MERSEYSIDE
FIRE & RESCUE
SERVICE

Annual Health, Safety and Welfare Report 2025-2026

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Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Health, Safety & Welfare (HS&W) report for the period of 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. This report provides detailed data of the Health, Safety & Welfare performance of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MFRS) against its pre-determined Local Performance Indicators (LPI's).

This report ensures that the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) are informed of the current HS&W performance and provides assurance that the Service complies with its corporate policy, legal obligations and overall HS&W performance requirements.

This report has been prepared using data from the Authority's HS&W Management System, 'OSHENS', and data from the Business Intelligence Department. The data is presented in detailed charts/ graphs and covers LPI's, which are either performance led or are monitoring only.

LPI figures are set by the H&S Manager on behalf of the Authority and in line with the MFRS Service Plan. The figures are drawn from empirical data / statistics and are approved and governed through the Performance Management Group (PMG). LPI's are reviewed annually, and targets may be reduced or increased based on this governance to ensure they remain in line with our risk profile.

"MFRA, the Chief Fire Officer, and the Strategic Leadership Team, through visible leadership, ensure that Health, Safety and Welfare is a priority."

MFRS Health, Safety & Welfare Management Arrangements

MFRA and the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) are fully committed to ensuring the Health Safety and Welfare of all MFRS employees and the communities MFRS serve to deliver Our Purpose 'Here to serve. Here to protect. Here to keep you safe'.

The Authority achieves this by ensuring that duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 are met, in order to prevent injury or illness to employees, contractors and members of the public who may be affected by MFRS work activities.

MFRA are fully committed to compliance with all relevant Health and Safety legislation, Statute, Regulations, Directives and Approved Codes of Practice and regard compliance as the basic minimum standard. MFRA recognise that a 'positive safety culture' in the workplace only exists when Health and Safety is understood and accepted as a high priority.

MFRA and CFO are responsible for ensuring that the HS&W policy is implemented and that responsibilities are assigned, accepted and fulfilled at all levels within MFRS and provide a clear direction for the Service Management Team to establish polices and procedures and manage Health and Safety performance effectivity.

The MFRA, CFO and the Strategic Leadership Team, through visible leadership, ensure that Health, Safety and Welfare is a priority and, in doing so, encourage shared beliefs, practices, values and attitudes within the organisation to promote a positive safety culture.

Whilst individual members of staff, supervisors and managers all have responsibility for health and safety, the Health and Safety Department provides competent professional advice and oversees the day-to-day management of health, safety and wellbeing activities.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) maintains overall responsibility for MFRS Health and Safety Management on behalf of the CFO. The H&S Manager and the Occupational Health (OH) Manager are responsible for the day-to-day management of HS&W on behalf of the MFRA and the CFO.

Working with Representative Bodies

During the year we have continued to enjoy a positive working relationship with the Representative Bodies on health and safety issues. The Service consults formally on a regular basis, working together to ensure safety, health and wellbeing concerns are resolved. Safety Representatives play a vital role in improving our health and safety culture whilst reducing our impacts on the environment.

The Health and Safety Committee is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, attended by safety representatives from the following representative bodies:

- Fire Brigades Union (FBU)
- UNISON
- Fire Officers Association (FOA)

The committee meeting allows each organisation to raise issues relating to health, safety and wellbeing with senior management in the Service.

The Service ensures that we have arrangements in place to meet all aspects of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.

Controlling Risk within MFRS

The varied nature of the Service's work activities and working environments means that there is a broad range of risks to manage, sometimes in challenging high hazard environments. The level of risk to both employees and service users can be identified from several of the Service's performance measures including the:

- Total number of accidents reported by employees and non-MFRS staff.
- Number of safety events reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the RIDDOR regulations.
- Number of near miss events reported.
- Number of absence days lost following an accident at work.
- Type of events that are being reported.

The H&S Policy and the wider Management System are devised to promote safe systems of work and minimise the risk of injury to employees and visitors. The H&S Department develops bespoke and proportionate procedures for MFRS, minimising 'red tape' and focusing on controlling the real risks in MFRS workplaces. Managers, through devolved health and safety responsibilities, ensure that recognised safe systems of work are being applied 'as far as is reasonably practicable'.

To ensure that the Service continues to meet its legal obligations in respect of heath and safety we ensure that all policies, procedures, instructions and guidance are regularly reviewed and updated. We ensure that we are aware of any developments relating to legislation and guidance which impacts on workplace health and safety. H&S training is refreshed, a minimum every three years together with any specific training required by role.

Performance is reviewed on a regular basis, through high level scrutiny via the H&S Committee, Workplace Review Group and Road Risk Review Group.

Health and Safety Performance

Workplace

Workplace performance monitors accidents and injuries across the Service and is measured through six key Local Performance Indicators (LPIs). Of these, four are subject to performance management against established targets, while the remaining two are monitored to identify trends, emerging risks, and opportunities for improvement.

Governance of workplace health and safety performance is provided through the Workplace Review Group (WPRG), which comprises representatives from a range of departments to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to risk management and organisational learning.
The four performance-managed LPIs focus on the following key areas:

LPI Performance

- Number of operational staff injuries on-duty **(LPI WR13)**
- No. of operational staff injuries at incidents **(LPI WR33)**
- No. of operational staff injuries at risk critical training **(LPI WR34)**
- No. of operational staff injuries conducting other routine activities **(LPI WR22)**

LPI Monitoring

- Number of non-operational staff injuries on-duty **(LPI WR32)**
- Reporting of the levels of Near Miss reports recorded by the Service **(LPI WR31)**

Together, these indicators provide a comprehensive overview of workplace safety performance and support the Service in identifying trends, targeting interventions, and promoting continuous improvement in health and safety standards.

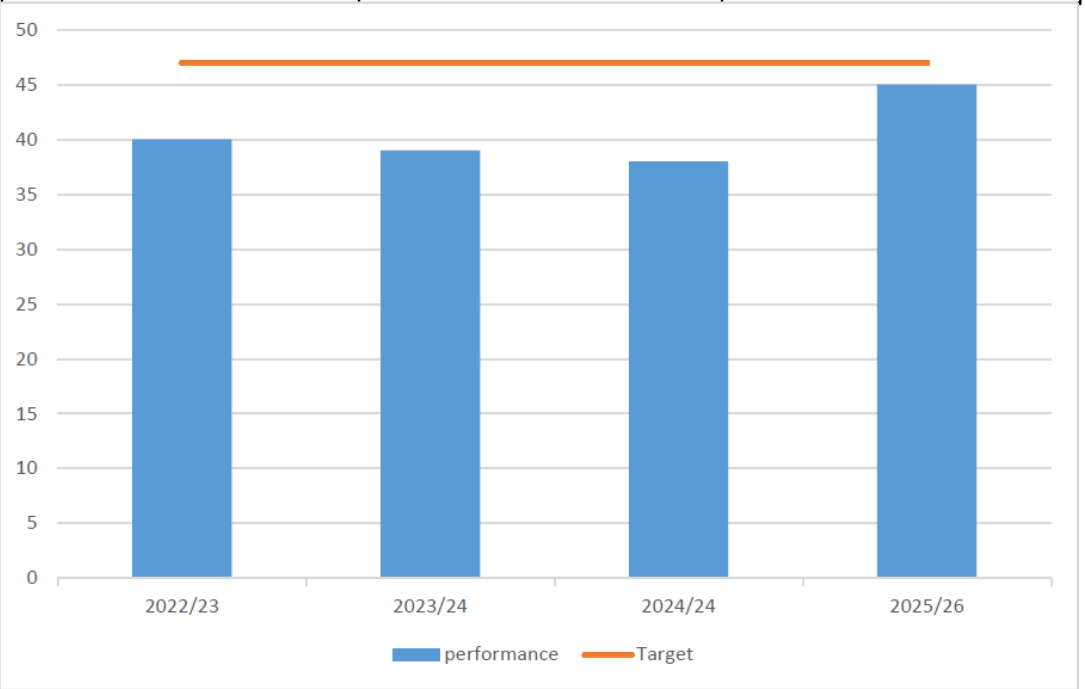
In addition to the core Workplace LPIs, the Health and Safety Department monitors and manages a range of other health, safety and compliance activities throughout the year. These areas are overseen through a programme of audits, inspections, assurance activities and active performance monitoring, providing the Service with ongoing oversight of key risks and statutory compliance requirements.

The outcomes of this work support continuous improvement across the organisation by identifying areas of good practice, opportunities for development, and emerging risks. Further details of these activities and the associated performance outcomes are included within this report.

Overall Number of Operational Staff Injuries On Duty

During 2025/26 there were a total of 45 injuries to operational staff, which is an increase of 7 on the previous year. A total of 33 of the 45 members of staff injured remained on duty and of those who went off duty; 4 returned to work within 7 days.

