

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting Scrutiny and Audit Panel

Date 20 July 2023

Title of Report Performance Report for Quarter 4 2022/23

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Background Papers None

Appendices Appendix 1 – Quarter 4 report

Implications (please tick ✓ and attach to 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 4 2022/23 and the year end results for 2022/23 against the previous year's results for the repectective periods.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, considered by the Assurance Performance and Governance Group (APGG) at its May meeting and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at its June meeting, provides the Scrutiny and Audit Panel with a summary of service performance information for quarter 4 2022/23 compared to quarter 4 2021/22 and the end of year results for 2022/23 against 2021/22.

The year end results for 2022/23 demonstrate an improvement of performance across a number of areas with 12 indicators showing an improvement in performance against the previous year and nine are showing a decline.

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.
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Assurance Performance and Governance Group, at its May meeting and the Senior Leadership Team at its June meeting, considered the performance indicator results of quarter 4 and the end of year results for 2022/23 against previous year's performance. This report contains the observations of those meetings in relation to service performance.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 The quarter four and end of year report for 2022/23 provides the Panel with a view of performance against the previous year. The year end results for 2022/23 demonstrate an improvement of performance across a number of areas with 12 indicators showing an improvement against the previous year and nine are showing a decline.
- 2.2 The quarter results present a different picture when directly compared, the decline in performance in certain measures is because in previous years there has been a considerable effort in the last quarter to achieve the targets set in home safety visits, business safety audits undertaken by crews and fire safety audits. Therefore, when comparing the quarter on quarter performance the direction of travel in terms of those indicators that have 'declined' is based on absolute figures and it should be noted that performance has been proactively managed throughout the year resulting in the 'spike' seen in previous years not happening in 2022/23.

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 Priority 1 - Reducing accidental dwelling fires

- 3.2.1 In quarter 4 2022/23, ESFRS attended 105 accidental dwelling fires (ADFs), this is a decrease of 23 against the same period in the previous year. The end of year result for ADFs shows a continued improvement in performance in this area with 412 against 433 in the previous year. This is the lowest number of ADFs ever attended by ESFRS.

3.3 Priority 2 - Undertake 10,000 home safety visits (HSVs) of which 95% to be delivered to vulnerable members of our community

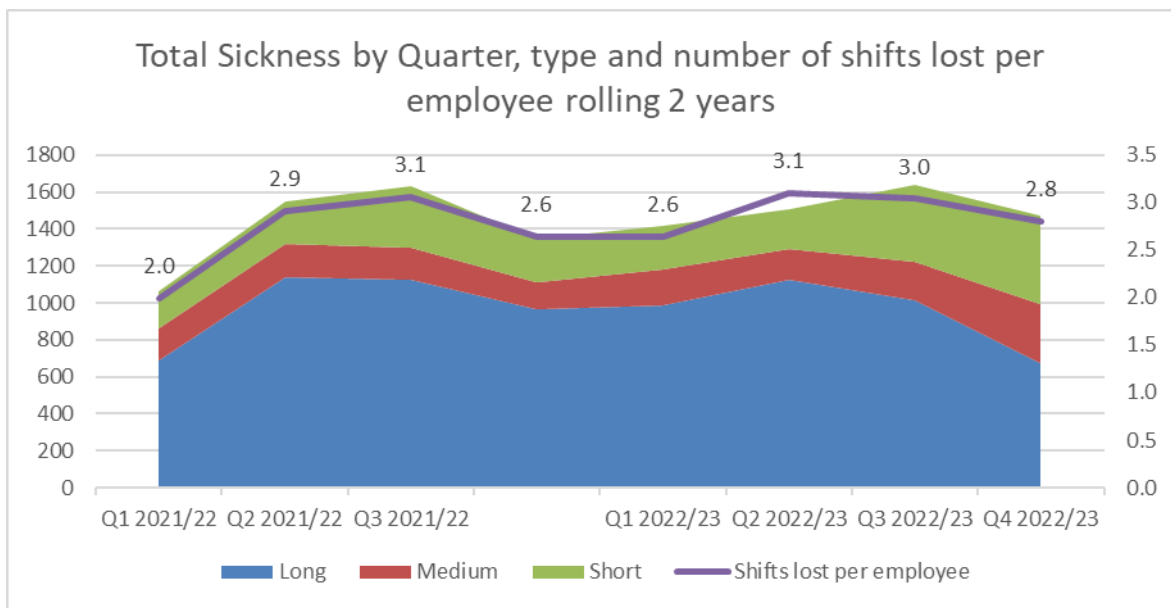
- 3.3.1 We delivered 2,295 home safety visits in quarter 4 of which 95.5% were to vulnerable people within our community. Although this is lower than the number in quarter 4 of the previous year, the year end result is significantly higher with 10,303 being completed; which is 842 more than in 2021/22 and also exceeds the Service

target of 10,000.

