

# West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

## Scrutiny Committee

You are summoned to attend the meeting of Scrutiny Committee to be held on

Monday, 23 May 2022 at 10:30

At Fire Service Headquarters, 99 Vauxhall Road, Nechells, Birmingham B7 4HW  
and digitally via Microsoft Teams

for the purpose of transacting the following business:

### Agenda – Public Session

- |   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| 1 | To receive apologies for absence (if any)                           |         |
| 2 | Declarations of interests   |         |
| 3 | Minutes of the Previous Scrutiny Committee held on 14 February 2022 | 5 - 10  |
| 4 | Scrutiny Review of Safe & Well                                      | 11 - 20 |
| 5 | Fire Control Performance Report Update - Quarters 1-4 2021-22       | 21 - 28 |
| 6 | Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion, Equality (DICE) Update              | 29 - 40 |
| 7 | Dispute Resolution Report   | 41 - 48 |
| 8 | Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2021-22                     | 49 - 58 |
| 9 | Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-22                           | 59 - 62 |

Distribution:

David Barrie - Member, Jasbinder Dehar - Member, Mary Locke - Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Kirat Singh - Member, Sybil Spence - Chair of The Scrutiny Committee, Patricia Young - Member

This meeting of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority will be held at Fire Service Headquarters. However, please note that although the meeting will be open to the public, there will be limited capacity due to ongoing social distancing measures.

The meeting will also be held digitally via Microsoft Teams allowing observers to access remotely. To access the meeting, please contact a member of the Strategic Hub, West Midlands Fire Service, who will be able to provide login details (please note that Microsoft Teams is not required to join a meeting) or provide guidance if you wish to attend in person at HQ.

Clerk Name:	Karen Gowreesunker
Clerk Telephone:	0121 380 6678
Clerk Email:	Karen.Gowreesunker@wmfs.net

**Agenda prepared by Kirsty Tuffin  
Strategic Hub, West Midlands Fire Service  
Tel: 0121 380 6906 email: [kirsty.tuffin@wmfs.net](mailto:kirsty.tuffin@wmfs.net)  
This agenda and supporting documents are also available  
electronically on the  
[West Midlands Fire Service Committee Management Information  
System](#)**



**Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee**

Item 3

**14 February 2022**

Conducted as a public meeting at Headquarters and digitally via Microsoft Teams

**Present:** Councillor Spence (Chair), Councillor Locke (Vice-Chair), Councillor Barlow, Councillor Barrie and Councillor Dehar

**Virtual:** Councillor Young

**Officers:** Andrea Simmonds, Karen Gowreesunker, Kate Alliss, Kirsty Tuffin, Pete Wilson, Simon Barry, Stephen Timmington.

01/22 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Shirley Haines.

02/22 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

03/22 **Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 01 November 2021**

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 01 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

04/22 **Fire Control Performance Report – Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2019-20, and Quarters 1 to 4 2020-21**

Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Authority, presented the Fire Control Performance Report – Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2019-20, and Quarters 1 to 4 2020-21 report, that outlined the operational performance of Fire Control.

The Committee were advised that the report covered the following two periods: 01/10/19 to 31/03/20 (Qtr. 3 and 4 – 2019-20) and 01/04/20 to 31/03/21 (Qtr. 1 to 4 2020-21). The report covering an 18-month period would bring the reporting schedule up to date following the Committee reconvening meetings in November 2021.

The Committee were advised that of the 65,997 emergency calls received for West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS), Fire Control mobilised 56% of the incidents. The mobilisation ratio of calls had been dependent upon the following:

- Calls challenging automated fire alarms (AFAs)
- Calls challenging special service calls that were deemed non-emergency
- Repeat 999 calls
- Use of 999eye footage/imagery

The average length of time for the critical incident types, for 999 calls to mobilise appliances had been within the WMFS aim of under 80 seconds.

The Committee were advised that Fire Control had successfully recruited 8 individuals to join two Fire Control training courses. 215 applicants were received, 28 of which were shortlisted with a ratio of 29% male/79% female and 18% were BAME. Of the successful 8 applicants, 1 had been male and 1 had identified as BAME.

Work had been conducted with the Command-and-Control Supplier, Capita, to upgrade the Vision Command and Control system used for integrated calls, incident and resource management across WMFS, and to upgrade the current 'Vision 3' to 'Vision 4'. It had been anticipated that the new system would go live on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February.

Members praised WMFS staff for all their had work and dedication throughout the pandemic.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the Fire Control performance update for the following two periods, be noted:
  - 01/10/19 to 31/03/20 (quarters 3 and 4, 2019/20)
  - 01/04/20 to 31/03/21 (quarters 1 to 4, 2020/21)

05/22

### **Scrutiny Review of Safe and Well 2022**

Andrea Simmonds, Head of Community Safety, presented the Scrutiny Review of Safe and Well 2022 report that outlined the proposal for Scrutiny Committee to review safe

and wells (SAW) following their concerns raised pre-pandemic, on the impact on relations with partners/referrals for SAW as a result of the Falls Response contracts and the Back Home Safe and Well pilot in 2018.

The Committee were advised that there had been new developments in SAW that would be beneficial to consider in the scope of the review. Those highlighted were:

- Introduction of the Fire Standard for Prevention
- Introduction of the NFCC Person Centred Framework for Home Fire Safety Visits
- The Covid-19 Pandemic
- Introduction of new systems and processes to support the delivery of SAW
- Restructure of the Prevention Team in Headquarters.

The proposed purpose of the review would be to establish that SAW had been effective, reduced the numbers of emergency incidents that WMFS attended, improved the safety and health of those most vulnerable to fire with communities, had targeted based on local, regional and national data and was aligned to national frameworks. WMFS could evidence through a review that SAW reduced the risk and vulnerability from accidental fires or serious/fatal casualty through its:-

- Stratification of risk including peoples understanding of the links between health inequalities and risk and vulnerability to fire
- Record keeping,
- Training and development,
- Performance management,
- Quality assurance and Evaluation
- Established relationships with and the referrals received from partners who work with those identified as being at risk and vulnerable to fire.

A review on remote SAW delivery that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic would help highlight the value and

benefit it had made as a SAW intervention and establish SAW as a business-as-usual Prevention activity. The draft outcomes and areas of work in progress, as per appendix 1, were also highlighted to the Committee.

It was agreed that the final scoping document be brought to Scrutiny Committee in May 2022. It was agreed that Councillor Spence (Chair), Councillor Barlow and Councillor Dehar would be members of the working group with stakeholders to conduct the review over a 6-month period.

Following questions, Pete Wilson, Strategic Lead (Project Executive) Prevention, advised that during the pandemic, referral numbers had not dropped as much as anticipated and that individuals could refer themselves should they wish to. Members could refer individuals in their wards but had to obtain the individuals permission to do so.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the recommendation to proceed with the review of Safe and Well (SAW), as outlined in the report and appendix 1, be approved.
2. That it be agreed that a working group be established with the following members:
  - Cllr Barlow
  - Cllr Spence
  - Cllr Dehar

06/22

### **Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-2022**

Simon Barry, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the Scrutiny Committee Work Plan for 2021-2022. No changes were requested.

The Chair of the Committee commended Officers for the work they had provided within the work programme.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-2022 be approved.

The meeting finished at 13:39 hours.

