

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting Scrutiny and Audit

Date 27 April 2023

Title of Report Performance Report for Quarter 3 2022/23

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Background Papers None

Appendices Appendix 1 – Quarter 3 report

Implications (please tick ✓ and attach to report)

Any implications affecting this report should be noted within the final paragraphs of the report

CORPORATE RISK		LEGAL	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
FINANCIAL		POLITICAL	
HEALTH & SAFETY		OTHER (please specify)	
HUMAN RESOURCES		CORE BRIEF	
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			

PURPOSE OF REPORT To present the results of quarter 3 2022/23 against quarter 3 2021/22 and the projected year end results for 2022/23.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY This report provides the Scrutiny and Audit Panel with a summary of service performance information for quarter 3 2022/23 compared to quarter 3 2021/22 and the projected end of year results for 2022/23.

The report contains information against 21 indicators. Additional information on East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) road traffic collision data is also contained in the report as requested by Members. The report includes additional narrative regarding sickness levels and actions that are being taken to address this issue.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

1. Consider the performance results and progress towards achieving the Service's purpose and commitments as contained in Appendix 1.
 2. Consider the performance results and remedial actions that have been taken to address areas of under performance in the Fire Authority's priority areas.
 3. Note that work is ongoing to develop the new performance report. This will be in place for Quarter 1 2023/24.
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This report compares the performance indicator results of quarter 3 2022/23 with quarter 3 2021/22 and the projected end of year results for 2022/23. The direction of travel column is comparing the Service's performance at the quarter end in the current year against the previous quarter.

2. **MAIN ISSUES**

2.1 **Quarter 3 results**

2.2 Eleven of the 21 indicators are showing an improvement in performance against the same quarter in the previous year, eight are showing a decline and two are the same.

2.3 Of those reporting a decline in performance, four indicators are reporting at least a 10% decline in performance against quarter 3 2021/22. These are:

- (i) Number of Fatalities in primary fires (100% 1 up from 0)
- (ii) Number of Injuries in primary fires (25% 5 up from 4).
- (iii) Number of workplace reported accidents / injuries (27% 42 up from 33)
- (iv) Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) mobilised calls to properties covered by the Regulatory Reform Order that were classified as a primary fire (175% 2.2% up from 0.8%)

2.4 **Additional information relating to the indicators which are reporting more than 10% decline in performance against the same quarter in the previous year.**

2.5 There was one fatality in quarter 3 2022/23 in an accidental dwelling fire.

2.6 There were five people injured in primary fires in quarter 3 2022/23, three of these were in accidental dwelling fires, one was outdoors at an allotment and the cause of fire for the remaining injury was reported as 'not known'. All five casualties attended hospital for their injuries.

2.7 There were 42 workplace reported accidents / injuries in quarter 3 2022/23. The main increase is in the number of vehicle collisions category which has doubled from the previous year from 6 to 12 and the number of near hits which have increased from 4 to 7.

2.8 The percentage of AFA mobilised calls to properties covered by the RRO that were classified as a primary fire has increased to 2.2% against the same quarter in the previous year. The increase is due to the decrease in AFA mobilised calls; in 2021/22 there were 512 and quarter 3 this year 369. The number of these mobilisations that resulted in a primary fire also increased from four to eight.

2.9 The reduction in AFA attended calls is as a result of the changes to the AFA attendance policy at Joint Fire Control whereby calls to AFAs are now not attended at low-risk commercial premises between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

3. PERFORMANCE PRIORITY AREAS

3.1 The Fire Authority priorities as agreed by the Scrutiny and Audit Panel are as follows:

1. Reducing accidental dwelling fires
2. Undertake 10,000 home safety visits of which 95% to be delivered to vulnerable members of our community
3. Reducing sickness
4. Reducing attendance at false alarm calls
5. Increasing inspections in high-risk premises

3.2 Reducing accidental dwelling fires

3.2.1 In quarter 3 2022/23, ESFRS attended 100 accidental dwelling fires (ADFs), this is a decrease of 5 against the same period in the previous year. The projected end of year result for ADFs shows a continued improvement in performance in this area with 407 against 433 in the previous year. The ADF working group continues to proactively engage with our communities and where spikes are seen in specific areas or station grounds with relevant communication campaigns.