3.4 Priority 3 - Reducing the number of absences of our employees due to sickness

3.4.1 Figure 1 shows that in quarter 4 2022/23, ESFRS lost 2.8 shifts per person to sickness (2.6 in the previous year's quarter 4). The 2022/23 year end result is 10.2 shifts lost per person, which is above the target of 7.5 but slightly below 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 4 2022/23.

Table 1: COVID related absence for Quarter 4 2022/23

Shifts lost Other absence code	No of employees	No of Shifts lost
COVID-19 (medically confirmed)	13	47
SELF-ISOLATION (instructed by ESFRS)	2	3.5
Total	15	50.5

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

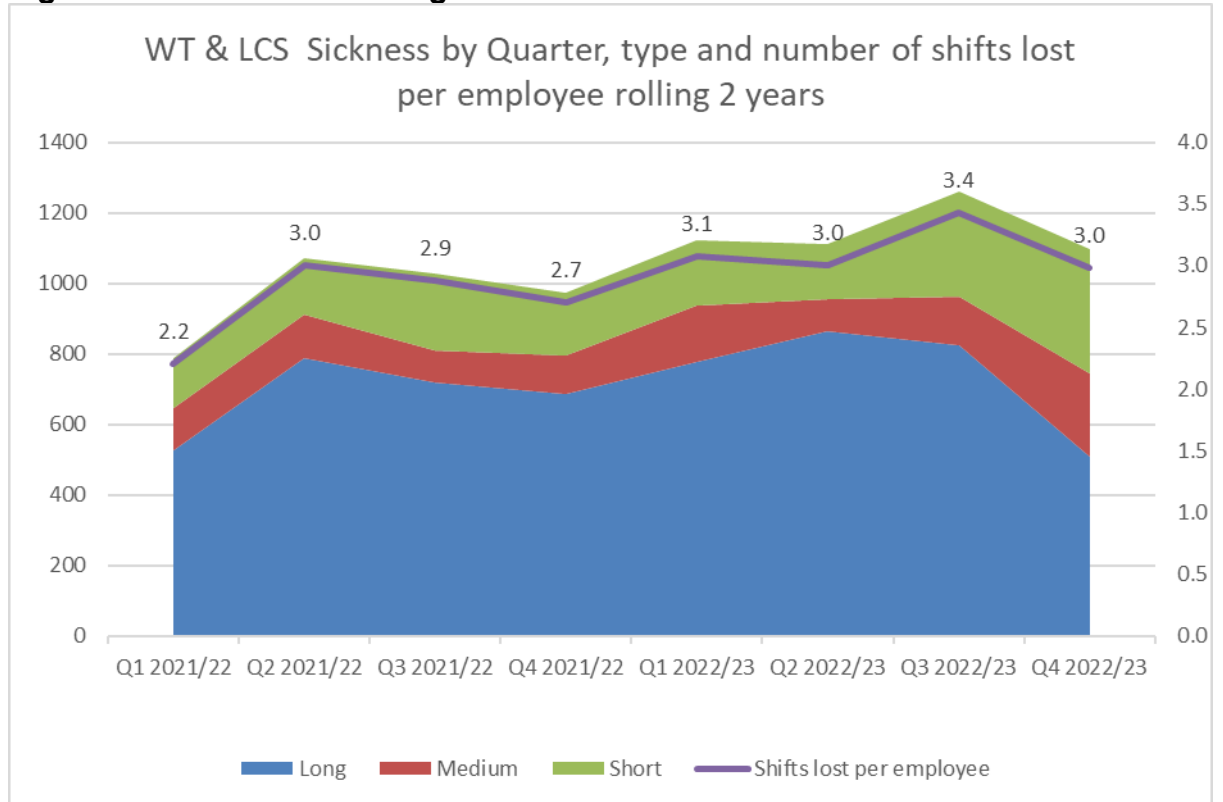
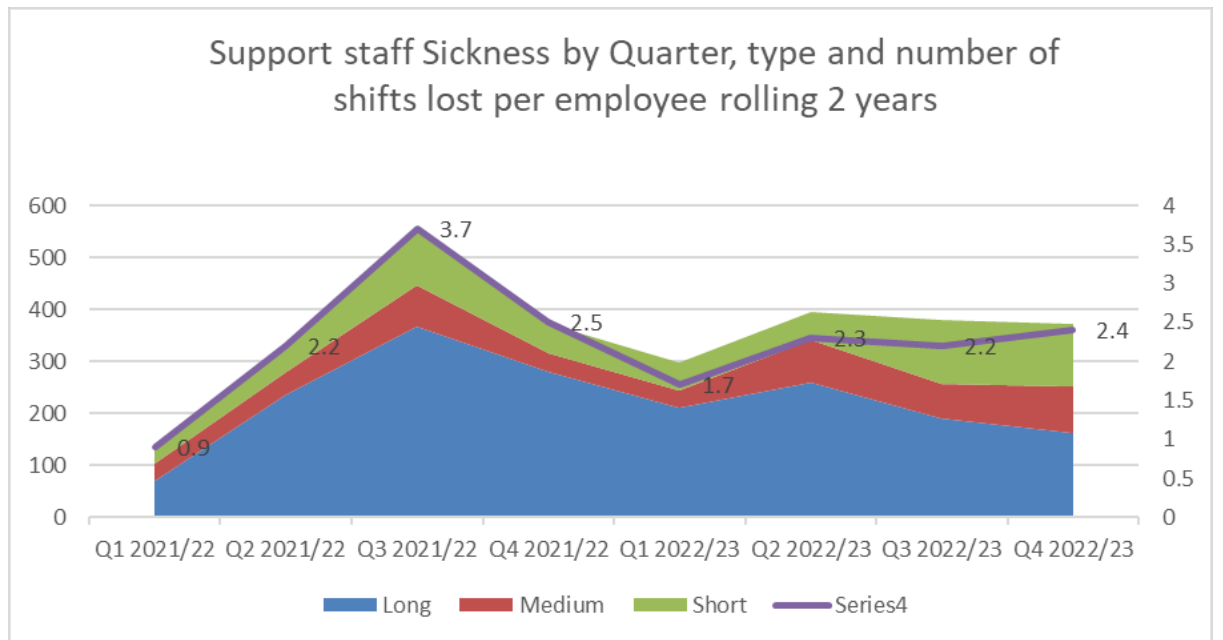