Kirsty Tuffin  
Strategic Hub  
0121 380 6906



**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 MAY 2022**

1. **Scrutiny Review of Safe & Well**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Committee considers and approves the recommendations to proceed with the review of Safe & Well (SAW) as outlined in this report.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 To provide the Committee with the details of the final scoping proposal for the Scrutiny Review of (SAW) which is attached as appendix 1.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Committee has previously raised concerns about the impact on relationships with partners and referrals for SAW because of the withdrawal from Falls Response contracts and the Back Home Safe & Well pilot in 2018.
- 3.2 At Scrutiny Committee in February 2022, members were updated about new developments in SAW that would benefit from consideration within the scope of the review. These are the:
- introduction of the Fire Standard for Prevention.
  - introduction of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Person Centred Framework for Home Fire Safety Visits.
  - the COVID-19 pandemic.

- introduction of new systems and processes to support the delivery of SAW.
- restructure of the Prevention Team in WMFS Headquarters – combining the Business Partner Adults and Partnerships Teams in 2020.

These remain in the scope presented today.

3.3 In February 2022 members were updated about significant areas of work in progress or starting imminently linked to SAW.

It was agreed that concluding this work, establishing the learning and recommendations from it, would support evidence-based approach prioritisation for the scoping that is reflective of the current situation.

3.4 These areas of work were:

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection March and May 2022.
- Creation and commencement of project delivery for Reducing Health Inequalities Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) objective.
- Internal customer satisfaction survey.
- External customer satisfaction and impact evaluation survey number 3.
- Introduction of SAW delivery PowerBi dashboard - SAW and Remote SAW (RSAW).
- Introduction of SAW evaluation and a PowerBi dashboard.
- Evidence from Station Prevention Evaluation.
- Evidence from Service Peer Assessments.
- Fire Standard for Prevention self-assessment.

All are concluded except for the outcome of the HMICFRS inspection which is expected to conclude with early feedback at the end of May 2022.

3.5 It was agreed at Scrutiny Committee in February 2022 that the review will commence in May 2022.

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Ref. AU/SC/2022/May/20605221

- 3.6. The purpose of the review is to establish that the Prevention priorities within The Plan, specifically linked to SAW are being delivered because:
- it changes behaviours and enables service users to access wider support that reduces risk and vulnerability to fire.
  - it improves the safety, health, wellbeing, and quality of life for those most vulnerable to fire within our communities.
  - risk is stratified and SAW is targeted based on local, regional, and national data.
  - there are established relationships with, and referrals received from, partners who work with those identified as being at risk and vulnerable to fire.
  - SAW is aligned to national frameworks.
  - SAW is targeted and delivered to those identified as being at risk from accidental dwelling fires or of being a serious or fatal casualty in line with the current Prevention Policy.
  - the workforce understands the links between health inequalities and risk and vulnerability to fire.
  - the service is aligning and developing activities relating to SAW to meet the requirements of the:
    - Outcomes and recommendations from the HMICFRS inspection.
    - Fire Standard for Prevention.
    - The NFCC Person-Centred Framework.
    - The Reducing Health Inequalities CRMP objective.
  - Remote SAW (RSAW) delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic is reviewed to establish whether there:
    - has been value and benefit from (RSAW) as an intervention during the pandemic.
    - is a role and if so, what that role RSAW has as a business-as-usual Prevention activity.

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3.7 The proposed outcomes of the review are to evidence that the Prevention objectives in The Plan are being met because:

- The service provides the right resources at the right time and in the right place.
- The service is using an evidence-based approach to the delivery of Safe and Well.
- There are appropriate resources and support available for those delivering prevention activities.
- The service is targeting its work with partners to keep the most vulnerable people in our communities safe from the emergencies to which we respond.

To determine and identify:

- What additional support and resources the workforce would benefit from to enable them to deliver SAW effectively and efficiently.
- How the delivery of Safe and Well has been affected by the pandemic (working with partners) and the plan for recovery.
- The difference Safe and Well visits make to the safety of our communities.

3.8 The proposed methodology for the review is to for the working group to facilitate 4 themed, focused and interactive workshops aligned to the purpose:

- i) risk stratification including referrals and relationships with partners.
- ii) record keeping.
- iii) delivery including training and development,
- iv) performance management, quality assurance and evaluation

Stakeholders from across all areas and levels of responsibility for SAW will be engaged in the workshops including partners who refer to and receive referrals from SAW.

The outcomes of the work in 3.4 will be used in conjunction with the information and evidence established in the workshops to provide a robust plan of action which will

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include deliver the outcomes from the scrutiny review. This will ensure that maximum benefit is obtained.

- 3.9 The working group met on 25 April 2022 to consider the final draft of the scoping document, the proposed timescale of 6 months and the review process proposed in 3.8.

It was agreed that the working group would be updated with details of the evidence gathered after each workshop, with invites to attend as diaries permitted.

It is also proposed that Officers meet with the Members of the working group midway through the review to update on progress and again with the draft report and recommendations when they have been written before presenting to Scrutiny Committee.

#### 4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained in this report do not currently relate to a policy change. Any changes to policy, process or practice resulting from the review the report proposes will be subject to an initial Equality Impact Assessment.

#### 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no known legal implications arising from this report.

#### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### 7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

PowerPoint presentation presented on 14 February 2022

Report presented on 14 February 2022

The contact name for this report is Strategic Enabler, Prevention –  
Pete Wilson telephone number 07973 810 262.

PHIL LOACH  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

### **Glossary of Terms**

SAW - Safe and Well

RSAW - Remote Safe and Well

NFCC - National Fire Chiefs Council

HMICFRS - Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire  
and Rescue Services

CRMP – Community Risk Management Plan

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**APPENDIX 1**

**Scrutiny Committee – Review Scoping Document**

<b>Review Title:</b>	Scrutiny Review of Prevention Safe & Well (SAW)
<b>Date of Review:</b>	Commencing 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2022
<b>Purpose of the Review:</b>	
<p>Be assured that Safe and Well (SAW) is effective, and improves the safety, health, and wellbeing of those most vulnerable to fire within our communities because:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is targeted based on local, regional, and national data and is aligned to national frameworks.</li> <li>• The workforce has the knowledge and understanding of risk and vulnerability and can translate this into a quality person centred service.</li> <li>• It is delivered in line with the current Prevention Policy aligned to the strategic Prevention Priorities</li> </ul> <p>Ensure that SAW activity is targeted and delivered to those identified as being at risk from accidental dwelling fires or of being a serious or fatal casualty through:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stratification of risk</li> <li>• training and development,</li> <li>• performance management,</li> <li>• quality assurance and evaluation</li> <li>• established relationships with and the referrals received from partners who work with those identified as being at risk and vulnerable to fire</li> </ul> <p>Ensure that SAW meet the requirements of the: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes and recommendations from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection</li> <li>• Fire Standard for Prevention</li> <li>• The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Person-Centred Framework</li> <li>• The Reducing Health Inequalities Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) objective</li> </ul> <p>and</p> <p>To review Remote SAW (RSAW) delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic establishing its value, benefit and place as a SAW intervention.</p>	



# WEST MIDLANDS FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

## Intended Outcomes:

The intended outcomes are that:

