Welcome to the quarterly Briefing Paper for quarter 3 of the financial year 2019/20. This paper will give an insight into our performance as a command for the year so far up to and including December 31st 2019.

The teams across Coventry and Solihull have been very busy during this period, attending incidents, exercises and working closely with partners on a range of issues in prevention, protection and response. There have been a number of initiatives carried out to support the vulnerable members of our Community during the Winter period, these will be detailed below.

Whilst it’s been a busy time dealing with a number of incidents, we have still been able to achieve 1435 safe and well checks, along with school visits across all key stages, road safety prevention work and fire safety protection delivery.
West Midlands Fire Service is committed to an average **risk-based** attendance time of **5 minutes**. We know through academic studies on survivability that if we can get to someone within 5 minutes the chances of them surviving a significant incident increases. Throughout October to December we have consistently over performed against our average risk-based attendance time, with the **brigade average being 4 minutes and 46 seconds**; which is really great news.

West Midlands Fire Service is the only Fire & Rescue Service out of all Fire and Rescue Services inspected by HMICFRS to receive **outstanding** for the **response element** of the service.

**Our response priorities focus on dealing excellently with emergency incidents:**

- through risk management, the most serious emergency incidents in high-risk areas will be attended within five minutes, to save life, protect homes and businesses, and keep our transport networks moving
- risk to life and property will be reduced through our commitment to operational excellence, enabling an assertive, effective and safe emergency response to all incidents whilst supporting firefighter safety
- at all incidents attended, rescue operations will be led and coordinated by WMFS whilst working collaboratively with other agencies to deliver an excellent response and meet public expectations
- National Resilience will be enhanced through delivery of a local, national and international response to major incidents, new risks and humanitarian situations through our specialist response teams.

Fire Control are the resource managers for both Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service and receive all the emergency 999 calls for both services.

Between October and December 2019, Fire Control received a total of **15,336** emergency 999 calls; **69%** of these calls were attributed to West Midlands Fire Service and **31%** attributed to Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. Fire Control mobilised to **51%** of these incidents with the other **49%** being challenged as not requiring a resource or deemed a non-emergency.

A key performance measure within Fire Control is the speed in which they mobilise a fire engine to a serious incident e.g. a house fire; impressively throughout October to December 2019, Fire Controls average time to mobilise to a house fire was **54 seconds**.

Fire Control apply dynamic intelligence led mobilisation which provides the control operators the autonomy to mobilise the appropriate number and type of resources to the incident based on the intelligence they receive from members of the public at the point of call. During this quarter, Fire Control have either increased or decreased mobilisations on approximately **600** occasions.
**COVENTRY AND SOLIHULL RESPONSE**

As shown in the Command Overview Performance Indicator (PI) table, there are some areas of focus for us moving into Quarter 4 to improve our performance against some of our key indicators which are currently in exception.

**Accidental dwelling fires**
Last year we saw great success following the implementation of an action plan to address this. We will use a similar approach again to help focus our efforts through our safe and well interventions, focusing our advice on key causal factors of fires in the home. These include safe cooking, and avoiding becoming distracted whilst cooking. We would hope to see improvement in this area quickly.

**Injuries in accidental dwelling fires**
Having analysed this indicator further, it is an area we will be focusing on moving forward. Whilst a number of these injuries were minor, we will seek to continue reducing this through the advice given during safe and well, when working with our vulnerable communities. A number of these injuries were caused as a result of occupants attempting to fight the fire, so we will ensure we reaffirm our advice on this through safe and well visits and through our social media channels.

**False Alarm Equipment**
This is an area we continually monitor and work in collaboration with our Fire Safety Protection teams to work with the responsible person for premises with multiple actuations to improve this. This work will continue throughout Q4 and again I hope to see improvement in this performance indicator.

During our next meeting I will discuss these areas in more detail with Fire Authority Members.

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**FLOODING**

During this period of the year, we have met a number of challenges with regards to flooding both nationally, supporting National Resilience arrangements as well as locally, supporting our Warwickshire colleagues.

Crews from Foleshill and Coventry Fire stations assisted Warwickshire crews to make a rescue from a taxi attempting to drive through flood water.

WMFS crews including our Technical Rescue crews based at Bickenhill Fire Station assisted with national flooding in Doncaster performing rescues and helping pump flood water out of risk areas.

A social media link which has a 1 minute 30 seconds video showing the flood impact and WMFS assistance in greater detail can be found here: [https://twitter.com/WestMidsFire/status/1193912428574265349](https://twitter.com/WestMidsFire/status/1193912428574265349)
Regular training and Brigade wide exercises are utilised to maintain high performance in a variety of incidents. This also includes multi agency training, an example of which was a training session delivered to student paramedics. It was aimed to demonstrate how our procedures operate at an RTC incident and how we can work collaboratively.

**INCIDENTS**

Teams from the command have attended a wide variety of incidents. With multiple rescues in that time from fire and RTC’s. Excellent standards have been shown at some difficult incidents.

Crews from Canley, Binley and Coventry worked assertively to ensure a severe bedroom fire was confined to the room of origin.

Proactive crews at Canley, attended an RTC (overturned car). Not only taking pictures of the vehicle, but also the low tyre tread on tyres to show on social media the importance of checking tyre depth at all times, especially at this time of year where road conditions are often worse.

Another example of good collaborative working with Warwickshire colleagues, was at an incident on the M6 at an RTC, minor injuries only.

**PREPAREDNESS**

West Midlands Fire Service are committed to undertaking 104 large exercises every year, these exercises test our response and procedures to a variety of complex incidents in some of our high risk premises.
Our prevention work focuses on reducing people’s vulnerability to the type of emergencies to which we respond.