WR13		
Number of Operational Staff Injuries - on duty		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
38	47	45

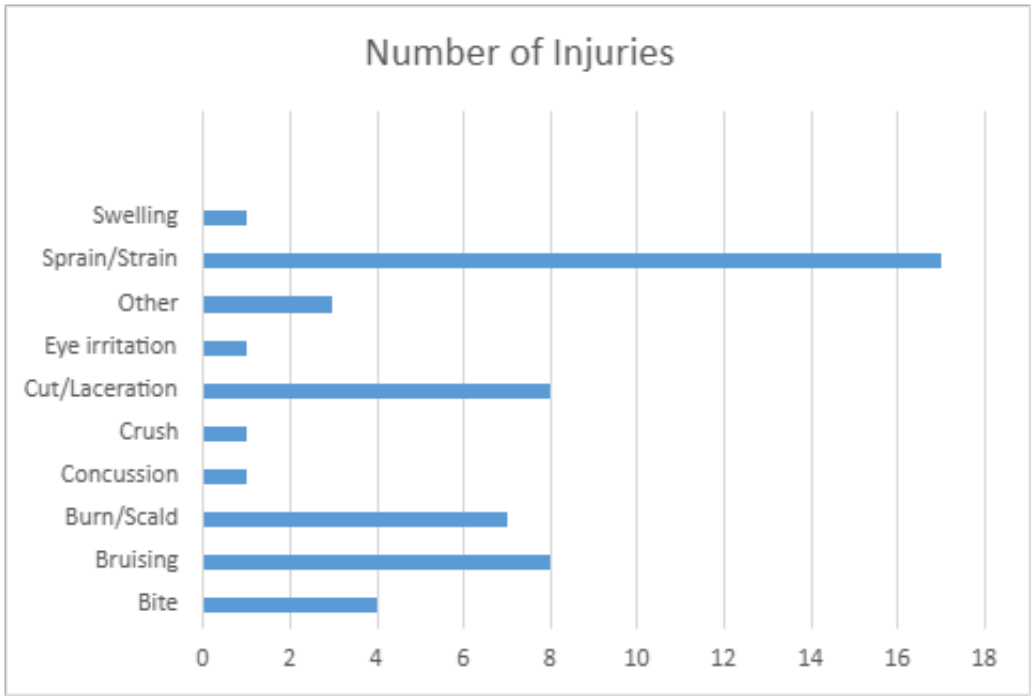


A total of 197 duty days were lost through staff injuries, which was a decrease of 37 on the previous year. 173 of the days lost were related to 7 members of staff being absent through long term sickness and the remaining days related to 24 other members of staff.

Trend analysis shows that all age ranges were similarly affected, and that 17 of the 45 injuries (37%) were due to sprain or strain, which is the most common recorded injury.

Injuries

The full break down of injury type amongst operational staff for 2025/26 is detailed below:



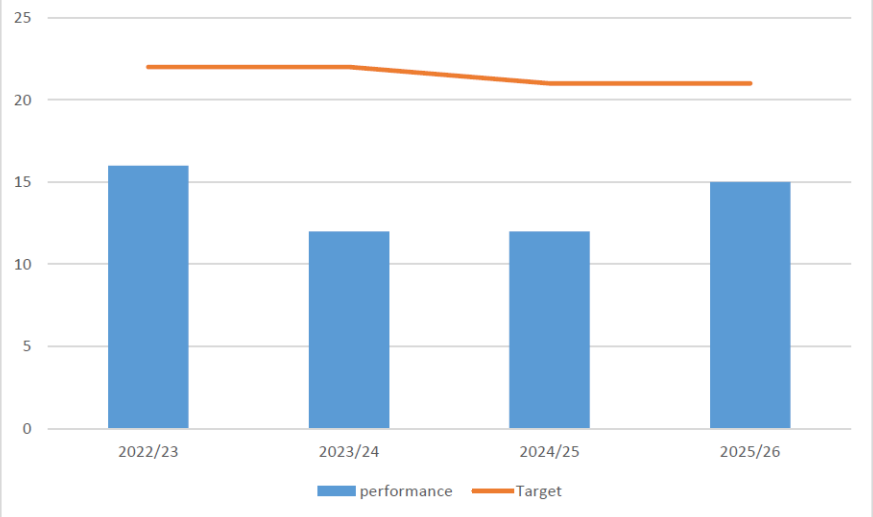
MFRS has an established positive reporting culture, with staff comfortable and confident in reporting injuries without reprisal, even when minor in nature. Historically, this is something that may not have been reported.

The breakdown of injuries into the individual Workplace LPI's, both performance-led and monitoring only, are displayed on the following pages.

Number of Operational Staff Injuries at Incidents

Of the total 45 operational staff injuries whilst on-duty, 15 occurred at operational incidents. This is an increase of 3 on the previous year. However, this amount remains significantly below the Service Plan Target (SPT) of 21. This is one of the LPI's where we have reduced the SPT based on previous years' data.

WR24		
Number of Operational Staff at Incidents		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
12	22	15



During 2025/26, MFRS attended 18,709 operational incidents, resulting in 99,628 appliance movements, including both emergency response and routine operational activity.

A total of 15 operational injuries were recorded during incident attendance. Of these, 9 employees remained at work following the incident, indicating that the injuries sustained were relatively minor in nature. This also reflects the positive reporting culture within the Service, where staff are encouraged to report all incidents and injuries, regardless of severity, to support organisational learning and effective risk management.

Of the 6 employees who were unable to continue working immediately following their injury, 1 returned to duty within 7 days, while the remaining 5 employees returned to work following longer-term periods of absence.

The total number of duty days lost as a result of operational injuries sustained at incidents was 46 days, representing a reduction of 16 days compared with the previous reporting period. This decrease reflects an overall improvement in the impact of operational injuries on workforce availability while maintaining strong levels of incident reporting and injury management.

Number of Operational Staff Injuries at Risk Critical Training

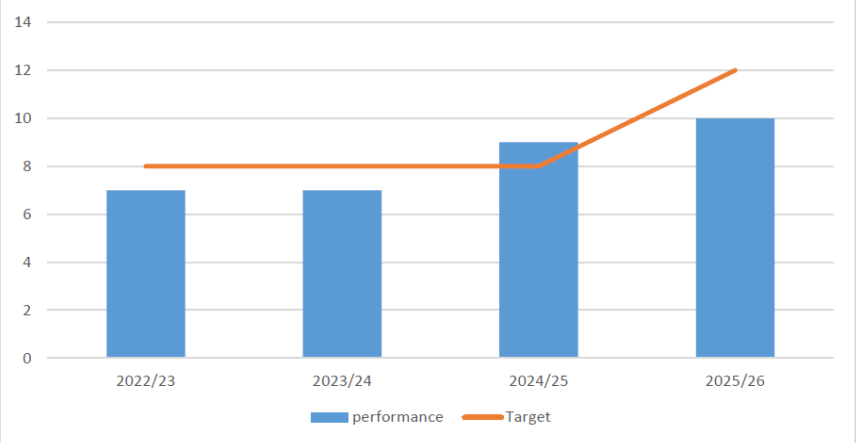
The Health and Safety Department has monitored injuries sustained during risk-critical training as a standalone Local Performance Indicator (LPI) since 2018/19. Prior to this, such injuries were reported within the operational injuries sustained at incidents indicator.

During 2025/26, 10 injuries were recorded during risk-critical training activities, representing an increase of one injury compared with the previous reporting period. Of those injured, 5 employees were unable to remain on duty following the incident. Following a review of the reported injuries, the relevant risk assessment and operational risk assessment was amended to strengthen existing controls and support the continued safe delivery of training.

This increase should be viewed in the context of the significant growth in training activity undertaken by the Service over the last four years. Despite the increase in reported injuries, the data indicates that the majority were minor in nature, demonstrating that the training environment continues to be effectively managed through robust risk assessment processes, appropriate control measures, and close supervision by competent operational managers.

MFRS remains fully committed to its vision, "to be the best Fire and Rescue Service in the UK", and therefore invests significant time and resources in the delivery of risk-critical training. This training ensures that firefighters and incident commanders maintain the skills, knowledge and competence required to operate safely and effectively in demanding operational environments.

WR25		
Number of Operational Staff Injuries at Risk Critical Training		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
9	12	10



Through this commitment, the Service continues to enhance operational preparedness, improve employee safety and wellbeing, and support workforce resilience.