### Stratification of risk

- The workforce understands the health, lifestyle, behavioural and environmental links to risk of fire and reducing health inequalities
- There is an understanding of the role of RSAW in the future delivery of SAW
- Partner relationships are built using evidence of risk and vulnerability

### Record keeping

- Records are kept in a consistent, safe, and accurate manner
- Establishing improvements for record keeping for SAW within the organisational digital transformation

### Training and development

- That all personnel responsible for the delivery of SAW understand its role in the delivery of the strategic Prevention priorities and the Prevention Policy and how it supports their role for the delivery of SAW
- The workforce across the service understands their roles and responsibilities within SAW delivery
- The workforce has the resources, skills, and knowledge to undertake their roles and responsibilities
- Establish what additional support and resources the workforce would benefit from to deliver SAW

### Performance management

- There is clarity at all levels within the service about the targets set and how performance is measured and monitored against these
- Ensure that SAW is being delivered in compliance with Criteria 8 of the Fire Standard for Prevention
- Assurance that SAWs are targeted and delivered to those who are identified as being most at risk
- The service has a strategy for engaging with external partners who work with those most at risk as we move back to business as usual from the pandemic

### Quality assurance and Evaluation

- The service can evidence the value SAW visits provide to its communities through evaluation of the service
- The service can demonstrate the impact that SAW has on reducing risk and vulnerability to fire



# WEST MIDLANDS FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

<b>Lead Member</b>	Cllr Sybil Spence
<b>Lead Officer/Officer Group (including partners):</b>	Kate Alliss
<b>Links to Strategic Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will prevent fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies</li> <li>• We will focus on reducing health inequalities for our most vulnerable as a means of reducing risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies</li> <li>• We will educate the community to reduce their risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies</li> <li>• We will collaborate and work in partnership with other organisations to reduce the risk and vulnerability to fire and other emergencies</li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for undertaking the review:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide assurance that the withdrawal from the Falls Response contracts has not had a detrimental effect on referrals from these organisations for SAW</li> <li>• To review SAW considering changes to methods of delivery during the COVID 19 pandemic</li> <li>• To ensure SAW is aligned to The Plan, Prevention Policy and national guidance</li> <li>• To ensure partner engagement and activity is aligned to WMFS's evidence-based approach to prevention activities</li> <li>• To develop a strategy for engagement with key partners post pandemic depending on risk and capacity</li> <li>• To ensure digital solutions for the management of SAW activity is fit for purpose</li> <li>• To ensure all personnel are adequately trained and have the right resources and support for delivery of SAW</li> <li>• To ensure systems and processes for performance management and evaluation and quality assurance are in place.</li> </ul>	
<b>Scoping undertaken by:</b>	Kate Alliss and Andrea Simmonds
<b>Chief Officer and/or Partner/Agency Equivalent:</b>	

### Existing data available for consideration:

- Station Prevention Evaluation
- SAW Evaluation Surveys



**WEST MIDLANDS  
FIRE & RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

- Service Peer Assessment
- Serious Incident Review Infographic
- SIR recommendations on MESH (WMFS Intranet)
- PowerBi SAW and Incident Dashboards
- Prevention Survey
- SAW Sector Directories
- SAW referral pathway & delivery Support pages on MESH
- Fire Standard for Prevention action plan

**Review Work Programme:**

Task	Method	Lead person(s)	Completion by:

Review Scoping Checklist	Status

**Glossary of Terms**

SAW - Safe and Well

RSAW - Remote Safe and Well

NFCC - National Fire Chiefs Council

HMICFRS - Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

CRMP – Community Risk Management Plan

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 MAY 2022**

1. **FIRE CONTROL PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTERS 1 TO 4 2021/22**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Committee note the Fire Control Performance update for Quarters 1 to 4 2021/22.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 This report is submitted to provide the Committee with an update of the operational performance of Fire Control. The report covers a 12-month period.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 **Emergency Calls Received and Call Handling**

Fire Control receives the emergency calls and effectively manages the resources for both Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services.

Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire Control received 70,573 emergency calls between 1 May 2021 and 31 March 2022 across both brigade areas.

This was split 48,956 calls for the West Midlands (69%) and 21,617 calls for Staffordshire (31%).

The table below show the breakdown of calls received for West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) and Staffordshire FRS

across a 3-year period.

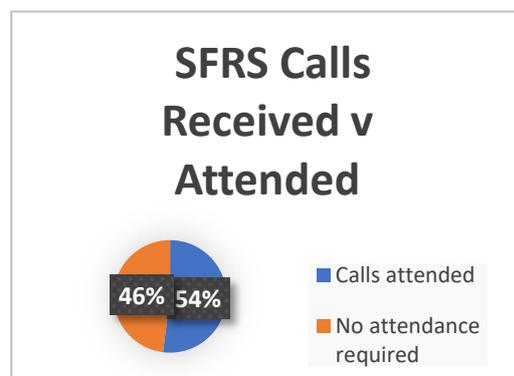
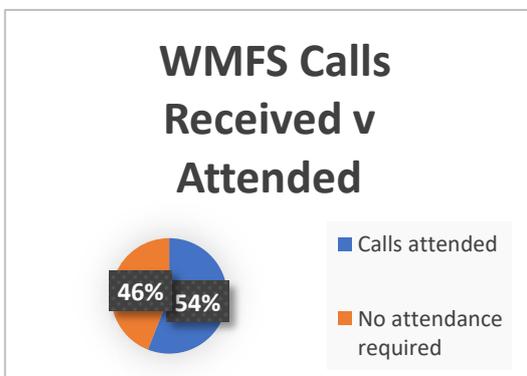
Period	WMFS			Staffordshire		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Q1 Apr - Jun	13,135	12,514	13,005	5,437	5,569	7,123
Q2 Jul - Sept	13,353	13,168	12,871	5,288	5,330	7,149
Q3 Oct - Dec	10,588	9,996	11,613	4,479	4,578	6,231
Q4 Jan - Mar	10,382	9,349	11,467	4,746	4,593	6,126

Of the 48,956 emergency calls received for WMFS across the reporting period; Fire Control mobilised to 26,629 (54%) incidents.

Of the 21,617 emergency calls received for Staffordshire FRS across the reporting period, Fire Control mobilised to 11,653 (54%) incidents.

This mobilisation to calls received ratio is because of several factors including –

- call challenging automated fire alarms (AFAs)
- call challenging special service calls which were deemed non-emergency
- repeat 999 calls
- use of 999eye footage and imagery



### 3.2 **Call Handling**

A key performance indicator for Fire Control is the length of time from answering a 999 call to mobilising appliances to category 1 (life and property) incidents. For these critical incident types, we aim to mobilise in under 80 seconds. The data below shows the median average call handling times for life and property incident types broken down for both Staffordshire and West Midlands:

Q1 – Q4 2021/22

brigade	SFRS		WMFS		Total	
Incident Type	Call Handling	Count	Call Handling	Count	Call Handling	Count
FIRE	85	474	79	1385	81	1859
FIRE PR	77	22	76	51	76	73
HOUSE FIRE	62	320	58	1101	59	1421
HOUSE FIRE PR	76	52	56	132	63	184
RTC	92	397	78	2004	80	2401
RTC PR	90	304	70	718	74	1022

For the above reporting period captured in the table, Fire Control have maintained an average mobilisation time below 80 seconds. Fire Control's continued focus on mobilising with the required urgency is a key factor in survivability and limiting damage to property.