Figure 3: Support Staff Sickness



3.4.5 As previously reported, the Service has continued to focus on sickness absence with the HR Strategic Committee and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee undertaking a deeper review of sickness at ESFRS. The cause of absence still fluctuates 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 continues to be 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.

3.4.6 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.

3.4.7 Actions to improve sickness levels continue 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 Service has invested in mental health first aiders (MHFAs) with a recent training course finished and the launch of the new MHFAs to take place soon.
- 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.
- A report to consider a pilot of the Benenden Health care scheme to support our staff was approved at May SLT.

3.5 Priority 4 - Reducing attendance at false alarms

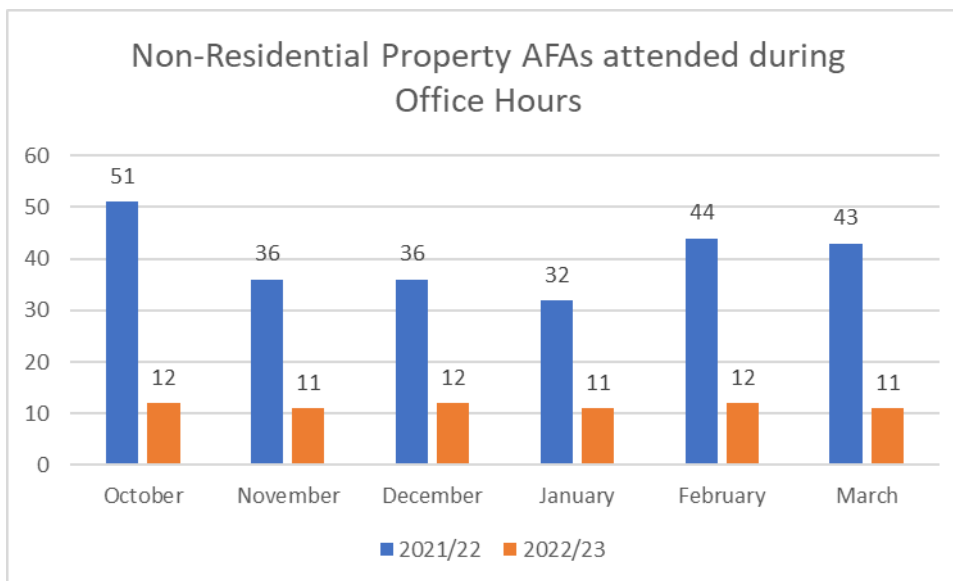
3.5.1 The year end result shows an improving performance with a 31.8% reduction against the baseline for 2022/23, an improvement over the 2021/22 result which was 26.4%

3.5.2 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.