Operational Training

In 2025/26, the following training took place:

A total of 264 core training courses were completed in the year 2025/26, representing a 61% increase on the previous year. This reflects a full year of delivery following the opening of the new Training and Development Academy at Long Lane in June 2024, after which core training briefly paused during the transition period. The core training courses that ran consisted of:

- 42 Breathing Apparatus (BA) courses with 8 -10 attendees per course
- 36 Compartment Fire Behavior Training (CFBT) courses with approx. 8 -10 attendees per course
- 39 Road Traffic Collision (RTC) courses with approx. 10 attendees per course
- 32 Safe Working at Height (SWAH) courses with approx. 10 attendees per course.
- 44 Hazardous Materials Response courses with approx. 10 attendees per course
- 41 Water courses with approx. 5 - 10 attendees per course
- 30 FREC courses with approx. 10 attendees per course

In 2025/26, MFRS delivered a comprehensive programme of realistic training and exercising, continuing the positive trend in both the volume and quality of activity since the pandemic.

A total of 72 off-site EN1 exercises were completed, alongside 37 joint multi-agency exercises. These included 14 airport exercises and 19 Senior Officer Tactical Command Assessments (TCAs), involving key partners such as Merseyside Police, North West Ambulance Service (NWAS), and other agencies. Additionally, 283 National Resilience joint training activities took place. These activities have further strengthened interoperability and multi-agency coordination.

MFRS also delivered 6 cross border exercises with regional Fire and Rescue Service colleagues, further enhancing interoperability, shared learning, and coordinated response across service boundaries.

Specialist training has remained a key focus, with 7 ship firefighting exercises and 3 COMAH exercises delivered, supporting operational preparedness in high-risk and complex environments. The continued growth in Specialist Station Training exercises (including Marine, HazMat, MTA, CPL, and HVP) reflects the strengthening and wider distribution of specialist capabilities across the Service.

In addition, 23 'Saturday Exercises' were delivered at the Training and Development Academy (TDA), with a specific focus on high-rise firefighting scenarios. The enhanced facilities at the TDA continue to significantly improve the quality and realism of training provision.

Overall, this programme demonstrates MFRS's ongoing commitment to building operational competence, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring preparedness for a wide range of incident types.

During 2025/26, the Service continued its commitment to developing operational capability through the delivery of firefighter apprenticeship programmes.

A recruit intake (Course 01/26) progressed through initial training at the Training and Development Academy and is due to pass out in July 2026, before being deployed to Community Fire Stations across the Service. A total of 28 Apprentice Firefighters were welcomed during the reporting period.

Individual training blocks are aligned to the daily training planner across all stations and equate to approximately 8,000 x 2-hour 45-minute training periods per year.

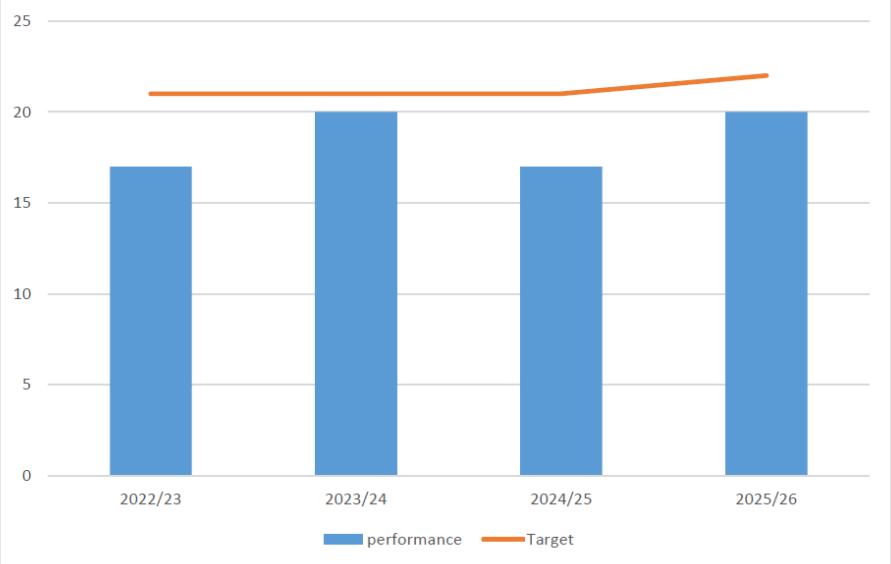
Number of Operational Staff Injuries at Routine Activity

During routine operational activities in 2025/26, a total of 20 injuries were recorded, representing an increase of 3 compared with the previous reporting period. Despite this increase, performance remains below the Service Plan target.

Of the 20 employees who sustained injuries, 17 remained on duty, indicating that the majority of injuries were minor in nature and did not prevent individuals from continuing their normal duties. The remaining 3 employees were unable to remain on duty following their injury.

The 3 injuries that resulted in employees going off duty accounted for a total of 82 duty days lost. This figure includes a number of cases classified as long-term absences, where more than 28 duty days were lost.

WR22		
Number of Operational Staff Injuries conducting other routine duties		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26Service Plan Target	2025/26 Perfomance
17	22	20



Analysis of the injury data shows that incidents occurred across a range of age groups, with no significant age-related trends identified.

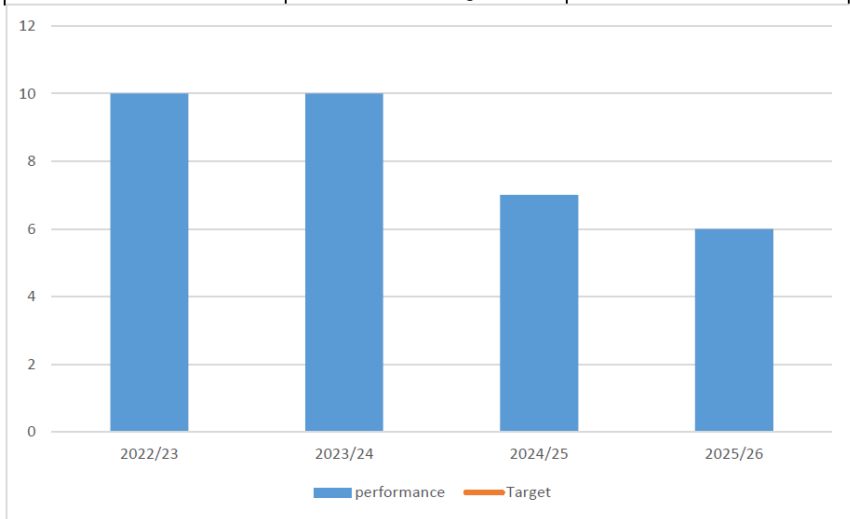
Similarly, no recurring causal factors or patterns have been identified that would indicate a specific area of concern. The Health and Safety Department will continue to monitor this indicator through the Workplace Review Group (WPRG) to identify any emerging trends and ensure that appropriate control measures remain in place.

MFRS actively promotes a positive reporting culture and encourages the reporting of all injuries and near misses. This approach supports a greater understanding of workplace risks, enables lessons to be identified, and contributes to the ongoing improvement of health and safety arrangements across the Service.

Number of Non-operational Staff Injuries On Duty

There was a total of 6 non-operational staff injuries in 2025/26, which is a decrease of 1 on the previous year. Of the 6 injuries, all remained on duty.

WR32		
Number of Non-Operational Staff Injuries On-Duty		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
7	Monitoring	6



There were a variety of minor injuries recorded. These include bites, crush, burn/ scalds, and swelling. The positive reporting of near miss events substantially reduces the potential for injuries as staff are encouraged to submit observations as part of the overall Health and Safety culture.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations - RIDDOR

RIDDOR puts duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and 'specified' dangerous occurrences (near misses).

Under RIDDOR, MFRA must report the specific categories under **'Major Injury'** to the enforcing Authorities, where occurrences happen 'out of or in connection with work'. The Health & Safety Department reports these occurrences to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), on behalf of MFRA.

There was no reportable **Major** injuries during 2025/26.

HSE

Health and Safety Executive

Reporting accidents and incidents at work

A brief guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

This is a web-friendly version of leaflet INDG453(rev1), published 10/13

What is RIDDOR?

RIDDOR is the law that requires employers, and other people in control of work premises, to report and keep records of:

- work related accidents which cause death;
- work related accidents which cause certain serious injuries (reportable injuries);
- diagnosed cases of certain industrial diseases; and
- certain 'dangerous occurrences' (incidents with the potential to cause harm).