### 3.3 **Dynamic Mobilising**

Dynamic mobilising involves using resources flexibly and efficiently in our approach to emergency call management and mobilising, resulting in a proportionate and appropriate initial incident response. The approach enables Fire Control to reduce and increase an incident response to achieve the best match for the incident needs, which includes selecting the most appropriate number and type of resource.

Fire Control continue to utilise several tools to support decision making including –

- Dynamic emergency call handling
- Information gathered at the time of call

- Location of the incident, both geographically and demographically
- Repeat calls
- Footage and images from 999eye
- Number and type of incidents in progress
- Weather
- Time of day

The following charts show dynamic mobilising data captured for the period, 2021/22 for both organisations.

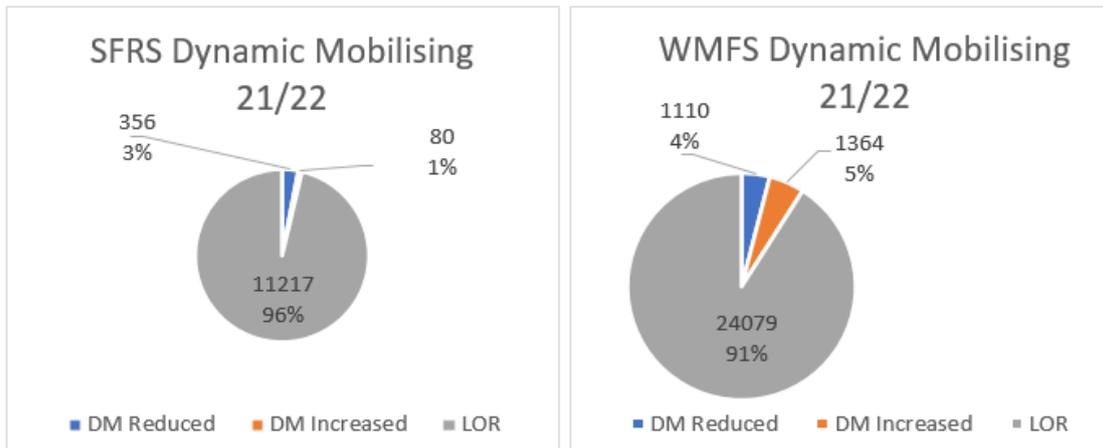
Fire Control dynamically amended the initial level of response 2,474 times throughout 2021/22 times for incidents in West Midlands area.

They dynamically amended the initial level of response 436 times for incidents in Staffordshire area.

These totals are either an increased or decreased attendance from the standard pre-determined levels of response.

On the occasions Fire Control reduce the attendance, this results in an increased number of appliances being available for category 1 incidents and to support prevention and protection activities, thereby increasing the effectiveness of our resources.

On the occasions Fire Control increased the attendance, this supported the speed and weight of attack allowing for safe systems of work to be implemented leading to effective and efficient resolution of incidents.



### 3.4 **999Eye**

Intelligence led mobilisation and resource management enables Fire Control to send the most appropriate number and type of resource based on the level of risk, this directly contributes to the achievement of our risk-based attendance standards.

999eye is enhancing the quality of intelligence and information that is received within Fire Control, thereby enabling Fire Control personnel to make more informed dynamic mobilisations through the use of this technology; further supporting our key aim of sending the right level of resource to the right incident type.

We have recorded a 6% increase in 999eye proposals recorded against the same period of the previous year.

The table below shows the recorded use of 999eye across the reporting periods.

	Q1 21/22	Q2 21/22	Q3 21/22	Q4 21/22
<b>WMFS</b>	3815	2455	1738	1848
<b>SFRS</b>	1182	549	481	549
<b>Totals</b>	4997	3004	2219	2397

### 3.5 **Vision 4 Command and Control System Upgrade**

We continue to work with our Command and Control supplier, to upgrade the current Vision 3 system to Vision 4. This upgrade will enhance our ability to interface our system with other required systems, supporting the value release of

the project, through efficiency, for both brigades and includes examples such as:

- Automatic retrieval of call location details from BT (information without manual intervention), with input into the 'call collection screen' for improved call handling times
- Enhanced Mobile Location (EML) – more accurate GPS location for mobile phones making 999 calls to pinpoint incident addresses pre-alert for faster mobilisation
- Attribute Mobilising, i.e. the ability to tailor responses to fully utilise the blended fleet and enhance resource management
- Integration of Fire Watch (SFRS staffing system) into Vision 4, automating a currently manual and time-consuming procedure.
- It has also enabled the replacement of system hardware and Windows operating systems.

The go live for Vision 4 has been delayed to 6 June 2022, due to issues occurring during testing which could affect mobilisation and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's back-office processes.

Mobilising effectively is critical to ensuring our response is proportionate to the incident type and keeping our communities safe. We would not go live with a new system unless we had a very high level of assurance that there would be no issues for us or Staffordshire.

#### 4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out.

#### 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The contact name for this report is Karen Gowreesunker Strategic Enabler Fire Control and Operations South, telephone number 0121 380 3388

PHIL LOACH  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 MAY 2022**

**1. DIVERSITY INCLUSION COHESION EQUALITY (DICE) UPDATE**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT Scrutiny Committee note the ongoing progress made by the Service in relation to Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion, Equality (DICE).

**2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 2.1 To provide an update to Scrutiny Committee to review and consider the ongoing progress being made by West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) in advancing DICE. This activity supports our equality objectives as well as our statutory requirements of the Public-Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 DICE objectives fulfil our legal duties as a public-sector organisation under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 This report details our continued progress towards achieving our objectives and provides an update in relation to DICE activity.

**4. LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT**

- 4.1 **Stakeholder Groups**

All groups have been impacted by Covid limiting their interaction and initiatives. We are currently rewriting/ updating terms of reference of the groups to refocus activity post lock down with greater emphasis on supporting people objectives and community engagement. All groups have been active in recent Brave Space talks around hidden disabilities and Positive Action which had a focus on internal positive action.

### Neurodiversity Group

The group has now formally launched and has developed awareness and guidance on their mesh page. The group has gathered momentum with a lot of interest from the workforce. Members of the group have been supporting various departments to ensure training packages and materials are Neurodiversity friendly and are currently working on a video to highlight role models within the Service.

### Inspire

Inspire have held a well-attended general meeting. They are preparing for local and national events, including Simmer Down and Notting Hill Carnival, as well as planning for Black History Month.

### AFSA

Local AFSA has not held any meetings recently but helped with the hosting of the AFSA event 'Empowering Women' at the end of March which WMFS hosted. Local AFSA members are in the early stages of supporting a regional event for LGBT+ to be held later in the year. Members of local AFSA have been supporting DICE with a series of staff videos for Ramadan.

### FireOut

Members of FireOut have been supporting recruit firefighter interview panels and are now planning for Birmingham Pride (September) and Pride Month. They issued communications around LGBT history month and have been supporting DICE

in the development of an Elearning course around LGBT+ awareness. They have also been supporting our first openly transgender operational member of staff and supporting DICE with Mother's Day videos of our female staff's children talking about what it's like having their mum work for the Fire Service.