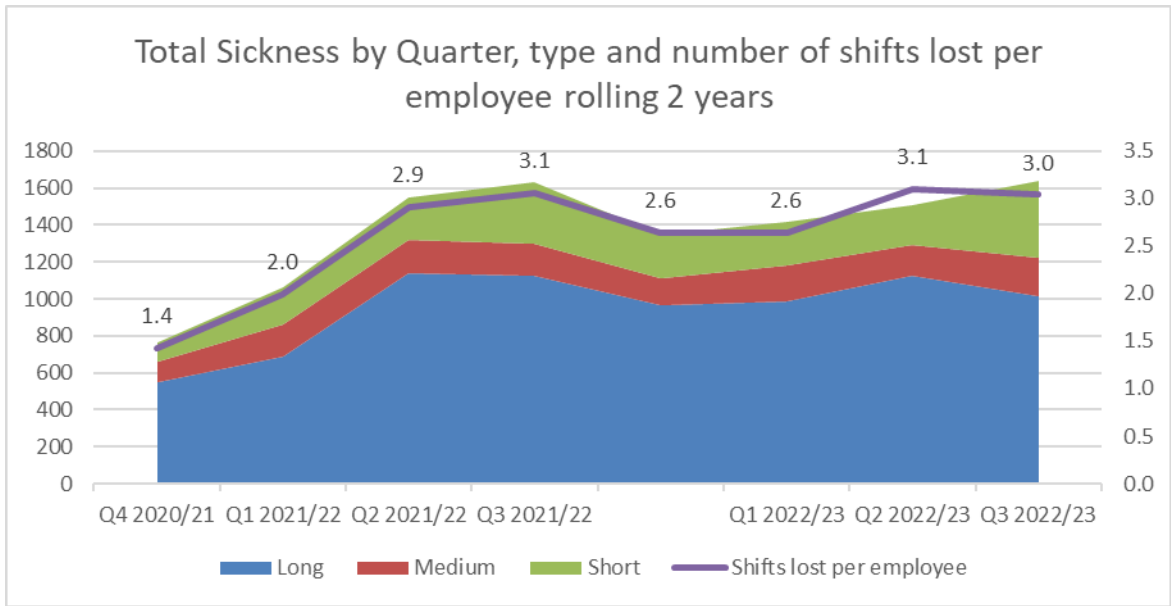
3.3 Undertake 10,000 home safety visits (HSVs) of which 95% to be delivered to vulnerable members of our community

3.3.1 We delivered 2,477 home safety visits in quarter 3 of which 94.2% were to vulnerable people within our community. This is 277 more HSVs than in quarter 3 2021/22. All HSVs up to 18 July 2021 were completed over the phone as COVID-19 restrictions were still in place.

3.4 Reducing the number of absences of our employees due to sickness

3.4.1 Figure 1 shows that in quarter 3 2022/23, ESFRS lost 3.1 shifts per person to sickness (same as in the previous year's quarter 3). The 2022/23 projected end of year result is currently 11.0 shifts, which is above the target of 7.5 and above the 2021/22 end of year result (10.5 shifts lost due to sickness per employee).

Figure 1: Total Sickness



3.4.2 Table 1 shows the shifts lost broken down by absence code due to COVID-19 in Quarter 3 2022/23.

Table 1: COVID related absence for Quarter 2 202/23

Shifts lost Other absence code	No of employees	No of Shifts lost
COVID-19 (medically confirmed)	49	211.2
SELF-ISOLATION (household showing symptoms)	3	9
SELF-ISOLATION (individual showing symptoms)	11	27
SELF-ISOLATION (instructed by ESFRS)	1	3
Total	64	250.2

3.4.3 Figures 2 and 3 contain information on whole-time and logistics control team and support staff sickness split into long term, medium term and short term sickness respectively by quarter for the previous rolling 2 year period.