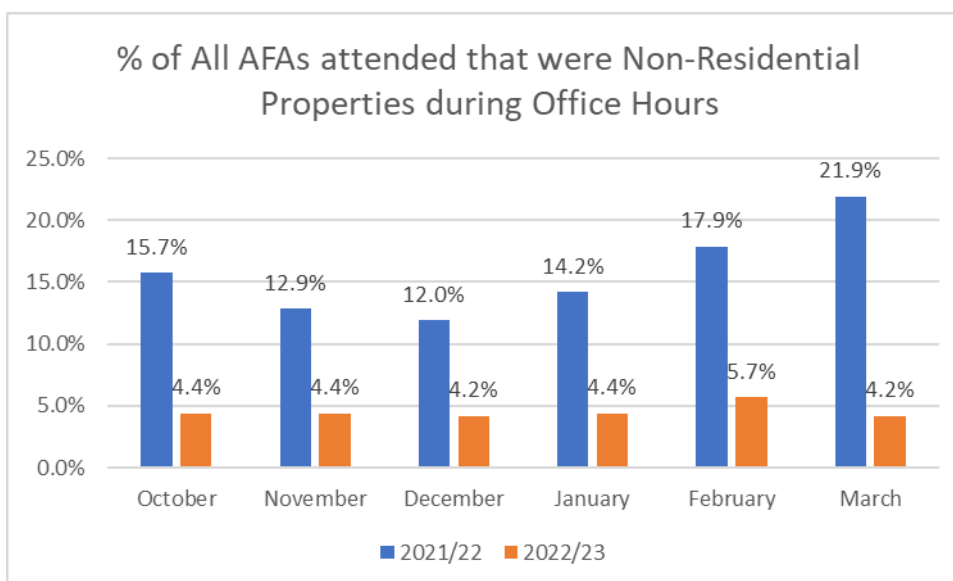
3.5.3 The results of this policy change were closely monitored during quarters 1 to 3 2022/23. In January 2023 a further paper was presented to the Policy and Resource Panel to consider no longer attending fire alarms operating in low risk commercial properties. This was agreed and a task force has been established and is in progress.

3.5.4 The indicator 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. The following charts show the number attendended prior to the policy change and the number attended now.

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



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



3.6 Priority 5 - Inspections of high risk premises completed

3.6.1 In quarter 4 there has been a decrease in the number of inspections of high risk premises compared to previous year. In quarter 4 2022/23 76 face to face high risk inspections were completed against 128. However the year end result shows an improvement in performance with 506 being completed in 2022/23 against 470 in 2021/22.

3.6.2 Table 2 below shows the breakdown of these other interactions that were completed during quarter 4 in 2022/23, in which there were 829. This compares to 766 in quarter 4 in 2021/22.

Table 2: Breakdown of Business safety interactions for Quarter 4 2022/23

Interaction	Total
Building Regulations	205
Housing	5
Licensing	86
Marriage Act	8
Other Consultation	1
Other FS Activity	493
Planning	31
Grand Total	829

3.6.3 Operational crews completed 208 business safety visits, a decrease from the 428 in quarter 4 2021/22. However, the year end result of 1,523 shows an increase in visits by the end of 2022/23 and shows a marked improvement on the previous year when 995 were undertaken.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATING TO THE INDICATORS WHICH ARE REPORTING MORE THAN 10% DECLINE IN PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE YEAR END RESULTS IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

4.1 Twelve of the 21 indicators are showing an improvement in performance against the previous year and nine are showing a decline.

