach to reducing primary fires across the Service. FireStoppers continues to provide a brand to facilitate crews working with partners to reduce deliberate fires. Excellent performance in the delivery of Safe and Wellbeing Visits (SWVs) has continued to reduce the number of ADFs attended.

See Appendix A, chart 1 for primary fires by motive and chart 2 for primary fires by type.

PI03 – Performance in this area continues to be very strong with a continued reduction in ADFs with 208 incidents being the lowest on record. This reflects the Service’s continued development and investment into the delivery of SWVs. Our Community Risk Management (CRM) and Information Services Teams have continued to work with operational personnel to develop and refine the effectiveness of our targeted approach to vulnerable people in the community. Recent investment in iPad technology and our online Nintex system has improved the quality of visits and our staff have, during a challenging year due to C-19, delivered 18,832 visits, exceeding the target of 18000. This reporting year will see the introduction of our Person-Centred Pathway, leading the way nationally in our risk-based targeting approach. This piece of work will also see a change in the name to Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) standardising the narrative in line with NFCC guidance.

See Appendix A, chart 3 for number of ADFs by room of origin and chart 4 for number of ADFs by occupier type.

PI04 – The performance of 15 injuries is below the target of 16 and maintains the performance of 2020/21. This is strong performance alongside the reduction in ADFs. Q4 performance of 2 injuries arising from ADFs is in line with the target of 2 for the reporting quarter. The injuries were sustained at two separate dwelling fires on the 30th January 2022. One female received first aid at the scene. The other incident also involved a female who was transported to hospital with injuries that appeared to be slight. The Service aims to continue to improve high performance through this indicator with a new improved approach to its targeting of home fire safety visits through adopting the NFCC approach to risk classification.

PI05 – Secondary fires performance has been very challenging this year, heavily influenced with unprecedented figures in April 2021, where a number of stations including Darlington and Peterlee experienced double the number of fires as seen in previous years for the same month. 92% of all secondary fires are deliberate and 60% of all secondary fires involve rubbish or refuse. The Service are part of the Safe Durham Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Strategic Group and Arson Suppression Group which aims to tackle these incidents. Introduction of four new management indicators related to deliberate fires reduction will drive the work through the station plans on a risk-based approach.

See Appendix A, chart 5 for secondary fires by motive and chart 6 for secondary fires by property type.

PI07 – The continued reduction in ADFs reflects the Service’s continued development and investment into the delivery of SWVs. Our CRM and Information Services team has continued to work with operational personnel to develop and refine the effectiveness of our targeted approach to vulnerable people in the community. Recent investment in iPad technology and our online Nintex system has improved the quality of visits and our staff have, during a challenging year due to C-19 delivered 18,832 visits exceeding the target of 18000. 2022/23 will see the introduction of our Person-Centred Pathway, leading the way nationally in our risk-based targeting approach.

PI42 – This target aims to ensure the effective targeting of our SWVs to vulnerable people and properties within our community and our performance of 85.1% provides reassurance our staff are effective in achieving this. The exceeding of this target also underpins the direction of travel in reducing the number of ADFs across the Service.

Protection

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2021/22 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 10a - Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Premises	Down	93	100	7%	73	-27.4%
PI 14 - False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment	Down	764	625	-22.2%	677	-12.9%
PI 17 – Number of Fire Safety Audits	Up	2119	2124	-0.4%	996	114.9%

PI10a – The yearly performance is below the set target. The total of 93 fires is more than 2020/21 performance, although it should be noted last year was exceptionally low due to C-19 with many businesses not operating during this period. Our risk-based inspection programme of premises which are regulated by the Fire Service under the Fire Safety Order continues to have a positive impact.

However, 2021/22 shows a rise in non-domestic fires which are arson related as opposed to poor maintenance or neglect of duties by the Responsible Person. The work of the Arson Suppression Group should help support a reduction in these deliberate incidents.

It is envisaged that the second year of the Business Fire Safety Communications and Engagement Plan 2021-2023 will continue to promote two-way engagement with business owners and Responsible Persons throughout the Service area. This allows the Service to deliver local initiatives to increase awareness on fire safety risks or fire trends identified as well as support National campaigns directed by the NFCC annual calendar.