Figure 2: Whole-time and logistics control team sickness

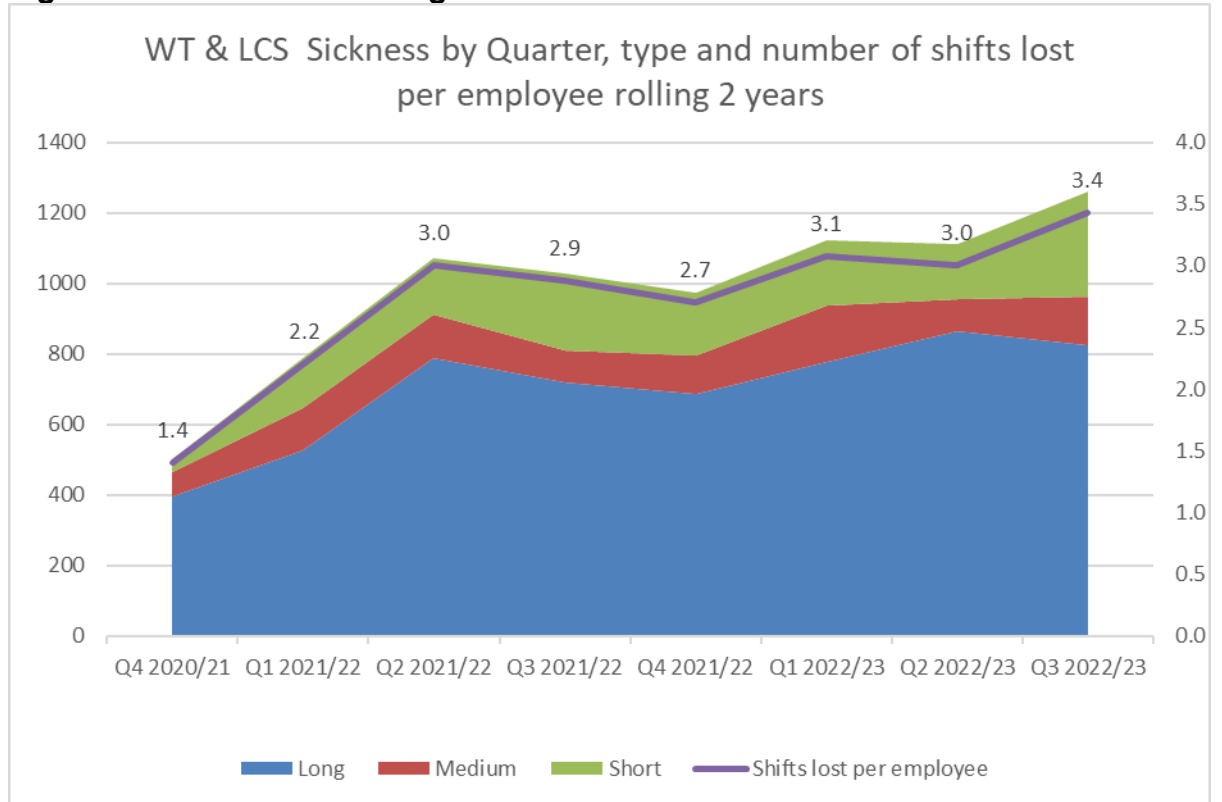
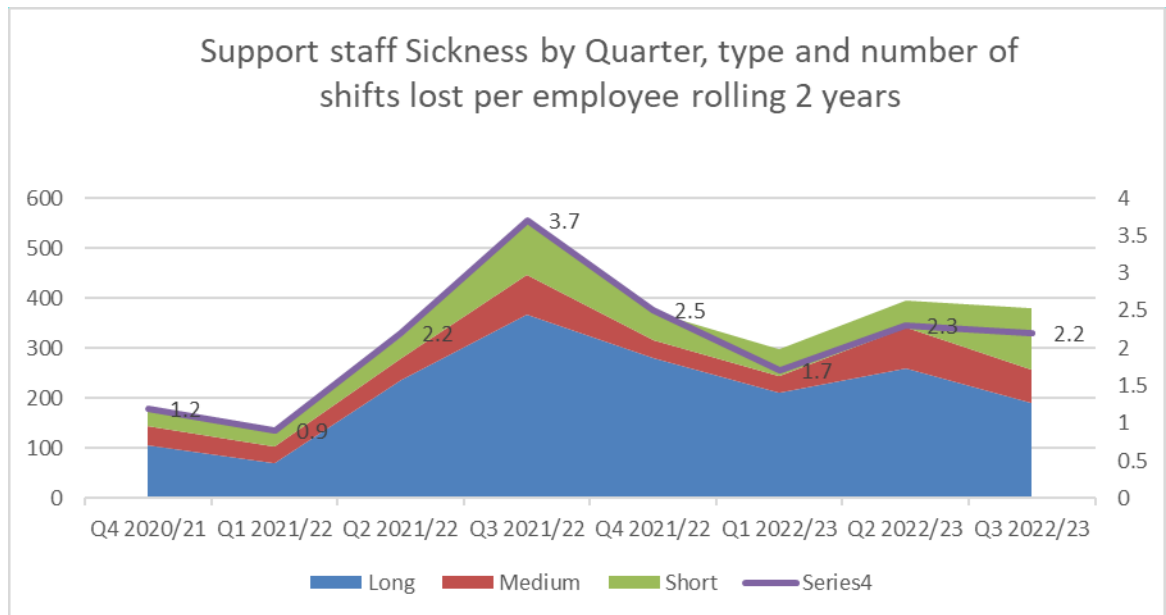