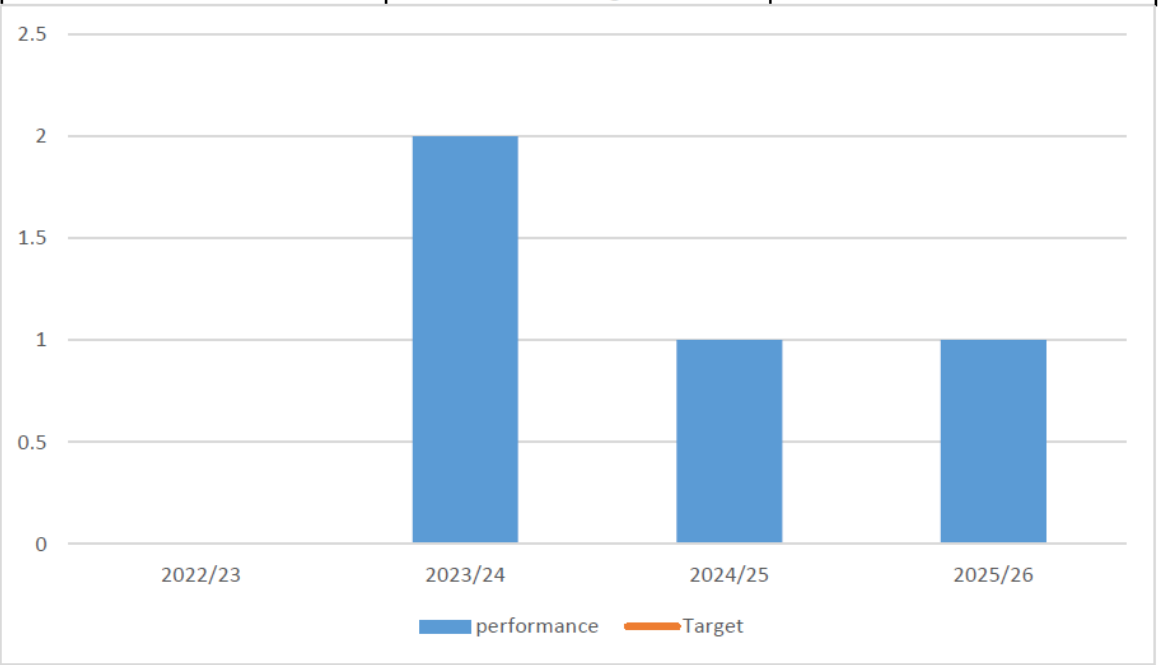
There are also special requirements for gas incidents (see 'Reportable gas incidents').

This leaflet aims to help employers and others with reporting duties under RIDDOR, to comply with RIDDOR and to understand reporting requirements.

RIDDOR 2013 Changes

From 1 October 2013, RIDDOR 2013 comes into force, which introduces significant changes to the existing reporting requirements. The main changes

RIDDOR - Major Injuries		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26Service Plan Target	2025/26
1	Monitoring/QA	1

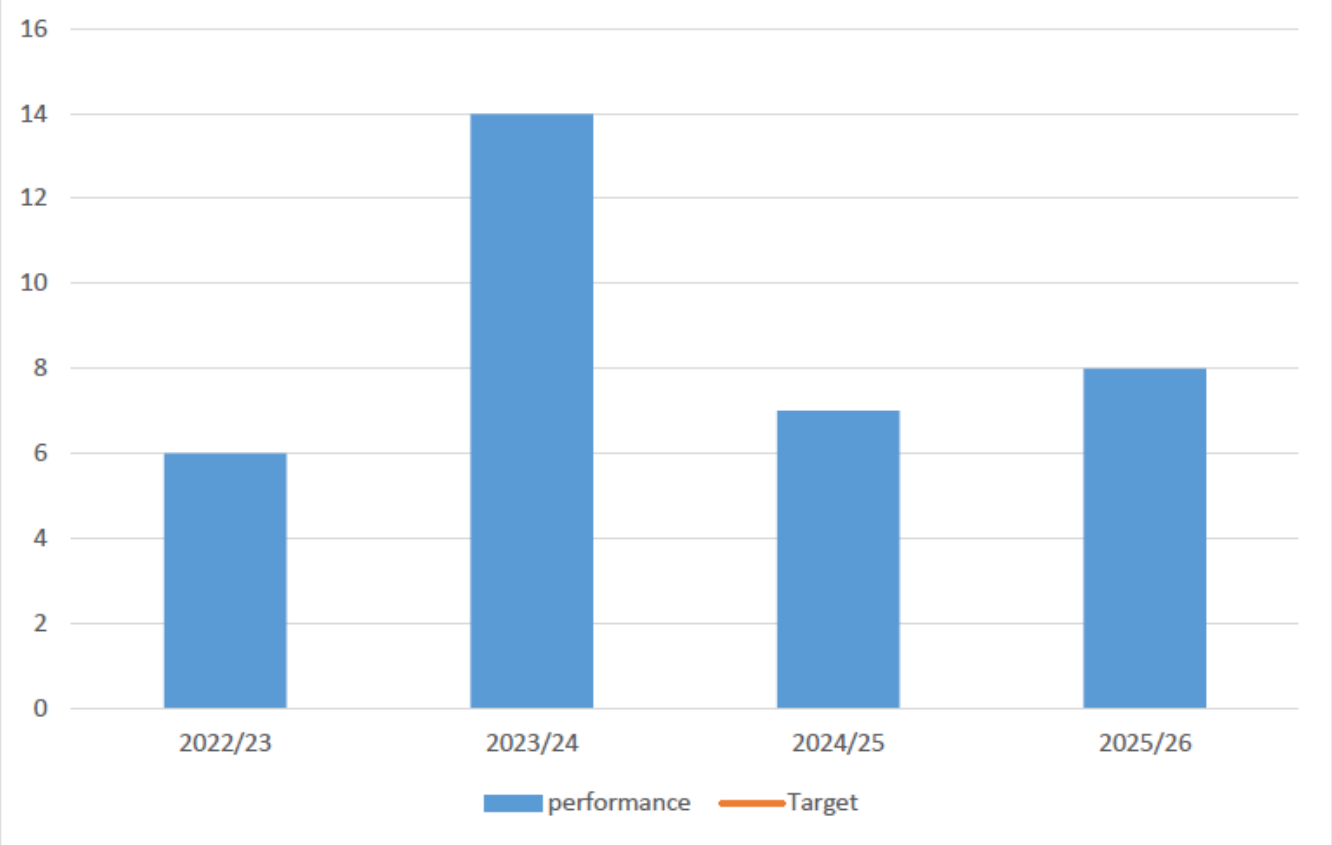


Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013, MFRA must report specific categories where an 'over 7-day absence' occurs when the cause is 'out of or in connection with work'. The Health & Safety Department reports the occurrences to the HSE on behalf of MFRA.

For 2025/26 there were 6 recordable events. 5 of the events were classed as 'over 7-day injuries' with 1 event classed as a BA malfunction with no Injury

MFRS reported one BA malfunction which occurred during the wearing of Breathing Apparatus (BA) at an Operational Incident. No injuries were incurred in relation to this event. The cause has been investigated and this was due to debris within the mask which led to the BA defaulting to the free flowing of air (as per its designed safety feature). The BA wearer did not lose air pressure and left the building safely.

RIDDOR - Minor Injuries (MFRS Staff)		
Previous Year Performance	2024/25 Service Plan Target	2025/26
7	Monitoring/QA	8



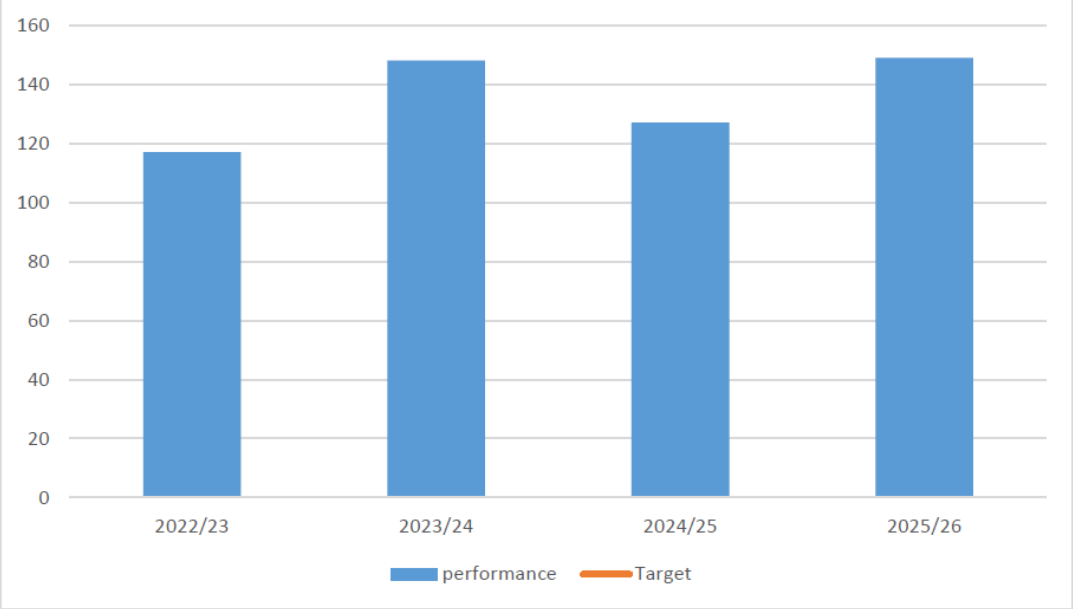
Reporting of the Levels of Near Miss Reports Recorded by the Service

A near miss is an incident that would have resulted in a loss, such as an injury or property damage, under only slightly different circumstances.