PI14 – Although this performance is over target and above last year's performance it remains below performance for 2019/20 and 2018/19. The relaxation of C-19 restrictions and the re-opening of businesses that had been closed for several months, has led to an increase in these types of incidents. This has been particularly prevalent in retail, offices and call centres.

Additionally, as well as students returning to higher education, we have seen an increase in the number of purpose-built student accommodation within the Durham area. This has meant an increase overall of Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS). The Service's approach to UwFS has increased communications with Responsible Persons to reduce activations and although the cost recovery strategy has covered costs to the service, where high activations from individual premises is identified, then further intervention has been implemented with steps such as de-sensitising detector heads.

The operational crews and central team continue to engage with these premises to reduce incidents through increased awareness and education. The continuation of the UwFS policy and cost recovery programme contributes to the longer-term downward trend of this indicator. Following scrutiny of each activation 53 cost recovery invoices were issued totalling £25,568. The Service received one appeal regarding cost recovery, however the Service did not uphold this application due to the reasons being related to longer term maintenance requirements.

See Appendix A, chart 7 for false alarms caused by automatic fire detection equipment.

PI17 –The central Fire Safety Team and station-based personnel worked effectively together throughout a challenging year, to deliver 2119 fire safety audits. Although 5 under the target, this is still strong performance. Staff experienced challenges gaining access to premises recovering or emerging from the C-19 restrictions. Additionally, the central team went through a large staff transition during quarter 4, due to retirements and resignations. This continues to be significantly higher performance than the average across all fire and rescue services.

Response

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2021/22 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
Total Emergency Calls Received (including EMR)	N/A	18009	N/A	N/A	15421	-16.8%
Total Incidents (excluding EMR)	N/A	8071	N/A	N/A	6746	-19.6%
Total Fires	N/A	4124	N/A	N/A	3368	-22.4%
Total False Alarms	N/A	2540	N/A	N/A	2421	-4.9%
Total Special Services (excluding EMR)	N/A	1404	N/A	N/A	954	-47.2%
Total Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	319	N/A	N/A	220	-45%
Total Emergency Medical Response (EMR)	N/A	6	N/A	N/A	2	200%
PI 06 – Number of Response Standards Met	Up	3	6	-50%	5	-40%

See Appendix A, chart 8 for total incidents (excluding EMR).

PI06 – Only 3 of the 6 response standards were met this year.

PI08b – Dwelling Fires Attended within 11 Minutes on 90% of occasions was 0.2% under target with 89.8% performance.

PI08c – Non-Domestic Property Fires attended within 8 minutes on 70% of occasions was 0.8% under target with 69.2% performance.

PI08d – Non-Domestic Property Fires attended within 11 minutes on 90% of occasions was 3.8% under target with 86.2% performance.

All incidents where the response standards are not met, are discussed between Divisional Managers and the attending Incident Commander at station monthly performance meetings. The most common cause of failing to achieve the standards is due to travel time to the incident, particularly on Retained Duty System (RDS) stations where the 5-minute response to the station applies.

Workforce

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2021/22 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 40 - All Staff Sickness	Down	12.03	6	-100.5%	7.26	-65.7
PI 69 – Number of Accidents to Personnel	Down	13	15	13.3%	12	-8.3%

PI40 – Overall, there has been an 65.7% increase on shifts lost in comparison with quarter 4 of 2020-21. C-19 symptomatic and confirmed positive cases have contributed significantly and equate to almost 30% of total absences across the year. Long-term absence has been a key issue accounting for approximately 59% of the Service’s total absence during this reporting year. Across all our employees, musculoskeletal (MSK) absence equates to almost 31% of the total absences with mental health just under 17%.

Absences within the wholetime and RDS categories have remained high across the full period still primarily linked to long term and C-19 related absence. Absence levels within Control have increased in the latter part of the year due to continuing occurrences of C-19 but also due to an ongoing long-term absence. Sickness amongst Corporate staff has risen significantly over the year due to various reasons.

The disruption caused by the pandemic to the Service in terms of working time has been immense in many ways. Nevertheless, it’s clear that C-19 has significantly contributed to absence levels in the Service with this indicator being significantly over target. The Service has decided to maintain many of its existing C-19 practices in the medium term such as encouraging the use of ventilation, hand sanitisers and advising employees to take lateral flow tests.