Figure 3: Support Staff Sickness



3.5 Focus on Sickness

3.5.1 As sickness levels continue to be high and significantly above the Service target of 7.5 shifts lost per person (currently project to be 11.0 shifts lost) the HR Strategic Committee and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee have been undertaking a deeper understanding of sickness at ESFRS.

3.5.2 Sickness levels as reported and scrutinised in more depth at the HR Strategic Committee and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee. The main causes of absence fluctuate between staff groups but the two main categories of reported sickness are musculoskeletal related (40% of reported sickness) and mental health related (40% of reported sickness). This situation is affected by the increases in NHS waiting times that staff are experiencing and particularly the lack of availability of support for mental health issues / referrals. The Service has also been affected by a nationwide shortage in physiotherapy provision and this has also affected the Occupational Health Team's ability to recruit staff, leading to further delays for OH appointments for our staff.

3.5.3 It is suspected that the ageing workforce is now starting to impact sickness levels. However, as the majority of the Service's operational workforce can still retire aged 50-55 the impact may become much more significant in future years when the retirement age of operational staff is 60. The Service has also seen an increase in complex cases, whereby people are presenting with multiple or simultaneous issues.

3.5.4 Actions to improve sickness levels were discussed at the HR Strategic Committee and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee in January 2023 as follows:

- The HR team have regular meetings with the Occupational Health team to ensure patterns and emerging trends are realised and acted upon.
- The Service has moved to a new provider for physiotherapy and will monitor and evaluate the impact of this.
- The Occupational Health collaboration has been recruiting and interviews are currently underway to recruit to all vacancies.
- The Wellbeing hub on the staff intranet continues to be developed.
- The Service has invested in mental health first aiders and wellbeing champions with more to be trained in the near future.
- There has been a renewed provision of manual handling training to reduce the number of injuries.
- There are quarterly complex case meetings to address and support individuals affected.
- The Service HR process has been audited by Internal Audit and a draft report has just been circulated.
- The Service is investigating utilising Benenden Health care to support our staff. Other Services who use this model have said it is difficult to make direct links to savings, but they have fewer people off sick and / or staff returning to work more quickly which will result in fewer shifts having to be covered.