4.2 Of those reporting a decline in performance, five indicators are reporting at least a 10% decline in performance against 2021/22. These are:

- (i) Number of injuries in primary fires (108% 27 up from 13)
- (ii) Number of Industrial and Commercial fires (10% 125 up from 114)
- (iii) Number of RIDDOR incidents (60% 8 up from 5)
- (iv) Number of workplace reported accidents / injuries (30% 194 up from 149)
- (v) Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) mobilised calls to properties covered by the Regulatory Reform Order that were classified as a primary fire (130% 2.3% up from 1.0%)

4.3 There were 27 people injured in primary fires during 2022/23, 22 of these were in accidental dwelling fires, one was a deliberate dwelling fire, one was outdoors at an allotment, one was a deliberate fire in a prison, one in a residential care home and one was in a car fire. All of these casualties attended hospital for their injuries; in nine of these causes the injuries were recorded as serious and the remaining 18 were slight injuries. Upon analysis there is no real pattern in the number of injuries as it can be imputed by something as simple as the number of people in the household at the time of the fire.

4.4 The number of industrial and commercial fires has risen by 10%, this equates to an extra 9 fires against the previous year. This is attributed to the national Covid lockdown period which was still in place until 19th July 2021 where we saw a reduction in fires.

4.5 There were 194 workplace reported accidents / injuries in 2022/23. The main increase is in the number of incidents where work time was lost which has increased

from the previous year from 13 to 25. The number of vehicle collisions category has also increases from 47 to 53 and this includes 9 third party incidents where we were not at fault and the number of manual handling incidents has increased from 27 to 34. However, when comparing manual handling figures, with the previous four years data this a consistent number. The average of the four year period is 31. We will continue to ensure that manual handling training is reviewed and kept up to date and will continue to monitor any trends at the Operations Committee, Workplace Safety Reps and the Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee. The Service has a positive workplace safety event reporting culture to assist the identification of trends so that mitigations can be put in place.

4.6 The percentage of AFA mobilised calls to properties covered by the RRO that were classified as a primary fire has increased to 2.3% against the previous year. The increase is due to the decrease in AFA mobilised calls; in 2021/22 there were 1,693 and this year 1,384. The number of these mobilisations that resulted in a primary fire also increased from 17 to 32. 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.

5. ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION DATA

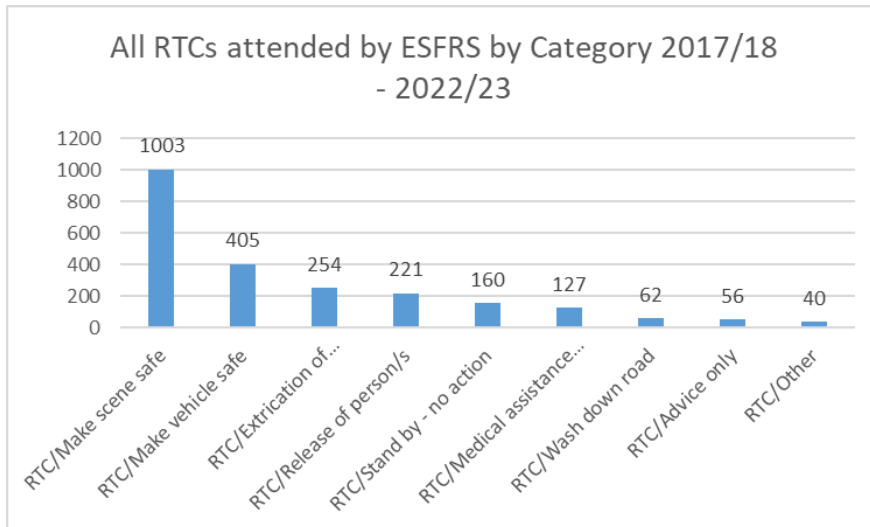
5.1 The following section contains information from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) and internal data. ESFRS attend on average 18% of RTCs attended by Sussex Police. Sussex Police only report RTCs where a casualty is involved, whereas ESFRS RTCs, for example include 'Making the scene safe' 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	2022/23
RTC ESFRS total attended	506	518	443	319	404	419
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%	