Sickness levels will continue to be monitored closely with regular analysis for any trends and patterns and instigation of the attendance management triggers where appropriate. HR continuously review all long-term absences and are in frequent discussions with relevant managers about what support mechanisms are available including occupational health referrals, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) support, etc.

Given the reduction in C-19 cases nationally, the removal of government isolation requirements and the change to the Service’s stance on C-19 absences and attendance management triggers late February 2022, it is anticipated absences will continue to reduce in the coming months which should hopefully significantly improve performance for the year 2022-23.

See Appendix A, chart 9 for all staff sickness.

PI69 – The performance of 13 accidents is two below the target of 15 and the Service continues to perform strongly in this area. This is one more accident than the previous year which was affected by reduced activity due to C-19. During Q4, there were only two accidents, both of which were minor injuries, during operational training. Every investigation is investigated to identify any learning and the Health and Safety Team continue to carry out proactive and reactive work to continue this strong performance.

Finance & Governance

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2021/22 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 34 - % of Invoices paid within 30 days	Up	98.6%	95%	3.8%	97.2%	1.5%

PI34 – In Q4, only 6 out of 440 invoices were paid late, with four of these being outside the control of Finance. The overall position for the year to date is still well above target and is higher than last year at the same time by 1.5%.

Recommendations

10. Members are requested to:
 - a. **Note** the content of the report;
 - b. **Comment** on the reported performance.

Keith Carruthers, Ext. 5564

Appendix A

Chart 1 - Primary Fires by Motive

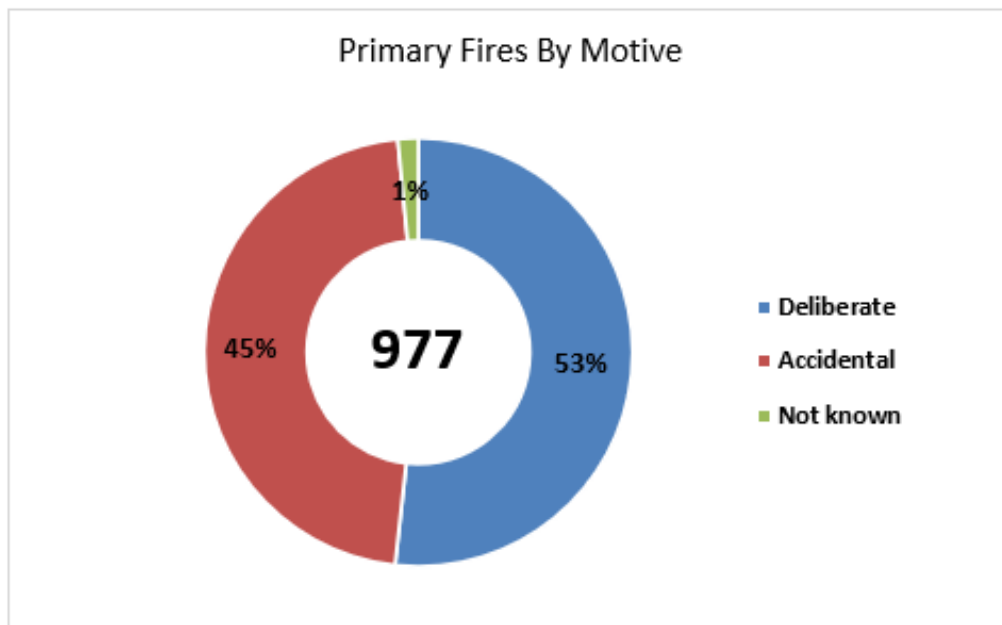


Chart 2 – Primary Fires by Type

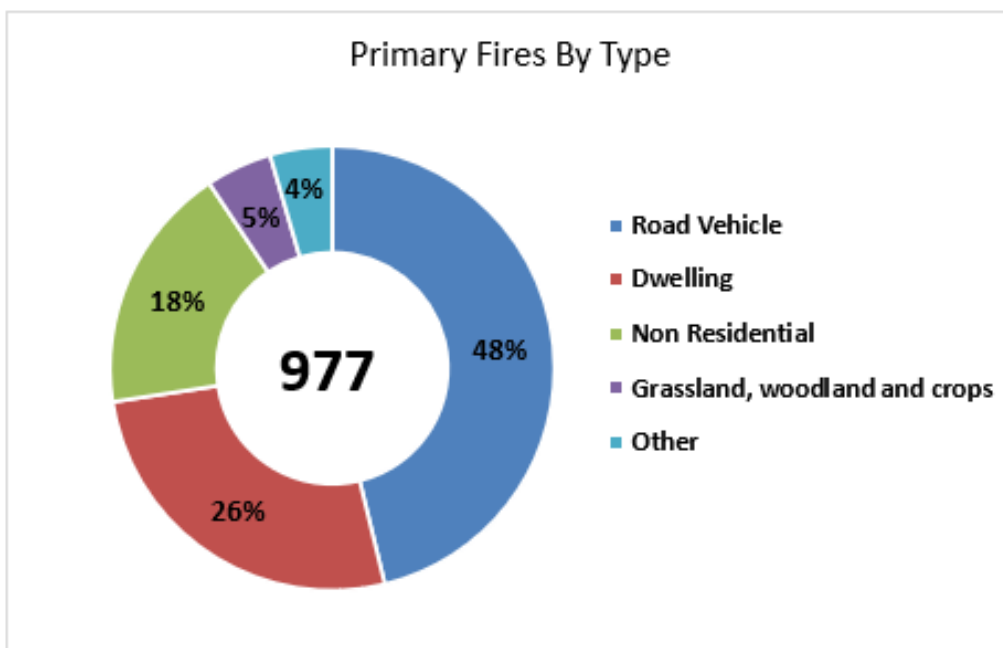


Chart 3 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Room of Origin