3.6 **Reducing attendance at false alarms**

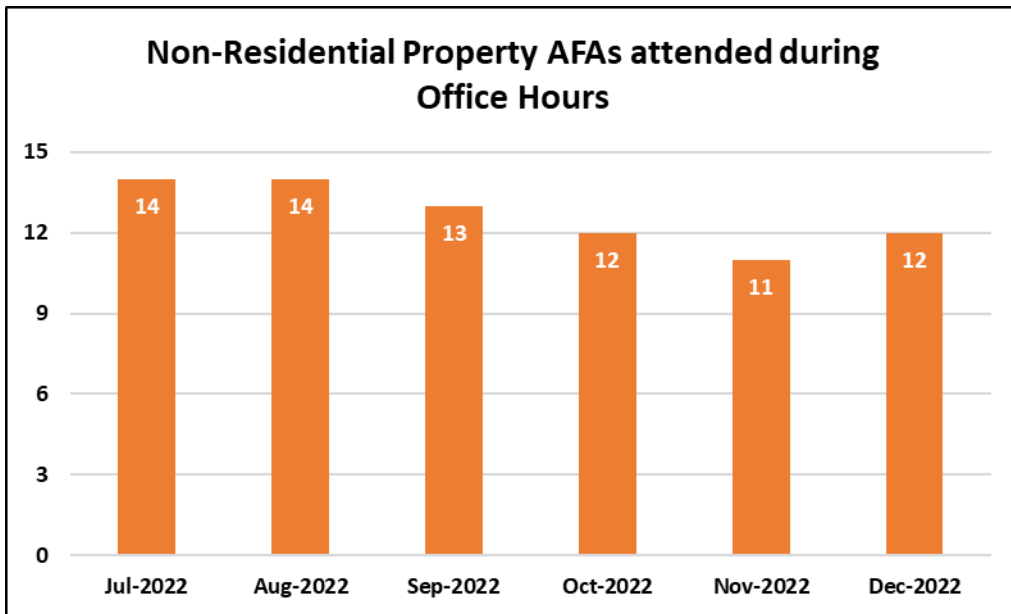
3.6.1 Our performance against false alarm calls attended in quarter 3 2022/23 has improved compared to quarter 3 in 2021/22. There is a 25.9% reduction against the baseline figure this quarter opposed to a 17.1% reduction the previous year. To understand this in terms of the reduction in attended false alarm calls 803 were attended in the current year quarter and 905 in the previous year.

3.6.2 On 1 April 2022 ESFRS introduced the unwanted fire signal policy at Joint Fire Control. Calls to specific non-domestic property types are now challenged if a call

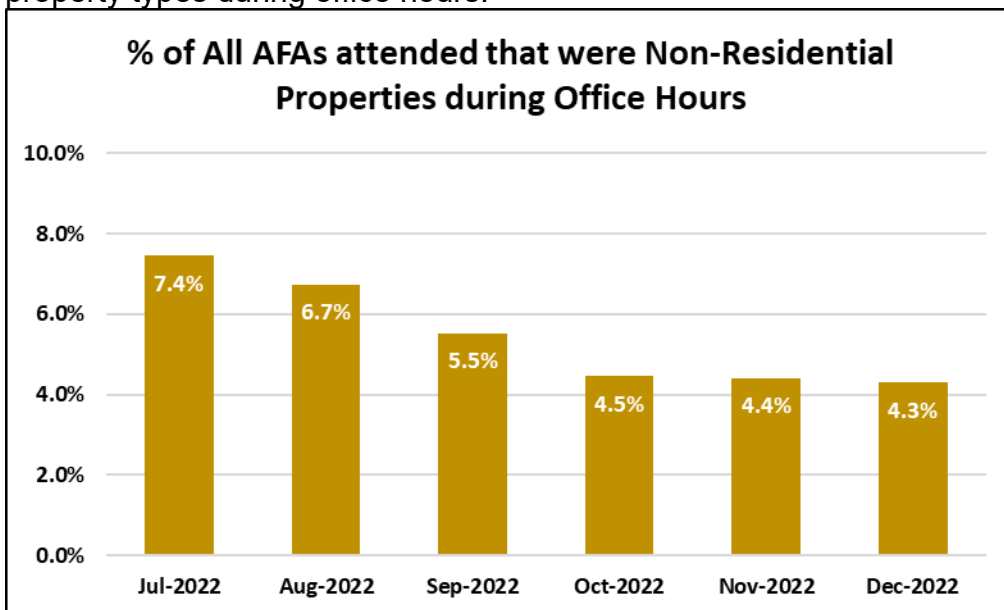
comes in from an Automatic Fire Alarm between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

3.6.3 The way this is monitored is by counting the number of calls in non-residential property AFA calls attended during the time period post go live of the unwanted fire signal policy.