### Affinity

Affinity's focus has been prepping for the Women in the Fire Service weekend at the Fire Service College, where 15 of our staff will attend support various activities. Members of Affinity attended a regional event hosted by Staffordshire FRS on cultural change.

## 4.2 **British Sikh Awards**

One of our employees was recognised at the first British Sikh awards held in Birmingham in February. The awards recognise a wide range of achievements from inspiring individuals who positively impact on business, charity, sport, arts, culture, religious advocacy, education and medicine.

Our employee was recognised for work with numerous charities as well as being a volunteer for our UK ISAR team.

## 4.3 **LGBT+ History Month**

During February members of FireOut were promoting LGBT+ history month and raising awareness through the initiative 'Time to Talk.' The aim of LGBT+ history month is to promote equality and inclusion by increasing the visibility of LGBT+ people, their history, lives and experiences.

The 'Time to Talk' initiative encourages all staff to engage in conversations with their teams about the LGBT+ community and ask those 'difficult' questions to encourage an open and honest supportive environment, as well as improve awareness around key LGBT+ issues to support our staff.

## **5. COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE, ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

### **5.1 Safeguarding**

The most recent safeguarding data provides some points of note. These include:

- The number of safeguarding concerns being reporting are increasing.
- Gender is till reported as male or female. 50% of safeguarding concerns are about males, 46% females and in 4% of cases they relate to both.
- Just over 17% of safeguarding concerns are about children and almost 83% about adults.
- Ethnicity is recorded in the Fire Control data using free-text. There is considerable variation in the way staff have recorded ethnicity. A PowerBi is being developed and changes will be made to the recording of ethnicity data.
- Since quarter 1, mental health has become the most frequent recurring theme in reported safeguarding concerns.

### **5.2 Covid 19**

WMFS staff continue to volunteer for activities in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic. These include the delivery of Lateral Flow Testing and supporting the delivery of the Covid Vaccination Programme.

Through our partnership with NHS Wolverhampton Central Health, 'pop up' vaccination clinics will be set up at various fire stations including Fallings Park, Wolverhampton and Tettenhall. This is initially a month's trial and our staff will be offered the opportunity to have their first, second or booster vaccine.

### 5.3 Reducing Health Inequalities

Building on our well-established Prevention work, the Reducing Health Inequalities project has been implemented. The project brings together both existing and new work to enable WMFS to target those within our communities who are at risk and vulnerable to fire and other emergencies.

At the end of January, the new Prevention policy was introduced alongside workshops for our staff to attend to assist with their understanding of the policy.

The newly introduced Safe and Well Public Survey, alongside the PowerBi dashboard, shows that the information, guidance, support, equipment and referrals made during safe and well visits, can change behaviours, reduce risk and vulnerability to fire, and reduce health inequalities at the same time.

It is envisaged that the Reducing Health Inequalities project will encompass many different areas of work including training and development, as well as changing the way we use data to improve our systems, build partnerships and collaborate.

## 6. EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### 6.1 Workforce Profile

As at 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 WMFS employed a total of 1894 employees of which:

- 1392 (73%) are uniformed, 440 (23%) non-uniformed and 62 (3%) Fire Control
- 12% of uniformed staff are female compared to more than half of non-uniformed staff and 88% Fire Control staff. 50% of the working population of the West Midlands are female.
- 14% of all employees are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. 30% of the

working population of the West Midlands are from BAME communities

- Declaration rates remain high with 91% of all employees having made a declaration regarding disability. 3% have stated they have a disability.
- 85% of all employees have made a declaration regarding sexual orientation. It should be noted however that 12% (227) employees have declared that they 'prefer not to state'
- The average age of our employees is 43 years

## 6.2 Grievance

During the reporting period July 2021 to December 2021 there were a total of 5 grievances raised.

All 5 were raised by uniformed Grey Book members of staff.

- 1 x at risk employee, qualified for direct assimilation, formal outcome which was upheld at the appeal stage
- 1 x recruitment process within Fire Control, dealt with informally
- 1 x working relations at a fire station, dealt with informally
- 1 x Covid status not declared, upheld as an outcome at the appeal stage
- 1 x recruitment process, formal process, outcome was not upheld at the appeal stage

Of those who submitted a grievance 2 were female members of staff, and 3 were male members of staff. All 5 of the staff are white.

## 6.3 Discipline

During the reporting period July 2021 to December 2021 there were a total of 8 discipline cases.

All 8 were uniformed members of staff (Grey Book).

- 3 x misconduct
  - 1 informal process
  - 1 formal process with an 18-month final written warning with no appeal lodged
  - 1 formal outcome 6 month written warning with no appeal lodged
  
- 5 x gross misconduct
  - 1 formal outcome individual dismissal which was upheld at appeal
  - 1 still ongoing disciplinary hearing scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022
  - 2 formal outcomes with a 12-month written warnings and neither went to appeal
  - 1 formal outcome dismissal which was upheld at appeal

Of those subject to disciplinary procedures 7 were male employees and 1 female employee. 7 are British White and 1 Mixed White and Asian.

#### **6.4 Occupational Health and Wellbeing**

Our Occupational Health and Wellbeing team continues to offer and promote a wide range of activities for our employees, encouraging participation in our full wellbeing programmes which include the use of gym facilities, 24/7 Support Line (EAP), Occupational Health, Mindfulness and weekly webinars delivered by psychotherapists.

The MESH pages for both Occupational Health and employee Wellbeing offer a 'one stop shop' for information and toolkits for staff.

Specific information for Long Covid has been made available to staff recognising the broad range of debilitating physical, cognitive and psychological symptoms that may persist beyond 12 weeks post Covid.

Our Occupational Health referral process has been updated providing the opportunity for a post Covid Occupational

Health Consultation on the management referral form for those suspected to have any post Covid related issues.

## **7. RECRUITMENT TRAINING AND PROGRESSION**

### **7.1 Firefighter Recruitment**

- Between April 2021 and March 2022 WMFS have employed 85 new entrant firefighters. Of these, 10 (12%) are women and 20 (24%) BAME.
- Whilst activity has been restricted due to the pandemic, a range of positive action initiatives continue for both women and BAME candidates.
- We have seen a decline in the number of females who are successful during recruitment. This has been attributed to our inability to provide targeted physical training sessions during the pandemic restrictions.
- Our strategy for increasing representation of both women and BAME candidates is constantly under review, and there is currently specific focus to ensure we improve on the diversity of candidates from what we have seen over recent months.
- Now that Covid Restrictions are easing, the FF recruitment programme for females and BAME candidates has been reintroduced. We currently have 2 programmes running with 16 women and 19 BAME candidates.
- Taster sessions are being introduced with the first session being hosted by Canley Fire Station in May 2022.
- The 'Be a Firefighter' portal that we utilise for initial attraction and expressions of interest is having a facelift. Working alongside colleagues in our Communications team, we have produced new video footage and photographs, and the look and feel of our recruitment web pages will be enhanced. This follows

research undertaken by our WCdr in DICE, considering feedback from candidates and 'best practice' examples from other Services.

## 7.2 Gender Pay Gap

With effect from 2017, any organisation that has 250 or more employees is required to publish and report figures regarding their gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings of men and women, expressed relative to men's earnings.

The figures are calculated using a specific reference date called the 'snapshot' date. The snapshot date for public sector organisations is 31 March. The data must be published within one year of the snapshot date, i.e.: by the 30 March each year.