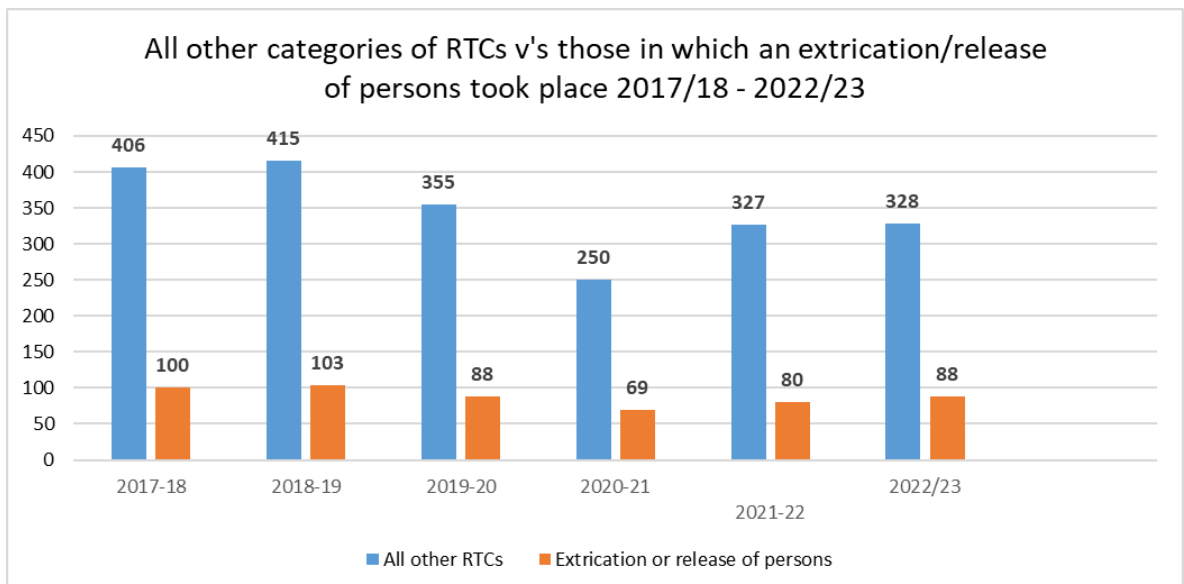
5.2 Chart 3 below shows the number of RTCs attended over a five year period by type to the end of 2022/23. The largest category ESFRS is called to is 'making the scene safe' with 1,003. The total number where we have extricated and or released people is 475 over the period.

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



5.3 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. 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 sets.

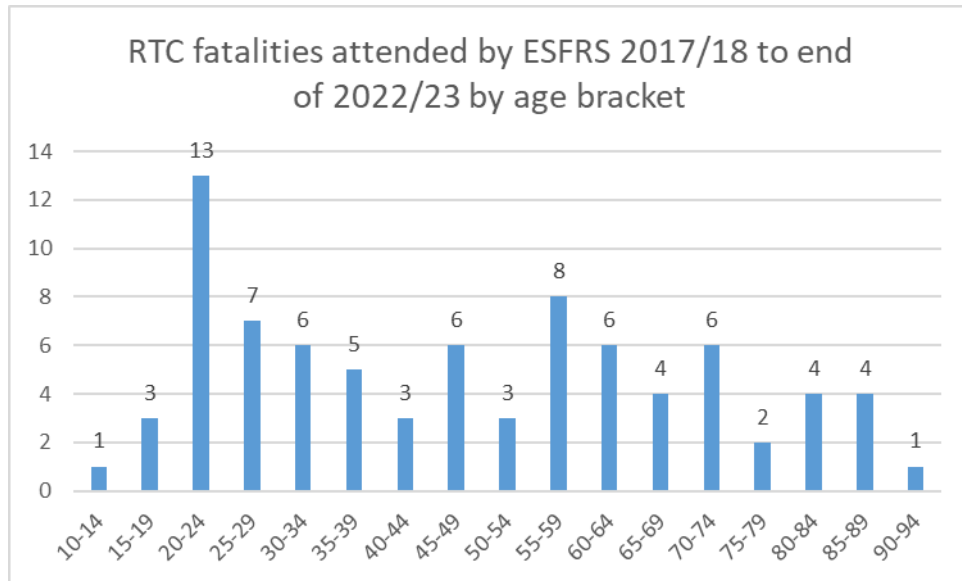
Chart 4: All RTCs attended by ESFRS v's those in which an extrication/release of persons took place



5.4 Chart 5 shows the age range of the fatalities in RTCs attended by ESFRS over the five year period to end of quarter 4 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 4 2022/23 by age bracket



6. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AGAINST THE CORPORATE STRATEGIES

6.1 The Corporate Strategies monitoring report is considered 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 were 124 agreed corporate activities to progress the Service’s strategies in 2022/23. A detailed report is presented with commentary against the actions to the APGG. Figure 4 shows the summary of progress against the Corporate Strategies.

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