Near Misses in MFRS are recorded through the OSHENS system and can be accessed by any member of staff. They help highlight safety issues when injury does not occur, helping prevent any future occurrence. Near Miss reporting is actively encouraged by the H&S Department, as it contributes to a positive H&S culture within the Service.

A total of 149 Near Misses were recorded during 2025/26. This is an increase of 26 reports, compared to the previous year. MFRS Health and Safety department, continue to promote positive reporting as part of workplace culture and respond to all submissions. MFRS continues to monitor Near Misses for any potential trends or emerging themes that arise.

WR31		
Near Miss Reports Recorded by the Service		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
127	Monitoring	149



Road Risk

Road Risk performance monitors all vehicle collisions and is managed via seven key LPI's. Five of the LPI's are performance led and the remaining two are for monitoring only.

The governance for road risk is managed via the Road Risk Review Group (RRRG) which has cross departmental membership. LPI's are broken down into:

LPI Performance

- Road Traffic Collisions involving Fire Service Vehicles **(RR23)**
- The number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's) where a Fire Appliance hit another vehicle or object whilst responding to an operational incident **(RR31)**
- The number of RTC's where a Fire Appliance hit other vehicle or object whilst engaged in routine activity **(RR32)**
- The number of RTC's where a light vehicle hit another vehicle or object whilst responding to an operational incident **(RR33)**
- The number of RTC's where a light vehicle hit other vehicle or object whilst engaged in routine activity **(RR34)**

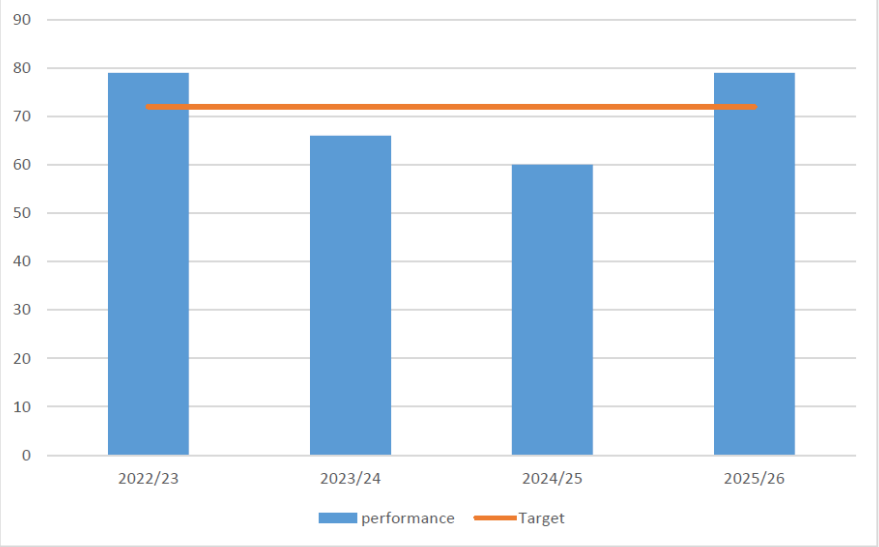
LPI Monitoring

- Other vehicle damage caused whilst any vehicle is stationary during response or routine activity **(RR35)**
- Service vehicle hit by other 3rd party vehicle **(HBOV)**

Total Number of RTC's Involving Service Vehicles

MFRS operates over 220 vehicles from light vehicle types/vans through to emergency fire appliances, specialist vehicles and combined platform ladders (CPL) with individual capability of 28m, 34m and 45m reach. The vehicle fleet is maintained by Workshops who ensure readiness for routine and emergency activity.

RR23		
RTC's Involving Fire Service Vehicles		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26S Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
60	72	79



A total of 79 road traffic collisions involving Service vehicles were recorded during 2025/26, representing an increase of 19 incidents compared with the previous reporting period.

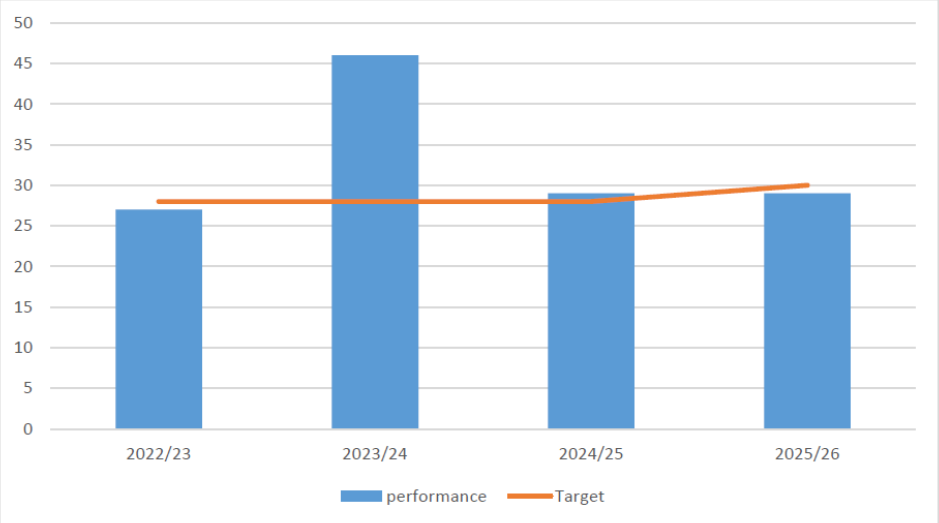
All road traffic collisions are subject to review by the Road Risk Review Group (RRRG), which is chaired by the Health and Safety Manager. The Group works closely with line management to assess the circumstances surrounding each incident and determine whether any further action is required. Where appropriate, tailored support, development plans, or additional monitoring arrangements are implemented for the individuals involved.

The RRRG considers a range of contributory and mitigating factors when reviewing incidents, including the pressures associated with emergency response driving, the actions of third parties, road and weather conditions, and other operational influences. Learning outcomes and recommendations arising from these reviews are communicated and actioned to reduce the likelihood of recurrence and to support the continuous improvement of driver safety and road risk management across the Service.

Fire Appliance Hit Other Vehicle/ Object Whilst Responding to Operational Incidents

MFRS recorded 34,308 appliance movements responding to 18,709 incidents in 2025/26, with this activity deemed as the Services most risk critical driving category. Although appliance movements have increased by 3% when compared to last year, our activity levels equate to one collision per 1,040 appliance movements.

RR31		
Fire Appliance hit other Vehicle/Object whilst responding to Operational Incident		
Previous Year Performance	2025/026 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
29	30	29



While the number of collisions involving fire appliances responding under emergency conditions increased by 14%, initial analysis indicates that the overall severity of these incidents was generally lower than in the previous reporting period.

During the reporting year, operational crews responded to **18,709 incidents,** resulting in a significant volume of emergency vehicle movements across the Service.

This reinforces the importance of considering collision rates and severity in the context of overall operational activity, rather than relying solely on the total number of collisions.

The continued focus remains on reducing both the frequency and impact of collisions through evidence-led learning, targeted interventions, and ongoing improvements to driver training and road risk management.

The Road Risk Review Group seeks to have a positive impact and provide mitigation measures with ongoing oversight, targeted actions and support to contribute to improved operational driving performance.

This has been complemented by enhanced communication, continued investment in driver development, and the delivery of targeted vehicle driver training packages.

The Group remains committed to continuous improvement and is actively exploring additional initiatives to further reduce risk. These include trials of enhanced vehicle lighting and conspicuity measures, alongside the development of varied learning approaches such as visual aids, operational videos, case studies, and other evidence-based educational resources to support different learning styles and reinforce safe driving behaviours.

Through continual review of collision data, operational feedback, and emerging themes, the Group seeks to identify opportunities for improvement and embed a proactive road safety culture across the organisation.

Future work will continue to focus on understanding the root causes of collisions, sharing organisational learning, and implementing proportionate interventions that support safer emergency response driving while maintaining operational effectiveness.