Measure 1 - The Mean Gender Pay Gap for WMFS is detailed below:

Employee Group	As at 31.03.20		As at 31.03.20		As at 31.03.19		As at 31.03.18		As at 31.03.17	
	Pay Gap £	Pay Gap %								
All employees	1.46	8.9	1.55	9.8	1.76	11.3	1.57	10.4	2.18	14.2
Operational employees (inc. Fire Control)	1.10	6.9	1.11	7.1	1.17	7.6	0.71	4.7	0.42	2.8
Support staff employees	3.61	19.6	3.33	19.0	3.18	19.2	3.00	18.6	5.56	34.9

The mean gender pay gap has decreased to 8.9% in 2021 when compared to the 9.8% gap reported in 2020.

In 2020, when considering the top 50 salaries, there were 18 females in this group. This has decreased to 17 in 2021. In 2020, when considering the top 100 salaries, there were 32 females in this group. This has increased to 37 in 2021.

Median Gender Pay Gap is the difference between the midpoints in the ranges of men's and women's hourly pay. The median gender pay gap as at 31 March 2021 is 4%. This has decreased from the 8% reported in March

2020 and is the lowest percentage reported since we began calculating in 2017.

Quartile Pay Bands refers to the proportion of male and female full pay equivalent employees in the upper, upper middle, lower middle and low quartile pay bands. The figures below show this information for each year. The % for females has increased year on year for the upper and upper middle quartiles.

		As at 31.03.21	As at 31.03.20	As at 31.03.19	As at 31.03.18	As at 31.03.17
Upper Quartile	Male	79.5%	80.5%	82.2%	83.0%	84.6%
	Female	20.5%	19.5%	17.8%	17.0%	15.4%
Upper Middle Quartile	Male	82.1%	83.7%	86%	87.6%	86.8%
	Female	17.9%	16.3%	14%	12.4%	13.2%
Lower Middle Quartile	Male	89.9%	91.3%	93.8%	93.9%	92.8%
	Female	10.1%	8.7%	6.2%	6.1%	7.2%
Lower Quartile	Male	50.8%	51.0%	49.6%	55.5%	55.2%
	Female	49.2%	49.0%	50.4%	44.5%	44.8%

### 7.3 Progression

42% of uniformed posts are Crew Commander or above.  
26% of female uniformed staff hold positions of Crew Commander or above, compared to 44% of male staff.

25% of BAME uniformed staff hold positions of Crew Commander or above, compared to 44% of white staff.

66% of non-uniformed posts are grade 9 or above. 54% of female non-uniformed staff hold positions of grade 9 or above, compared to 80% of male staff.

60% of BAME non-uniformed staff hold positions of grade 9 or above, compared to 67% of white staff.

Our positive action strategy has been enhanced to encompass internal positive action for progression. During the attraction phase of promotion selection activity, candidates from under-represented groups will be actively engaged to encourage and support participation in selection

activity. Early and sustainable contact is made with our Networking Groups throughout.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This report responds directly to the General and Specific Duties of the Equality Act and considers DICE issues that are pertinent to the needs of the Service. In doing so a range of equality data has been analysed and considered regarding all protected characteristics.

## **9. RISK IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The objectives identified in this report support the organisation in mitigating its risk regarding claims of unlawful discrimination.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendations outlined in this report assist us to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010 particularly to advance equal opportunities and eliminate behaviours that are unlawful under the Act.

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

The contact officer for this report is Alex Shapland, Strategic Enabler for DICE, contact number 07973 810156.

**Phil Loach**  
**Chief Fire Officer**



**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 MAY 2022**

1. **DISPUTE RESOLUTION REPORT**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the contents of the Dispute Resolution Report for the below period is noted:

- 01/10/2021–31/12/2021 (3 calendar months)

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform the Scrutiny Committee regarding the number, type and outcomes of discipline and grievance hearings and other dispute resolution including Employment Tribunal activity that has occurred during the period listed above.

To inform the Scrutiny Committee that this is a shorter reporting period and the reason for this is to bring the reporting period back in line with pre Covid-19 agreed meetings.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 This report provides a summary of the number, type and outcomes of disciplinary, grievance, debriefs, collective grievances and any reported failure to agree, or failure to consult.
- 3.2 Within this report we will identify any lessons learned from the application of our then current practices but also a full and comprehensive review and stakeholder engagement in relation to the disciplinary and grievance policies. The revisions and crucial conversations management training is aligned to the Discipline policy which went live from 1 July 2021 and the Grievance Policy which went live November 2021.

Following on from crucial conversations courses and to support the ongoing development of our managers, we are delivering sessions covering 'The Manager as Mediator'. These sessions are run by the same organisation who delivered Crucial Conversations Line Managers sessions. We also considered feedback and regular discussions with Trade Unions/Representative Bodies and other employees within the Service. Feedback is also noted after case debriefs which we hold once a case has come to an end.

3.3 Discussions frequently take place at Joint Consultative Committee and monthly Joint Working Party meetings around the application of the case management policy.

#### 4. **SUMMARY OF CASES**

##### 4.1 **Grievances**

##### **Summary of Grievance Position**

During this 3 month reporting period there have been 4 grievances lodged.

1 grievance started as a collective grievance with multiple employees, however because of the fact finding exercise all employees except 1 withdrew from the process, culminating in 1 stand-alone individual grievance.

- 3 grievances were grey book (Male)
- 1 grievance was from Control (Female)

Grievance 1	Working relationships, behaviours and leadership styles displayed by management.	Fact-finding investigation resulted in the grievance no longer being a collective matter but an individual grievance that was not upheld, no appeal was lodged.
Grievance 2	Employee believed to be substantiated in line with the current Managing Vacancies policy.	With the agreement of all parties this grievance was managed informally, the outcome was that the employee accepted 'Manager A' position which became available.

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Grievance 3	Employee did not wish to declare their Covid vaccination status	Grievance was not upheld, and an appeal has been lodged. The outcome following appeal meeting was that this grievance was upheld.
Grievance 4	Retired Employee raised a grievance based on age discrimination around his retirement dates.	Appeal part upheld and ACAS early conciliation has taken place with all parties. The employee has made a claim to the employment tribunal

Position	Green or Grey	Gender reassignment	Age	Ethnicity/Race	Sexual Orientation	Disability	Marital Status	Pregnancy or maternity	Religion or belief
WCdr A	Grey	Male	53	White - english	DNS	No	Civil partnership	N/A	Christianity
WCdr B (Control)	Grey	Female	48	White - english	Heterosexual	No	Married	DNS	None
FF	Grey	Male	40	White - english	DNS	No	Single	N/A	DNS
CCdr	Grey	Male	45	White - english	Heterosexual	No	Married	N/A	Christianity

Analysis of the equality data supports no impact on any specific group. The above table will confirm a full breakdown of the equality data for each case.

It was identified through policy consultation, SET, Stakeholder engagement, Trade Union feedback that management training is required to support the Grievance process, which has been picked up by PSS Management. The day-to-day management of people and specifically through the formal investigation process has also been factored.

Monthly breakdown on all grievance cases is presented at the HR Joint Working Party meeting.

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Ref. AU/SC/2022/May/11005223

## 4.2 Disciplinary Cases

There were 5 disciplinary cases in this 3 month reporting period.