3.6.4 Chart 1 shows the number of Non-residential Property Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) attended during Office hours.



3.6.5 Chart 2 shows the percentage of all AFAs attended that were in Non-residential property types during office hours.



3.7 Inspections of high risk premises completed

3.7.1 In quarter 3 there has been a decrease in the number of inspections of high risk premises compared to previous year. In quarter 3 2022/23 149 face to face high risk inspections were completed against 165 over the telephone and face to face post 19 July in 2021/22. The projected year end result is 539.

3.7.2 Table 2 below shows the breakdown of these other interactions that were completed during quarter 3 in 2022/23, in which there were 749. The majority of these were undertaken over the telephone. This compares to 608 in quarter 2 in 2021/22.

Table 2: Breakdown of Business safety interactions for Quarter 3 2022/23

Interaction	Total
Building Regulations	188
Explosives, Registered	5
Housing	4
Licensing	58
Marriage Act	13
Other Consultation	1
Other FS Activity	491
Planning	45
Grand Total	805

3.7.3 Operational crews also completed 315 face to face business safety visits this is a decrease from the 338 in 2021/22. The projected year end result is 1,618.

4. ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION DATA

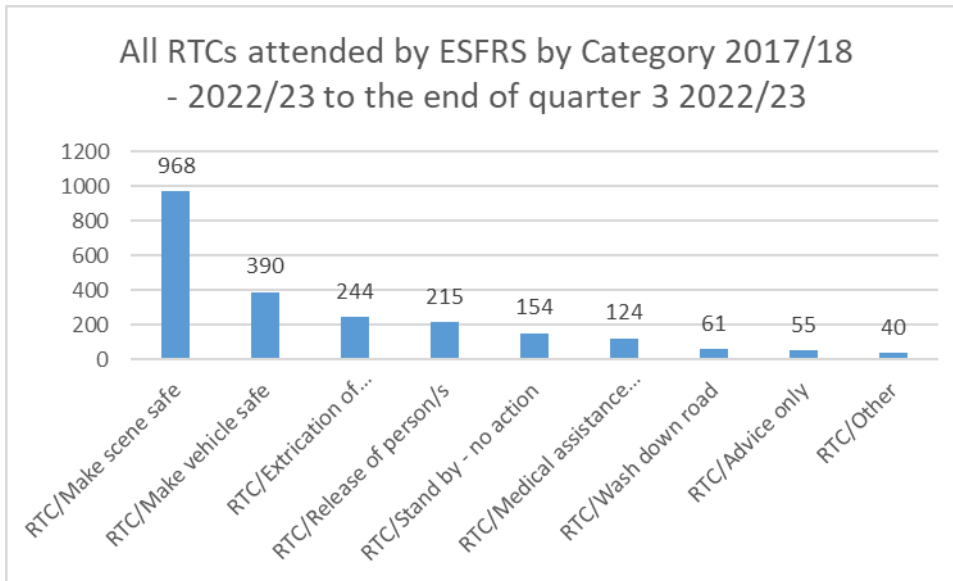
4.1 The following section contains information from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) and internal data. ESFRS attend on average 18% of RTCs attended by Sussex Police. Sussex Police only report RTCs where a casualty is involved, whereas ESFRS RTCs, for example include 'Making the scene safe' and 'Making the vehicle safe'. Table 3 shows that the drop in RTCs attended by both Sussex Police and ESFRS during the COVID pandemic period is now returning to slightly higher levels, albeit not the same heights as 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Table 3: Number of ESFRS attended RTCs in the past 5 years against the numbers of RTCs with casualties attended by Sussex Police in East Sussex

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Projected 22/23
RTC ESFRS total attended	506	518	443	319	404	450
East Sussex all RTCs	2,534	2,574	2,539	1,788	2,266	N/a
% of RTCs attended by ESFRS	20%	20%	17%	18%	18%	