Our firefighters carry out thousands of ‘Safe and Well’ visits every year, and our crews give advice on health and wellbeing where it will reduce the risk of a fire. This means vulnerable people are safer in their own homes and we can get them extra help if they need it.

We also provide fire safety education in hundreds of schools and colleges and at our interactive ‘Safeside’ learning centres in Handsworth and Eastside, as well as at public events and through our popular Fire Cadets programme.

Our prevention priorities focus on making safer, healthier communities:

- the number of people killed or seriously injured by fire related incidents will reduce as we focus, with our partners, on reducing the risks faced by the most vulnerable people in our communities
- the safety, health and well-being of the most vulnerable people in our communities will improve by targeting ‘radical prevention’ interventions that are directly linked to vulnerability from fire
- arson-related incidents will fall, supporting safer and stronger communities, as a result of our partnership working
- fewer people will be killed or seriously injured on West Midlands roads and we will keep our transport networks moving, as we work with the West Midlands Combined Authority and other organisations to develop and deliver interventions that support the West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy.
**COVENTRY AND SOLIHULL PREVENTION**

One of our main aims of our prevention strategy is to reduce vulnerability in the home. Along with the previously mentioned 1435 safe and well visits completed in this quarter are:

- 7.7 average risk score

We are always working to improve the above points, as our evidence suggests the partners we do have with an active, productive partnership are where we see WMFS delivering safe and well visits to the most vulnerable risk groups. Some of these current partners include:

- Coventry Mental Health Teams
- Age UK Coventry
- Age UK Solihull

During this time of year, we often see an increase in the number of road traffic collisions due to rain and icy weather conditions alongside shorter hours of daylight. With this in mind, crews have delivered sessions around road safety in a variety of ways. To support this prevention strategy, crews will regularly send out a social media safety message for any incident they have attended, as demonstrated at the RTC featured in the Response section, with a tyre picture and safety information.

**ROAD SAFETY EVENTS**

A road safety event at Coventry University used practical demonstrations as well as virtual reality to show the impacts of any potential RTC. Our road casualty reduction team showcased their road safety programs encouraging any potential user to make the right choices when driving.

Coventry University posted a social media link to a 2 minute video filmed at the event, which can be found here: [https://twitter.com/covcampus/status/1192111904094863360](https://twitter.com/covcampus/status/1192111904094863360).

Foleshill crews delivered road safety messages to young pedestrians as well as drivers at a Junior PCSO course.

**COOKING FIRES AND THE ELDERLY**

We monitor performance using our key performance indicators and use this data to identify trends. We can then work to reduce this by delivering initiatives around that subject or area. For example, the Olton area in Q2 saw a small trend of older people having cooking fires and trying to extinguish as opposed to exit the property. To counter this, Solihull delivered a campaign in Q3 to directly identify and target these key areas, to reduce this trend.

This was shown in "Moving forward" section of the Q2 report. An update on this has seen excellent feedback from residents in Olton, stating they are far more aware of the dangers of fire and have helped us complete safe and well checks with other hard to reach vulnerable residents.
Our protection work focuses on helping businesses to thrive, making the West Midlands stronger.

We assess high-risk buildings including residential high-rises to ensure public safety and provide reassurance about the risks of fire.

We also advise companies how best to comply with fire safety legislation, to keep staff and customers safe.

If fire does strike, we help them to get back up and running as soon as possible. As a large organisation ourselves, we know the importance of business continuity.

Our protection priorities focus on protecting life and property to make businesses stronger and communities safer:

- life and property will be protected by targeting high-risk buildings and vulnerable businesses, including residential high-rises, to ensure compliance and enforcement of fire safety legislation
- improved community safety through implementing outcomes of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety
- improved community safety through innovative and contemporary approaches to the delivery of protection activities and working cohesively with partners at local, regional and national levels to influence the development of new and enabling legislation
- prosperity and economic growth are enhanced by educating and supporting businesses, including collaboration with other regulators and partner agencies
- disruption to businesses, communities and West Midlands Fire Service caused by unwanted fire signals from fire alarms will be reduced.

We continue with our SSRI site risk survey assessments at multiple large commercial premises. Quarter 2 of this year has seen the majority of these completed by all stations at previously unidentified sites. This equates to vital intelligence at a number of large or complex sites to aid firefighter safety through the development of tactical plans in the event of an incident. This will increase the safety of firefighters should we respond there for an incident.

These visits have not only been completed at large commercial sites, but also large complex student blocks prior to opening, giving real planning and insight in the event of any incident.
CHARITY WORK

Solihull Fire Station acted as a delivery hub for donations for homeless support program. Working with numerous charities, for example ‘Sifa Fireside’, ‘Homeless one’ and ‘In their shoes’, the program ran over a 3 week period and then assisted with delivery (some volunteering outside of work hours) to those who needed it.

WINTER WARMTH CAMPAIGN

A multi-agency initiative titled “The winter warmth campaign” was delivered over the Christmas period by Solihull crews. It included Age UK, West Midlands Police, Solihull Community Housing and WMFS. The aim was to target older vulnerable residents who may struggle to get out of their home during the winter period. Agencies would then visit and see what support could be offered. WMFS offered safe and well checks, completing over 40 checks in this time. Using #solihullsafewellandwarm on Twitter, will show the span of activities by all agencies involved.

UPDATE

In Q2 report an exercise titled ‘Trouble in Paradise’ was showcased. This was a large scale multi agency exercise. I am pleased to follow with the update of this exercise winning an award “Resilience and learning from major incidents” at the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards 2019, which took place in London.