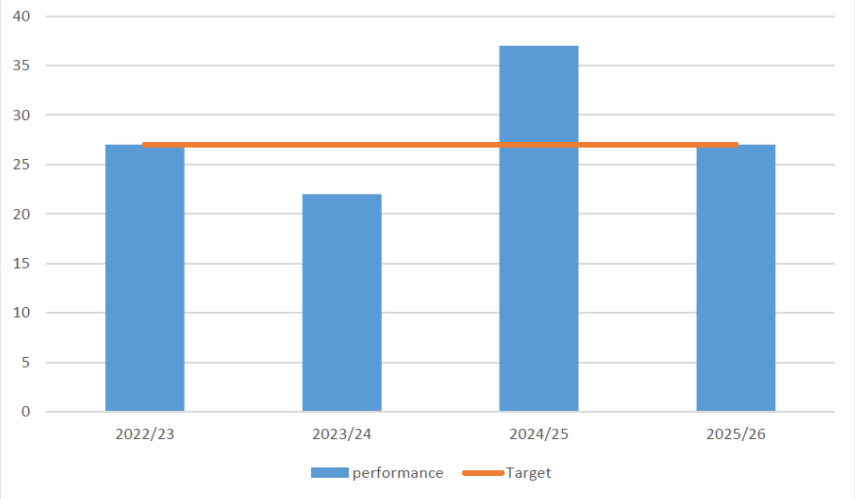
Review of the 33 blue-light collisions identified that the predominant trend for this LPI relates to incidents occurring while travelling forward at speeds below 10 mph. Of the 33 collisions, 28 (85%) fell within this category, with the remaining 5 occurring while travelling forward at speeds exceeding 10 mph.

To support continuous improvement, the Health and Safety Department regularly circulates communications highlighting identified trends, lessons learned, and key areas of focus aimed at reducing the number of incidents.

Station Managers (SMs) work closely with supervisory managers and operational staff to educate, support, and monitor Service drivers. Collision findings and learning outcomes are reviewed through monthly standardisation meetings and progressed via the RRRG. Improved working relationships, underpinned by a culture of trust, support, and learning, have been recognised as key factors in reducing collisions. Drivers are provided with tailored support, development objectives, and monitoring arrangements designed to address the root causes of collisions while promoting higher driving standards across the Service.

Fire Appliance Hit Other Vehicle/Object Whilst Engaged in Routine Activities

RR32		
Fire Appliance hit other Vehicle/Objects whilst engaged in Routine Activities		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
37	27	27



During 2025/26, MFRA fire appliances undertook 65,320 routine vehicle movements. A total of 38 appliance collisions occurred while engaged in routine activities (representing a 41% increase compared with the previous reporting period.)

Although this increase is significant, trend analysis identified that a disproportionate number of collisions occurred during October. When compared with wider road traffic collision data for the general population, a similar increase in incidents was observed during this period. In response, forward planning work will be undertaken in collaboration with Corporate Communications to raise driver awareness and implement targeted interventions aimed at mitigating the impact of seasonal factors and reducing future collisions.

The prevailing trend for this LPI relates to low-speed forward movements. Of the 38 collisions recorded, 24 (63%) occurred while travelling forward at speeds below 10 mph. Three collisions occurred while travelling forward at speeds exceeding 10 mph, while the remaining 11 collisions occurred during reversing manoeuvres at speeds below 5 mph.

All collisions reported under this indicator are reviewed by the Road Risk Review Group (RRRG). The group provides support to both line managers and drivers through tailored support plans, progress monitoring, and the review of evidence captured within the Health and Safety Management System. This process ensures that learning is identified and shared, while appropriate measures are introduced to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

During 2025/26, the Service introduced 25 newly qualified LGV drivers into the operational environment. Analysis of the collision data found no evidence that this cohort contributed disproportionately to the overall number of reported incidents. Instead, collisions were distributed relatively evenly across drivers with varying levels of experience, indicating that driver experience was not a significant contributory factor in the overall performance for this reporting period.

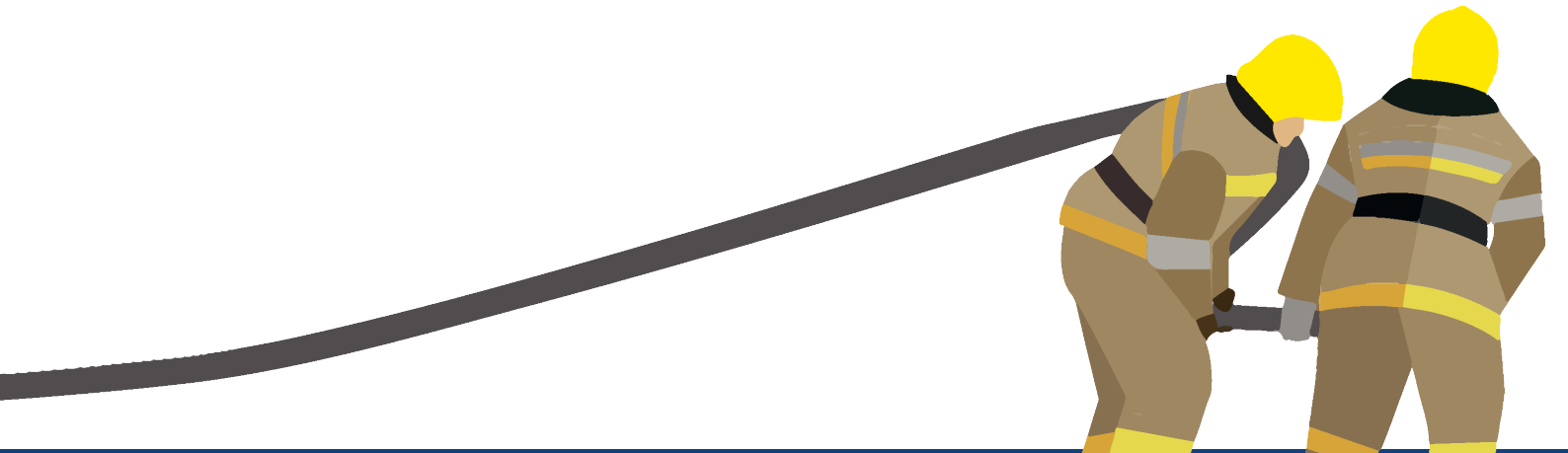
Light Vehicle Hit Other Vehicle/ Object Whilst Responding to Operational Incidents

This category relates to the Service's blue-light response activity undertaken in light vehicles, predominantly by Senior Officers responding to operational incidents. While no performance target is assigned to this indicator, it is monitored to identify trends and areas for improvement.

RR33		
Light Vehicle hit other Vehicle/Objects whilst responding to an Operational Incident.		
Previous Year Performance	2024/25 Service Plan Target	2025/26
0	Quality Assurance	1

During 2025/26, Senior Officers mobilised to operational incidents on 3,701 occasions. One collision involving a light vehicle was recorded while responding under emergency conditions, where the vehicle came into contact with another vehicle or object. This represents the first incident of this type recorded by the Service in the last nine years, demonstrating a consistently strong safety performance within this area of operation.

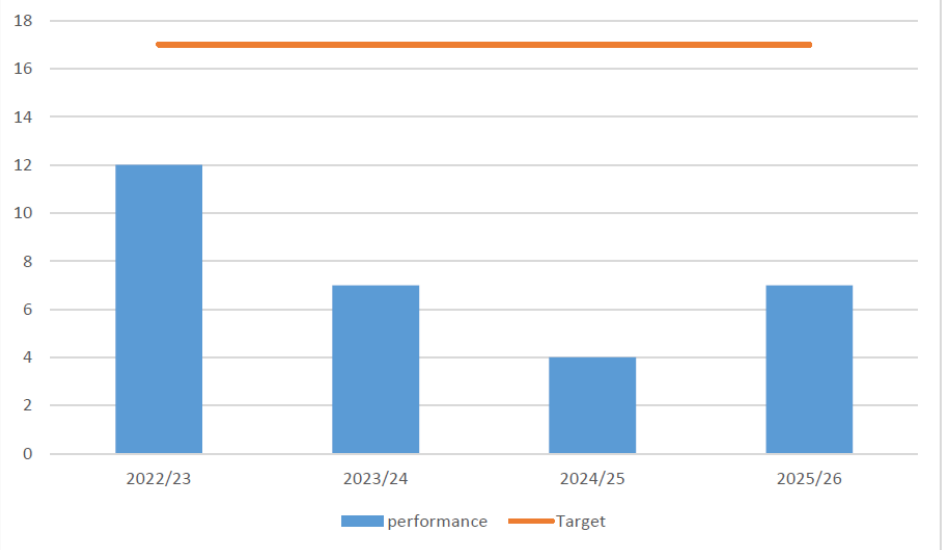
All Senior Officers are required to complete Emergency Light Vehicle Driving (ELVD) refresher training every two years. This ongoing programme of professional development ensures that emergency response driving skills remain current and supports the continued safe operation of Service vehicles during blue-light response activities.