- 5 were grey book male employees
- 4 cases were investigated under Gross Misconduct
- 1 investigated under Misconduct

Disciplinary 1 Misconduct	Employee breaching the Covid rules that were set out by the Brigade, did not adhere to self-isolation instruction following close contact with someone who had tested positive for Covid-19	Outcome 6 months written warning; no appeal logged
Disciplinary 2 Gross Misconduct	Inappropriate conduct and physical contact towards a female employee	Outcome 6 months written warning; no appeal logged.
Disciplinary 3 Gross Misconduct	Inappropriate usage of West Midlands Fire Service ICT equipment.	The outcome was that there was no case to answer.
Disciplinary 4 Gross Misconduct	Alleged criminal charges in relation to GBH	Investigation ensued to a formal hearing where the outcome was a 12 month final written warning. No appeal lodged.
Disciplinary 5 Gross Misconduct	Safeguarding alert disclosure to West Midlands Fire Service	External investigation resulted in dismissal; Appeal lodged dismissal outcome upheld.

Position	Green or Grey	Gender reassignment	Age	Ethnicity/Race	Sexual Orientation	Disability	Marital Status	Pregnancy or maternity	Religion or belief
FF	Grey	Male	28	White - english	Heterosexual	No	Single	N/A	None
WCdr B	Grey	Male	43	White - english	Heterosexual	No	Single	N/A	Not Stated
T/FF	Grey	Male	35	White - english	Prefer Not to State	Not Stated	Single	N/A	None
FF	Grey	Male	65	White - english	Heterosexual	No	Single	N/A	Christianity
FF	Grey	Male	30	Mixed - White & Asian	Not stated	Not stated	Single	N/A	Not Stated

Analysis of the equality data there has been no impact on any specific group. The above table will confirm a full breakdown of the equality data for each case.

## 5. **EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS**

The Service has received 1 employment tribunal for claims under racial discrimination during this reporting period, there are no scheduled ACAS early conciliation meetings for this case.

Separately to the above, there has been 1 early conciliation case late December and the employee has made a claim to the employment tribunal.

## 6. **DEBRIEFS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Substantial revisions continue to be made to our policies, toolkits, procedures and practices.

## 7. **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR LINE MANAGERS**

Following feedback from SET the trade unions and managers through the Disciplinary and Grievance stakeholder group and HR JWP a decision has been taken to provide those involved in people management including Trade Unions, line managers and PSS Business Partners training through external training providers ACAS and ABD CCT (achievement by design Coaching Consulting training). The training that was provided is stated below:

- **Disciplinary Investigations** (78 managers and BPs attended)
- **Disciplinary Commissioning and Appeals** (29 managers and

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- BPs attended this course *(limited availability with this course)*
- **Crucial Conversations** (68 managers, BPs and Trade Unions officials attended)
- **The Manager and Mediator courses** (562 attendees this includes BPs)

## 8. **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Disciplinary policy and the Grievance policy are available for all employees on MESH. Detailed analysis and a fresh review of these processes is currently underway as part of the Head of HR Enabler objectives.

### **Disciplinary Policy and Toolkit**

Following an extensive engagement process, we have made some significant changes to the way we develop and engage on our people policies. All our policies are currently consulted with our Trade Unions, and on considering lessons learnt, information from our debrief process and feedback from managers and trade unions we have identified further areas of improvement.

As an outcome of this feedback, we have revised the new discipline policy to provide a clear and concise framework to support managers decision making and application of the process.

The supporting toolkit contains additional supportive information, guidance, and template documents.

The revised policy focuses on the informal process, trying to resolve issues early, sharing advice and guidance through the day-to-day management and in a timely manner. This will help to resolve issues where appropriate and prevent escalation. Our PSS Business Partners will also be meeting with managers to go through the changes to support understanding and the application of the policy.

All employees are made aware that they need to be accountable for their conduct and behaviours and Managers need to ensure the expectations on all staff to uphold our core values.

In support of this we have provided crucial conversations training to all managers to support the early intervention and conversation to prevent the escalation of an issue to formal disciplinary stages. This will also assist in managing the informal stage of the discipline policy should it be

required.

Managers will carry out this training as part of their ongoing development and need to book on to People Management training for crucial conversations.

9. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The Service's policies that are applied in all case management have been subject to full Equality Impact Assessments.

10. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

11. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications to this report.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Disciplinary Policy 2/1

Grievance Policy 2/2

Previous JCP reports Dispute Resolution Reports 0-19 and Review of Case Management Debriefs.

The contact officer for this report is Simon Barry, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Strategic Enabler (People Programme) 07973 810 657.

PHIL LOACH  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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Ref. AU/SC/2022/May/11005223



**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 MAY 2022**

1. **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2021/22**

Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That the Committee gives consideration to the content and format of its Annual Report 2021/22 for submission to the Annual General Meeting of the Authority on Monday 27 June 2022.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 This report is submitted to Members to seek approval of the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2021/22.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee was established in line with expectations set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework. The Committee forms an integral part of the Authority's scrutiny framework, supporting the Authority in achieving its strategic objectives.
- 3.2 The Committee enables the scrutiny of decisions, made or to be made, on the basis of public safety, supporting the principles of pre-decision scrutiny and post-decision scrutiny (defined as 'pre-scrutiny' and 'post-scrutiny' within the associated Terms of Reference). In doing so this further enables:
- informing of policy development and/or
  - holding the Authority to account
  - scrutinising performance of specific issues and/or
  - holding officers to account.

- 3.3 Further information on the role of the committee including its full Terms of Reference are included within the Appendix A of the draft Annual Report.
- 3.4 The draft Annual Report for 2021/22 has been prepared in liaison with the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee and is attached for comments by the Committee in preparation for submission of the report to the Annual General Meeting of the Authority (27 June 2022).
- 3.5 It should be noted that meetings of the Scrutiny Committee were put on hold when the Authority implemented business continuity arrangements in March 2020 in response to the then emerging Covid 19 Pandemic. Meetings of the committee were reconvened as of 1 November 2021. This is reflected within the draft Annual Report.

#### 4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out because the matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change.

#### 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no particular legal requirements for the Authority to establish a Scrutiny Committee; it is however, considered good practice for authorities to have a means through which monitoring and review of the Authority's policies and practices can be undertaken.

#### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Advice may be provided internally by Officers at no direct cost to the Authority, supporting the Committee in its work. The Scrutiny Committee can, if required, access resources to be able to engage external professional advice where applicable.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Authority and Scrutiny Committee Reports  
Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Sybil Spence  
Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE**

**Annual Report of the Scrutiny  
Committee  
2021/22**

## 1. Background

In line with expectations set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework the Authority has established a Scrutiny Committee to support it in achieving its strategic objectives. The committee ensures that its policy and budgetary framework is followed and developed to reflect the changing needs and demands in meeting its statutory obligations.