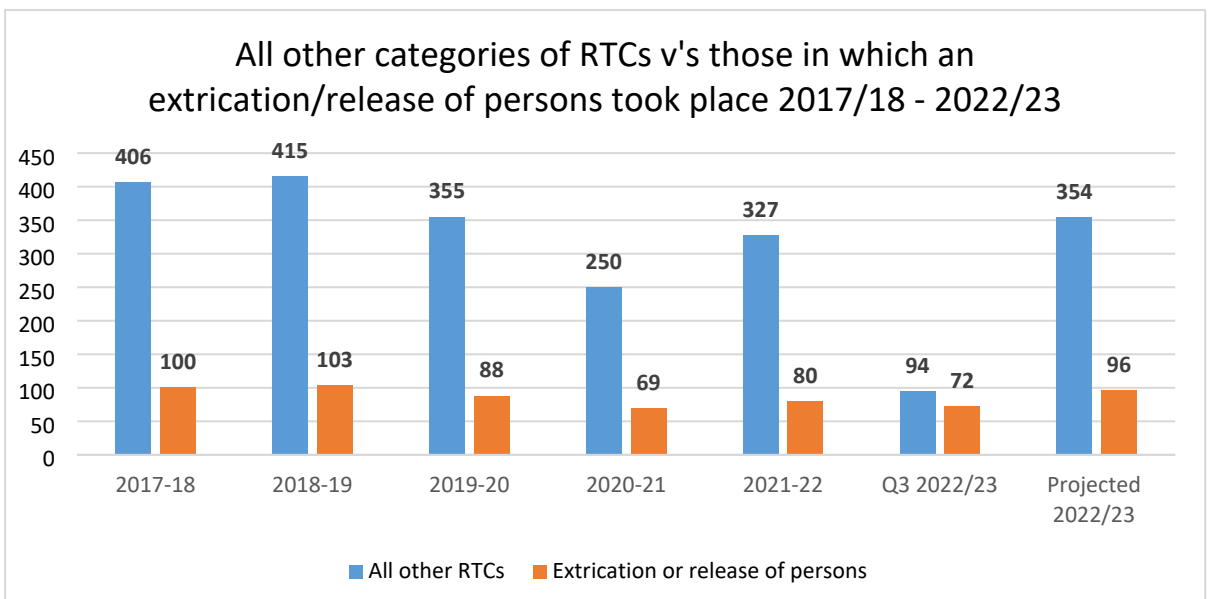
4.2 Chart 3 below shows the number of RTCs attended over a five year period by type to the end of quarter 3 2022/23. The largest category ESFRS is called to is 'making the scene safe' with 847. The total number where we have extricated and or released people is 968 over the period.

Chart 3: All RTCs attended by ESFRS by Category 2017/18 to the end of Quarter 3 2022/23



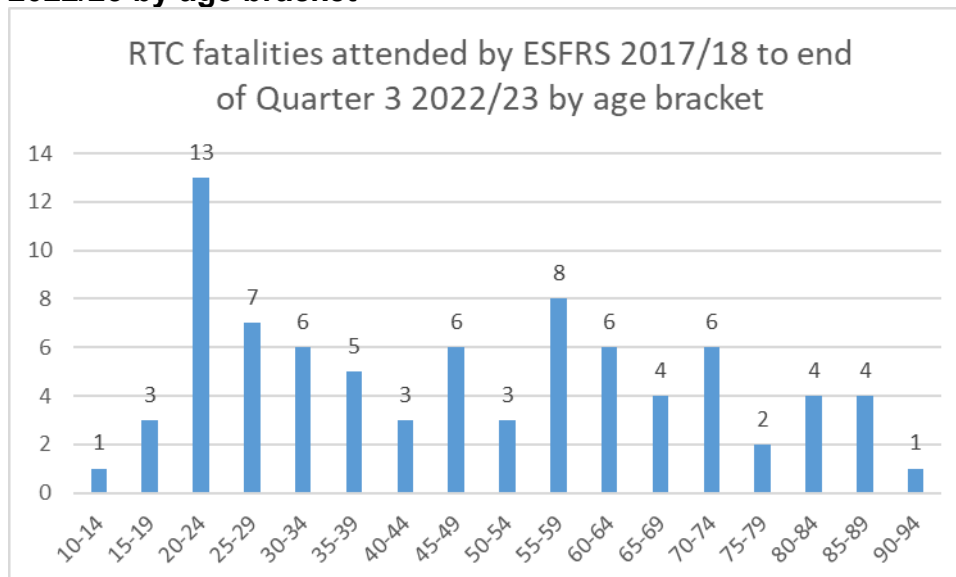
4.3 Chart 4 contains information on the number of RTCs attended against those in which an extrication or a release of persons took place. Both categories are showing a decreasing trend over the entire reported period. Until the current year which is showing an increase. This chart includes a projected end of year result for 2022/23 based on current quarter 3 figures. As with all RTC data, it is important to recognise the impact that lockdowns and other restrictions due to COVID 19 have affected recent data.