Light Vehicle Hit Other Vehicle/ Object Whilst Engaged in Routine Activity

The number of vehicle collisions involving light fleet vehicles was 7 during 2025/26, an increase of 3 compared with the previous year. Despite this increase, performance against this LPI continues to show a downward trend over the last three years, indicating an overall reduction in collision frequency over the medium term.

RR34		
Light Vehicle hit other Vehicle/Objects whilst engaged in Routine Activity		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26
7	17	7



Analysis of the incidents shows that all collisions occurred at speeds below 5 mph, suggesting that the associated risks remain predominantly linked to low-speed manoeuvring and vehicle positioning activities.

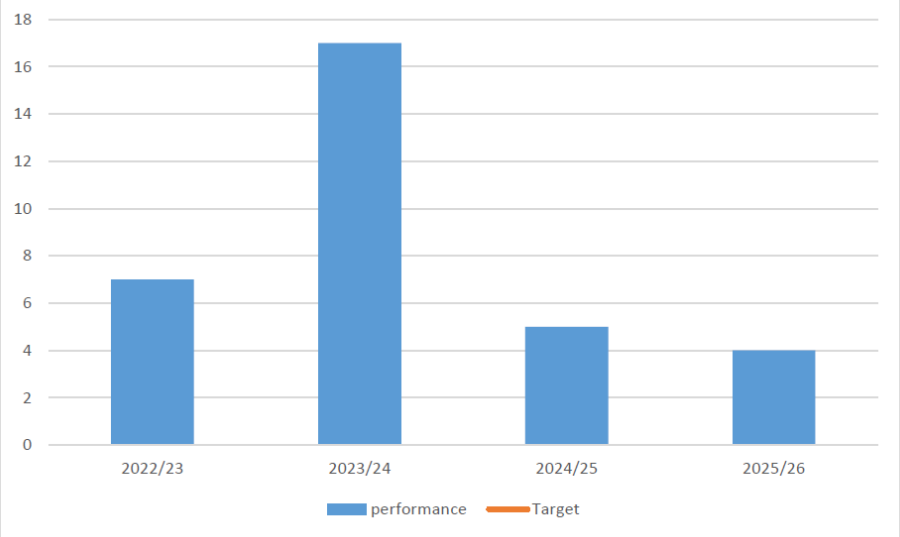
To be authorised to drive a Service vehicle, staff must hold a full and valid UK driving licence, which is verified and recorded by the MFRS Driving School. In addition to licence validation, employees are required to meet the Service's medical standards and demonstrate the capability and competence necessary to safely operate Service vehicles.

This indicator has consistently performed better than target over the past six years, reflecting the effectiveness of the Service's driver selection, competency, and vehicle management arrangements.

Other Vehicle Damage Caused Whilst Any Vehicle is Stationary during Response or Routine Activity

This category was introduced in April 2019 to capture incidents of vehicle damage not resulting from a collision, covering both fire appliances and light fleet vehicles. While no performance target is assigned to this indicator, it is monitored to identify trends and support preventative action.

RR35		
Other Vehicle Damage Caused Whilst Any Vehicle is Stationary During Response or Routine Activity		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
5	Quality Assurance	4



During 2025/26, four incidents of vehicle damage were reported where the vehicle was stationary at the time the damage occurred.

To establish the circumstances and identify root causes wherever possible, investigations utilise available evidence, including Service and local CCTV footage, driver statements, vehicle logbooks, and vehicle inspection records. Although the cause cannot always be conclusively determined, the Health and Safety Department proactively investigates every reported incident.

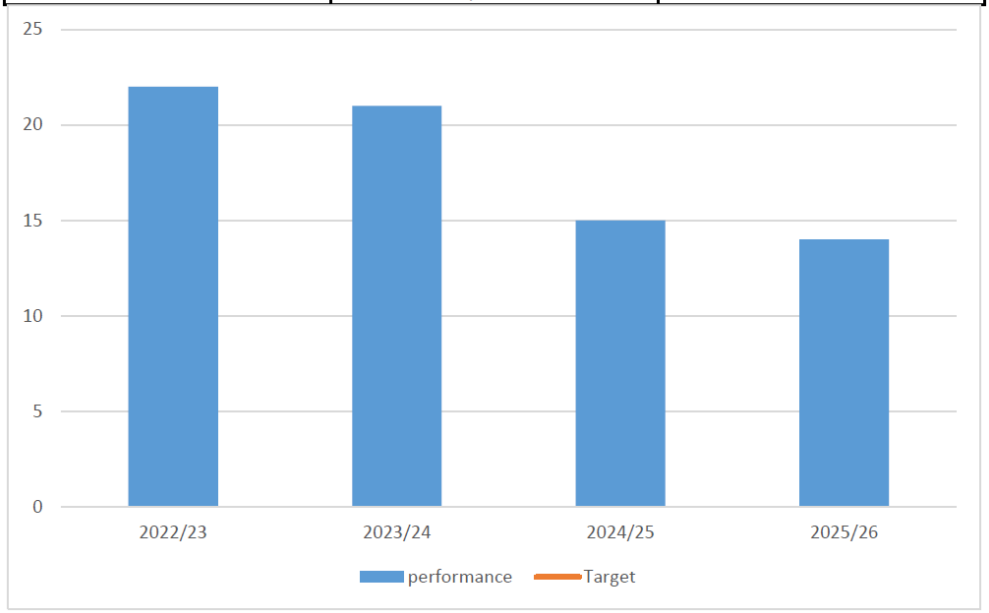
This type of damage is frequently identified after the event, often when responsibility for a vehicle is transferred between users, during routine 'A' inspections, or when the vehicle attends Workshops for maintenance or repair.

The continued monitoring and investigation of these incidents supports the Service in identifying recurring themes, improving reporting practices, and minimising avoidable vehicle damage.

Service Vehicle Hit by Other 3rd Party Vehicle

The Road Risk Review Group (RRRG) monitors all collisions involving Service vehicles where fault has been attributed to a third party. During 2025/26, there were 14 third-party collisions, representing a decrease of one incident compared with the previous reporting period.

Hit by Other Vehicles		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
15	Quality Assurance	14



Collisions of this nature are subject to ongoing review by the Health and Safety Department to ensure that appropriate support is provided to any staff members involved and that any emerging trends are identified.

Particular attention is given to the welfare of employees following an incident, together with any operational learning opportunities that may arise.

All third-party collisions are reviewed and discussed at RRRG meetings, enabling the Service to monitor trends, assess any recurring circumstances, and ensure that appropriate actions are taken where necessary.

The continued scrutiny of these incidents supports both employee wellbeing and the effective management of occupational road risk.

Annual Work Plan

As part of our annual workplan, the H&S team undertake a programme of reviews and internal checks to ensure that we manage risk correctly and are implementing Service policies. We have reviewed the following aspects of our systems during 2025/26:

- Risk Assessment
- Lone Working
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Hazardous Waste Registrations and Waste Permits
- Smoking at Work
- Safe Storage & Handling of Hazardous Substances
- Violence at Work
- Management Standards Compliance
- COSHH Register and Assessment Review
- Legionella
- Young People/Work Experience
- Fire and Management of Other Emergencies
- Noise

We have carried out the following during 2025/26:

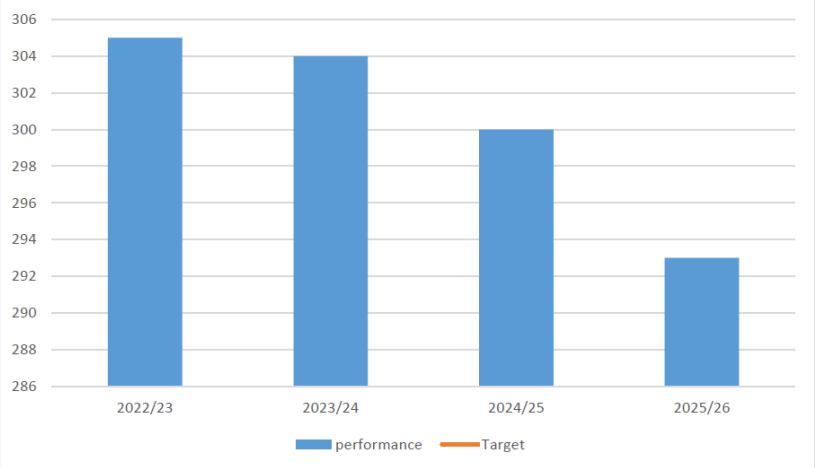
- Managed the suite of risk assessments for MFRS activities, reviewing existing assessments and producing new documents to support new activities/risks, equipment and vehicles.
- Continued to maintain and develop the health and safety management system by carrying out programmed reviews of policies and Service Order documents to ensure their currency and continued suitability.
- Ensured joint working on assurance monitoring for operational activity, sharing learning and trends from accidents and near miss events to ensure continual learning within the MFRS operational environment to ensure firefighter safety.