Effective scrutiny frameworks will be in place for both the scrutiny of strategic policy, as well as performance. Aligned to the role of the Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer (CFO) as set out within the Constitution of the Authority, the scrutiny function should scrutinise decisions made or to be made, on the basis of 'public safety' aligned to the following definitions:

Pre scrutiny enables changes proposed to strategic policy decisions to be scrutinised. These are decisions which if implemented, would change the strategic priorities and outcomes agreed by the Fire Authority (for example, matters contained in Authority 'forward plan' for approval). Pre scrutiny can:

- i) Inform policy development and/or
- ii) Hold the Authority to account

Post scrutiny enables the Fire Authority to seek assurance around operational decisions already made by the CFO and other officers in the delivery of strategic priorities and outcomes (for example: training, partnership working). Post scrutiny can:

- i) Scrutinise performance of specific issues and/or
- ii) Hold officers to account

The key benefits of the Committee can be seen as:

- Complementing the strategic and policy formulation and development work of the Authority and Service.
- Developing the skills of Members to enable them to investigate below the surface of policies, strategies and processes.

- Providing a useful oversight and an element of ‘challenge’ to performance improvement processes and continuous improvement.
- Encouraging public involvement in the policy process.
- Supporting the development of an environment that stimulates a more reflective, evaluative, and evidence-based culture within the Authority and Service.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee can be found at Appendix A of this report.

## 2. Meetings

Meetings of the Scrutiny Committee were put on hold when the Authority implemented business continuity arrangements in March 2020 in response to the then emerging Covid 19 Pandemic.

Meetings of the committee were reconvened as of 1 November 2021. During 2021/22, the Committee met on the following dates:

• 1 November 2021
• 14 February 2022
• 23 May 2022

## 3. Members & Attendance Record

	01/11/21	14/02/22	23/05/22
Councillor Barlow	√	√	
Councillor Barrie	√	√	
Councillor Dehar	√	√	
Councillor Locke	√	√	
Councillor Singh	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Councillor Spence	√	√	
Councillor Young	√	√	
S Middleton (co-optee)	<b>N/A</b>	<b>X</b>	

Officers from the Authority are also present at meetings as appropriate.

Working Groups are also appointed to consider scrutiny reviews. The Committee are to undertake a maximum of two such reviews each year. Each Working Group is to have a minimum of three Members allocated to it.

#### **4. Business**

During the year the Committee conducted the following business:

- Diversity, Inclusion Cohesion and Equality Updates
- Dispute Resolution Monitoring
- Progress Update on the Review of Safeguarding in West Midlands Fire Service
- Consideration of Scrutiny Reviews leading to a Scrutiny Review of Safe and Well
- Fire Control Performance Reports
- Work programme selection

#### **5. The Committee's main achievements**

The Committee believes its key achievements during the year include:

- The refresh of scrutiny arrangements upon the reconvening of the schedule of meetings of the Committee, including appraisal of previously refined terms of reference.
- The consideration of performance related information covering the period from when business continuity arrangements were implemented to date, thus enabling the continued robust monitoring of the Service's performance in the areas of:
  - Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality,
  - Workforce profile indicators,
  - Dispute resolutions,
  - Operational performance of Fire Control.
- The Committee received an update on the progress made to date by the Service in implementing the recommendations

that had resulted from the outcomes of the Review of Safeguarding in West Midlands Fire Service, providing assurances regarding the work undertaken to improve safeguarding arrangements and practice within the Service.

- As part of the overview of its Work Programme for the year, the Committee considered themes for Scrutiny reviews, including taking into account reviews and business undertaken by the Committee prior to the implementation of business continuity arrangements. This has resulted in the Committee approving to undertake the Scrutiny Review of Safe and Well. Members and Officers have actively engaged and discussed the review, understanding rationale, purpose and outcomes, with the formation of a working group to oversee and participate in the review as well as the submission of a scoping document to the full Committee. The working group is comprised of nominated Members plus Officers of the Service as and when applicable, with progress to be reported to the full Committee.
- Full details of the review are outlined within the respective reports submitted to the Committee:
  - Scrutiny Review of Safe and Well (February 2022)
  - Scrutiny Review of Safe and Well – Scoping Document (May 2022)
- It is to be noted that this is a Scrutiny review that is ongoing at the time of writing this report with the review expected to be undertaken over a six-month timeframe. As a result, findings of the review are anticipated to be provided during 2022/23 municipal year and will be subsequently reported to the Authority.

**Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee****Scrutiny Committee**

To carry out a maximum of two scrutiny reviews per annum selected by the Committee. Such reviews will be member-led and evidence based, and will produce SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) recommendations to the Authority.

To track and monitor the implementation of review recommendations that are accepted by the Authority.

To summon any officer or member of the Authority to give account in respect of reviews or any other relevant matter.

To manage, in consultation with the Strategic Enabler for Finance and Resources, a specific budget for the purpose of buying in any necessary external advice and support in connection with the reviews.

To receive and scrutinise performance information including progress against the Community Safety Strategy and 'The Plan', the Service's objectives and corporate performance indicators and review performance targets.

To have responsibility for scrutiny of Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality and diversity throughout the West Midlands Fire Service and to review policies and monitor performance in relation thereto.

To monitor and scrutinise as appropriate the Authority's HR policies.

To monitor and scrutinise sickness levels, promotion policies and employee exit information.

To receive information and statistics on grievance monitoring and to report outcomes to the Joint Consultative Panel.

To ensure that the Authority is meeting its duties under Health & Safety and environmental and other relevant legislation.

To deal with any matters referred to it by the full Authority, the Policy Planning Forum, the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk, Monitoring Officer or Treasurer, not within its work programme.

To refer any matter for consideration by the Authority, another Committee or an officer where considered appropriate.

To submit its minutes and an Annual Report to the Authority.

In order to allow for separation of the Scrutiny and decision-making functions, findings and recommendations of Scrutiny reviews will be presented to the Authority by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. Members (excluding substitutes) of the Scrutiny Committee shall not vote on matters arising from Scrutiny reviews.

The Committee will sit in public with minimum exceptions. In addition to its programmed meetings, the Committee will hold additional meetings, as and when required, in order to efficiently manage its workload.

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**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Completed</b>
<b>2021</b>			
1 November 2021	Dispute Resolution Report – July 19 to March 20	ACFO Strategic Enabler - People	1 November 2021
	Dispute Resolution Report – April 20 to September 21	ACFO Strategic Enabler – People	1 November 2021
	Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality Update	ACFO Strategic Enabler - People	1 November 2021
	Review of Safeguarding – Update	ACFO Strategic Enabler - People	1 November 2021
	Scrutiny Committee – Reviews	Clerk to the Authority	1 November 2021
	Consideration of Scrutiny Committee Work Programme	Clerk to the Authority / Chair of Scrutiny Committee	1 November 2021

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**2022**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Completed</b>
14 February 2022	Fire Control Performance Report	ACFO Strategic Enabler - People	14 February 2022
	Safe and Well Report	Strategic Lead – Prevention	14 February 2022
	Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2022-23	Democratic Services Officer	14 February 2022
23 May 2022	Safe and Well Report	Strategic Lead – Prevention	23 May 2022
	Dispute Resolution Report	ACFO Strategic Enabler - People	23 May 2022
	Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality Update	ACFO Strategic Enabler - People	23 May 2022
	Fire Control Performance Report	ACFO Strategic Enabler – People	23 May 2022
	Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee	Chair of Scrutiny Committee	23 May 2022
	Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2022-23	Democratic Services Officer	23 May 2022

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November 2021

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To report as appropriate:

- Updates on reviews

Note: separate meetings of any review working group are to be scheduled if and when required

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