Chart 4: All RTCs attended by ESFRS v's those in which an extrication/release of persons took place.



4.4 Chart 5 shows the age range of the fatalities in RTCs attended by ESFRS over the five year period to end of quarter 3 2022/23. (NB If the age is not known these incidents have been excluded this accounts for a further 33 fatalities. Please also note that collisions where Sussex Police have not yet finished their investigations are not shown. While this can apply to the whole time period covered, it is particularly relevant to those collisions that occurred in the most recent months.)

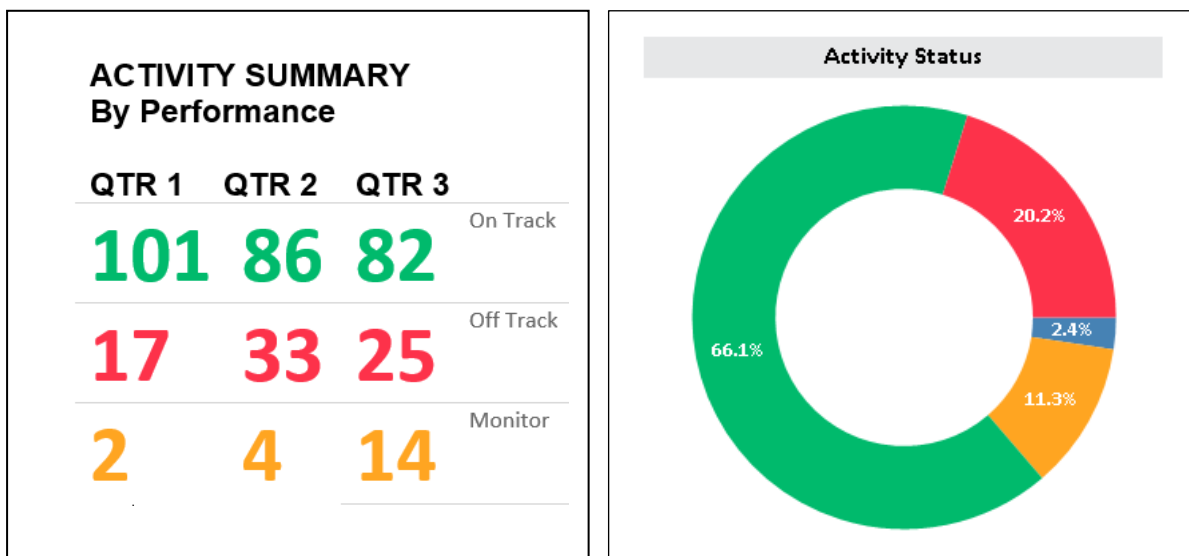
Chart 5: RTC Fatalities attended by ESFRS 2017/18 (5 years) to end of Quarter 3 2022/23 by age bracket



5. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AGAINST THE CORPORATE STRATEGIES

5.1 The Corporate Strategies are monitored at the Assurance Performance and Governance Group. Each strategy has an annual action plan containing actions that are assigned to a responsible owner who must give an update on progress. There are currently 120 agreed corporate activities to progress the Service's strategies in 2022/23. A detailed report is presented with commentary against the actions to the Assurance Performance and Governance Group. Figure 4 shows the summary of progress against the Corporate Strategies.

5.2 **Figure 4: Summary of Corporate activity progress at the end of Quarter 3 2022/23**



6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This report is for information purposes only, so there are no equality implications arising from this report.