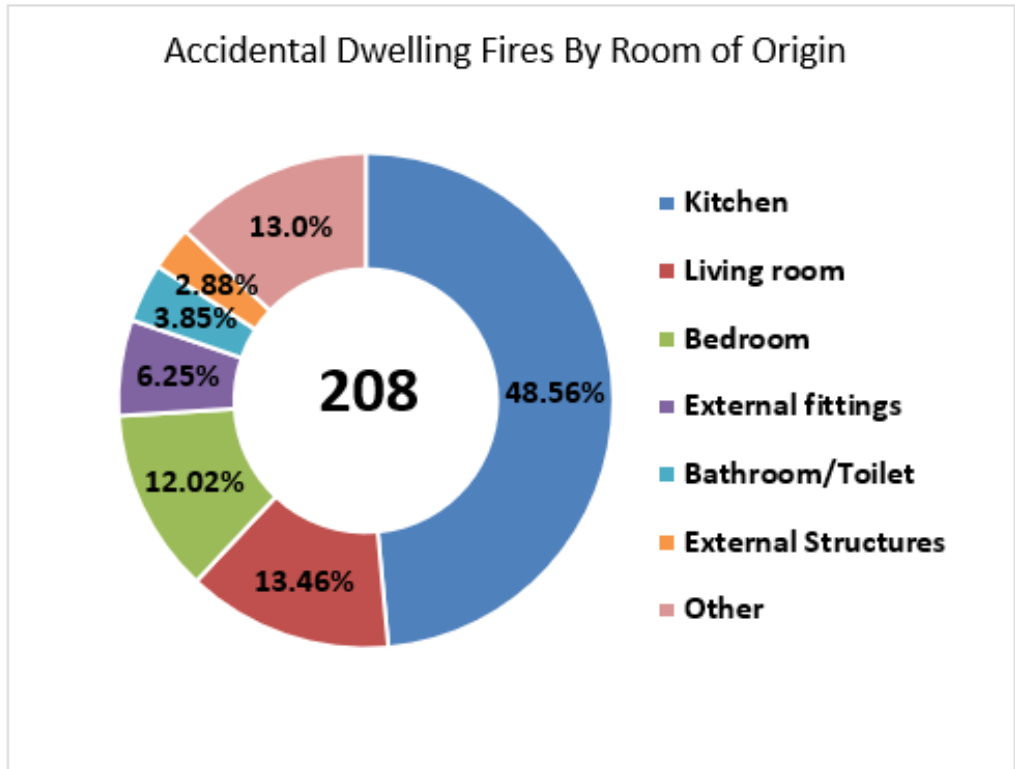


Chart 4 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

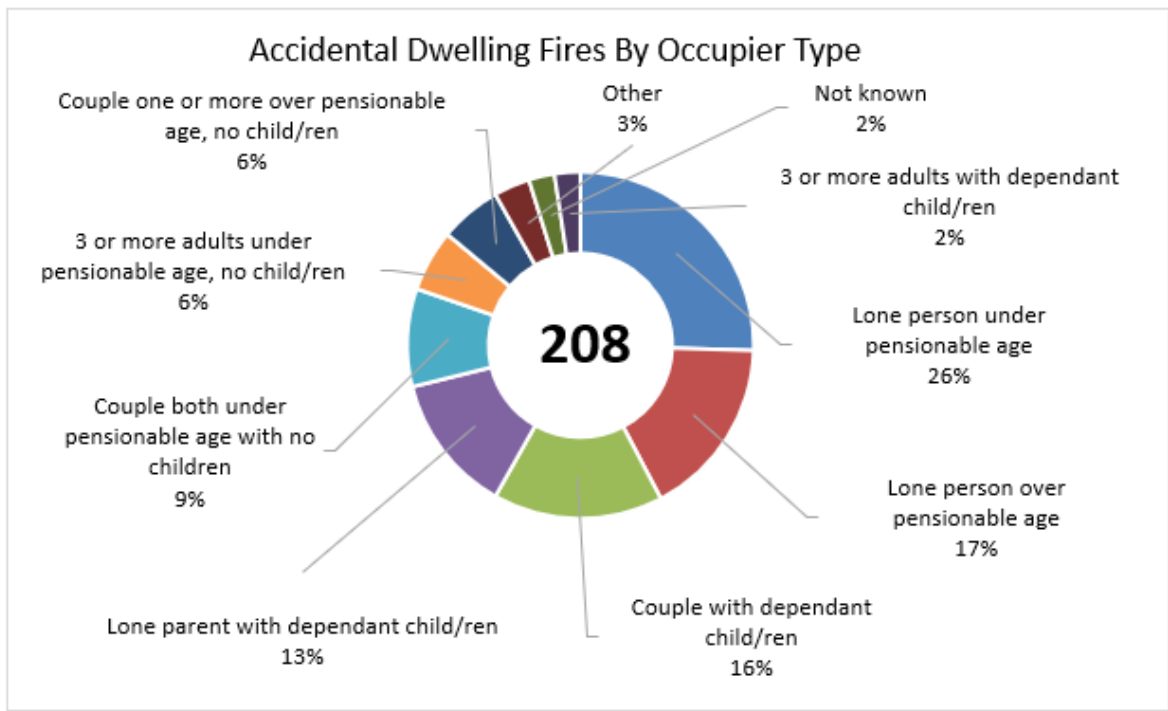


Chart 5 – Secondary Fires by Motive

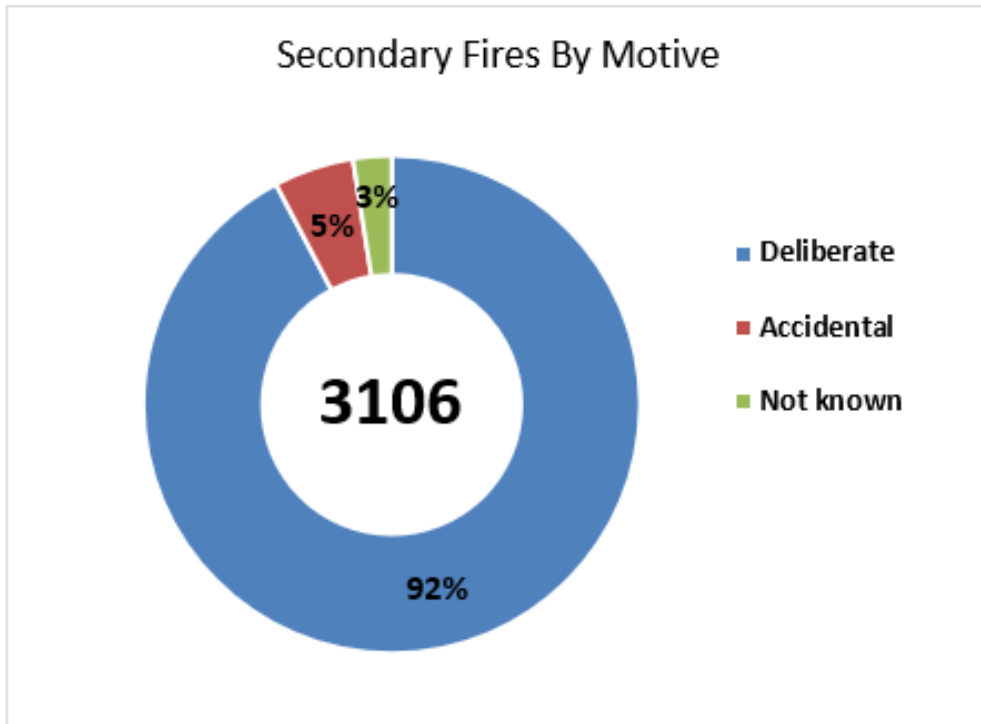


Chart 6 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

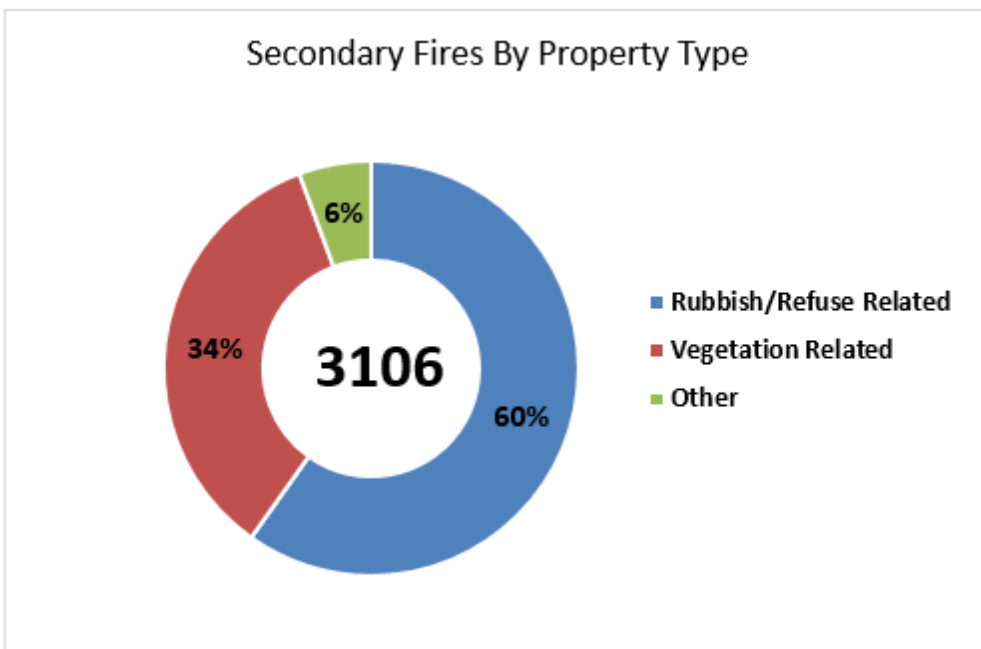


Chart 7 - False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment

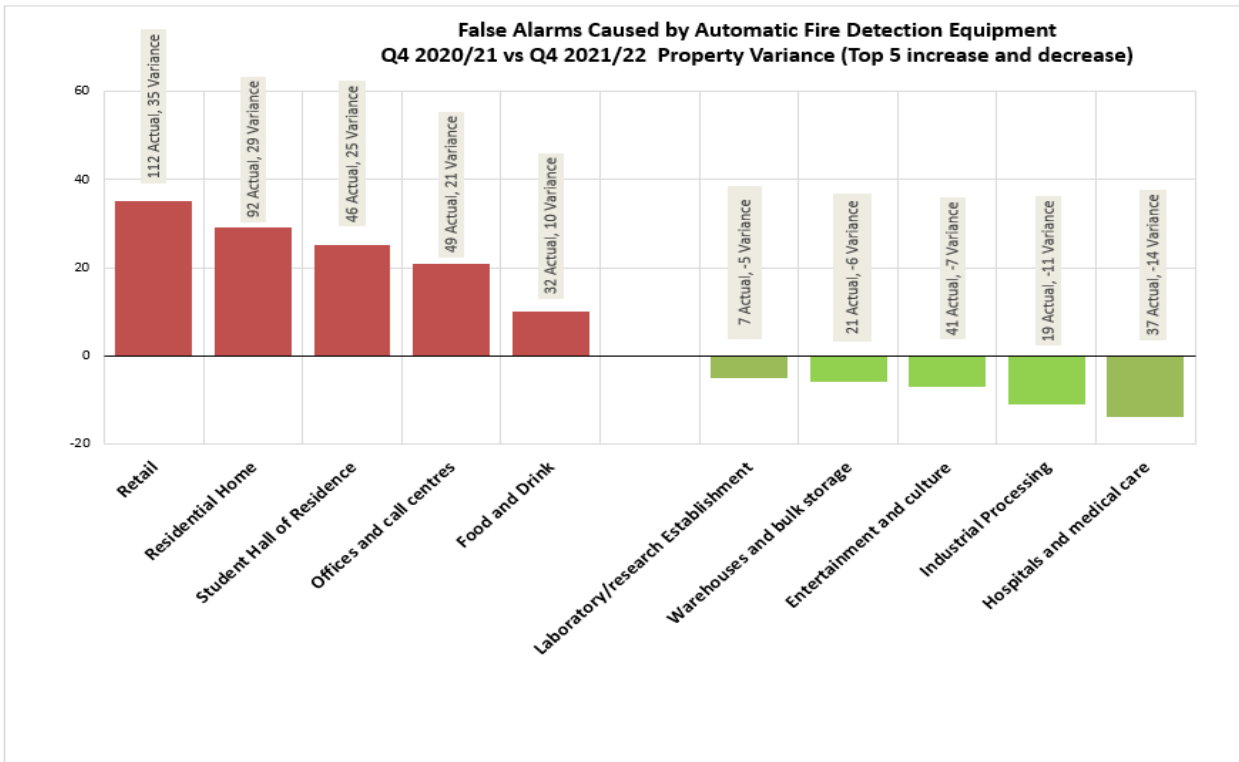


Chart 8 - Total Incidents (excluding EMR)

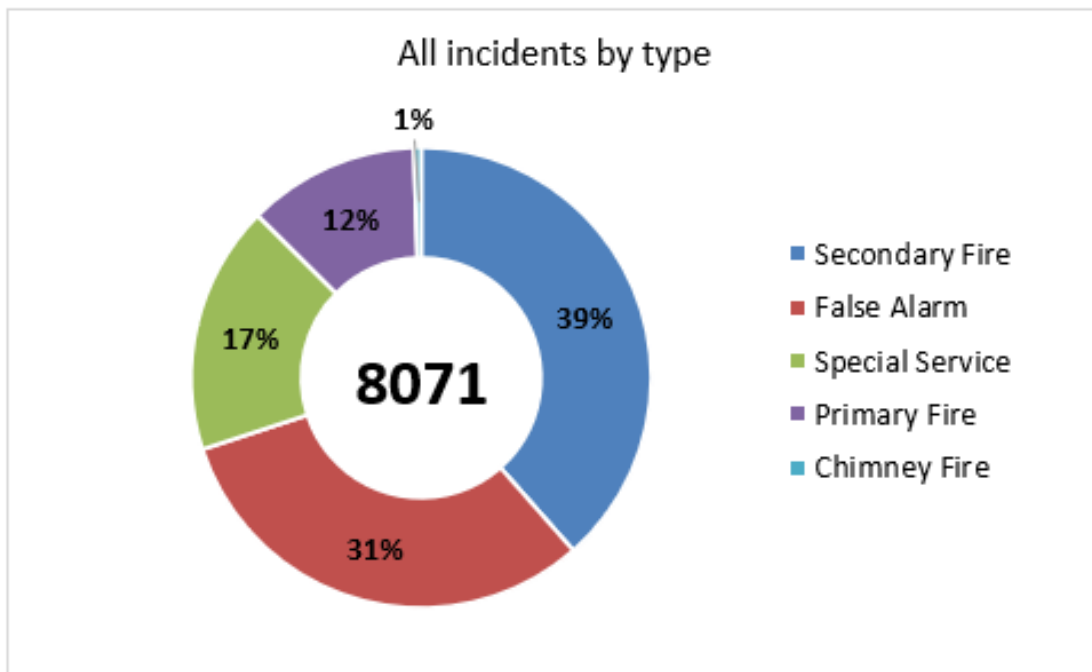


Chart 9 - All Staff Sickness