Number of Station Manager Monthly H&S Inspections

The Station Manager's Monthly Health & Safety Inspection monitors station records, operational readiness, station accommodation and preparedness of appliances and equipment.

The Inspection is recorded as a management audit on the OSHENS software and monitored by the Health and Safety department. There is no target for this indicator, it is quality assurance only. This group also includes monthly inspections completed at Vesty Road / Workshops, TDA & MRU.

Number of Station Manager Monthly H&S Inspections		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26 Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
300	Quality Assurance	293



For the period of 2025/26, there have been 293 Station Manager H&S Inspections. No significant trends were identified from the inspections. The fact that no significant trends were identified is positive. Whilst the figure represents a slight reduction against the planned inspection programme, performance remained strong throughout a period of organisational transition, including the establishment of TDA station arrangements.

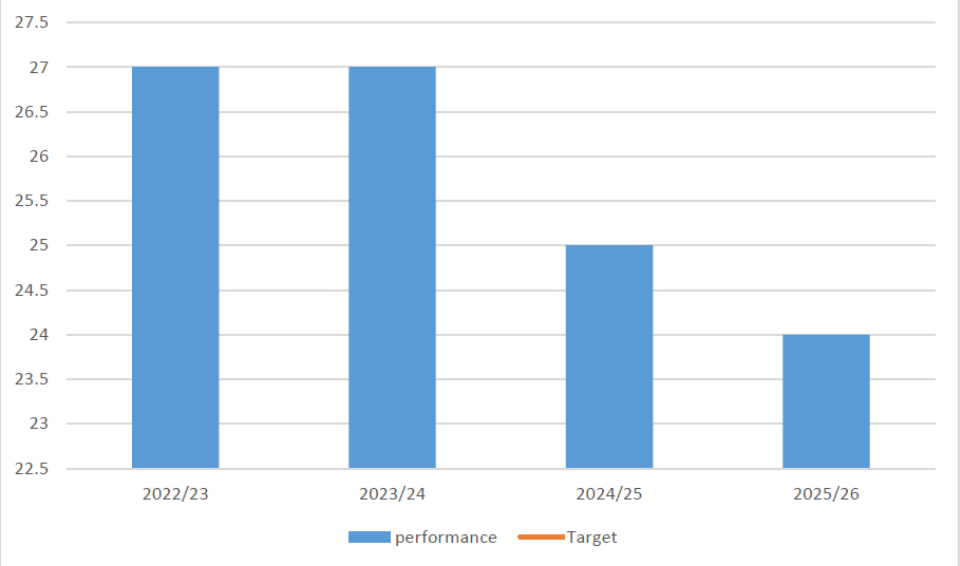
The transition required significant management focus to support operational changes, staff movements and the integration of new working arrangements. As a result, a small number of planned inspections were deferred during the latter part of the reporting period. Despite this, station managers continued to maintain effective oversight of health and safety arrangements, with inspections identifying and addressing a range of workplace safety issues and contributing to continuous improvement across stations.

Lessons learnt through the inspections have been used to improve overall compliance and reinforce safe systems of work. That said, it's important to continue with regular inspections to ensure that the required safety standards are maintained.

Number of Annual General H&S Audits

The Health and Safety department has the responsibility of carrying out General H&S Audits annually across the 25 MFRS sites. There was a reduction in the number of sites due to the opening of the new TDA and the subsequent relocation of NR / ISAR from Unit 5a Vesty Road. The number of Community Fire Stations was reduced followed by the combining of Aintree (Long Moor Lane) and Croxteth to the new Aintree Community Fire Station.

Number of Annual General H&S Audits		
Previous Year Performance	2025/26Service Plan Target	2025/26 Performance
25	Quality Assurance	24



Findings from all audits are logged through the normal fault reporting process to the relevant facilities management company and staff are encouraged to report issues with immediate safety implications through the OSHENS near miss/safety observation software.

All findings are then considered and reported through the Workplace Review Group for discussion on a six-weekly basis.

Welfare Performance

The Health and Safety department work closely in conjunction with the Health and Wellbeing Team to support the robust welfare arrangements that are in place for members of staff. MFRS staff operate in diverse roles and not only are required to maintain high levels of fitness but will occasionally be exposed to potentially traumatic events.

The Health and Wellbeing Team provide mental, physical and spiritual support and have the expertise to refer staff to specialist care when appropriate.

MFRS utilise Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) trained officers to defuse and debrief staff following exposure to potentially traumatic or difficult experiences and can request further counselling support through the Health and Wellbeing Team.

As an overview for the period 2025/26, the Health and Wellbeing and Occupational Health Medical Team have completed the following:

Occupational Health Medical Appointments:

There was a total of 1,723 Occupational Health medical appointments undertaken in the financial year 2025-2026. These can be broken down into:

Health Screenings (Operational Staff)	**210**
LGV medicals	**27**
Early Intervention	**269**
Management Referrals	**65**
Uniformed pre-employments	**42**
Non uniformed pre-employments	**26**
Long Term Sickness/Sickness	**456**
Other Duties	**288**
Clinical Checks	**217**
Other (Eyesight tests, audio tests etc)	**123**
Total medical appointments	**1,723**

Additionally, through the Occupational Health Medical Team, onward referrals for the following were made:

MRI/Scan Referrals	**22**
Physiotherapy appointments	**496**
Fitness Tests	**493**
Nutritionist appointments	**51**
Safety Glasses issued	**2**
Eyesight vouchers issued	**15**
Ill Health Retirements (Ops)	**2**
Ill Health Retirements (Non-Ops)	**1**

Critical Incident Stress Management:

Through the CISM mechanism the following have been undertaken:

Critical Incidents (CI) declared	**90**
CI Defusing sessions	**155**
CI Debriefs (elevated support)	**5**

Counselling Support:

The Health and Wellbeing Team provide professionally trained counsellors. During 2025/26, a total of **740 sessions** were provided for staff.

The welfare support offered by the Health and Wellbeing Team contributes to overall MFRS staff wellbeing in the workplace and provides an encompassing level and range of services to ensure that the physical and mental health of employee's is sustained.

Reducing Exposure to Contaminants Project

MFRA recognise the reported findings of recent years in relation to the activity of firefighting being deemed a "carcinogenic" risk.

The Health and Safety department have a dedicated Station Manager lead who has, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Manager, made significant progress in this area. Highlights of progress for 2025/26 include:

- Zoning of community fire stations to further reduce residual risk of exposure to contaminants.
- Production of Service Instruction 0998: Reducing Exposure to Fire Contaminants.
- Introduction of a monthly "Reducing Exposure" station inspection. This is to quality assure that guidance is being followed.
- Appointed SM lead.
- MFRS being embedded in the regional NFCC group.

We will continue to work with internal and external stakeholders including, Representative Bodies and the NFCC North-West contaminants working group, in our response to reducing exposure.

The North-West region, as part of the NFCC project into contaminants will focus specifically on training and competence in this area.

In addition to the achievements above, it is also worth noting the broader framework of documentation that underpins this work and demonstrates the depth of MFRA commitment to protecting its firefighters.

A COSHH risk assessment has been produced specifically to address exposure to contaminants arising from fire and rescue activities, ensuring that MFRA legal obligations under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) are met in a way that is directly relevant to the operational work its firefighters carry out.

This sits alongside the Service Instruction for Reducing Exposure to Fire Contaminants, which remains current and in date until December 2026, at which point it will be subject to a scheduled review to ensure it continues to reflect MFRS best practice and any future emerging guidance. Importantly, this work does not sit in isolation.

A suite of supporting operational documentation reinforces MFRA principles set out in the Service Instruction, including SOP 6.3.0 on Decontamination, SOP 4.1.2 covering Operational Risk Assessment for Hazardous Materials, and SI 0148 relating to the PPE Pooled System.

Together, these documents provide a framework that guides firefighters and managers at every stage, from the management of PPE through to post-incident decontamination procedures, helping to embed safe behaviors as standard practice.

Looking forward, the Service remains an active participant in the NFCC North-West Contaminants Working Group, and we are pleased that the regional focus for the coming period will center on training and competence.

This aligns closely with MFRA own internal focus and will help ensure that the policies and procedures we have in place are understood, applied consistently, and continuously improved upon by all relevant personnel.

Taken together, this work reflects a Service that is not just simply responding to external findings about the carcinogenic risks associated with firefighting, but is proactively building the systems, documentation and collaborative relationships needed to manage that risk effectively and sustainably over the long term.

A Look Forward to 2026/27

The Health and Safety department will use the findings of this report to continue to effectively manage performance and strengthen the positive H&S culture that already exists within the organisation.

We will:

Look to further reduce the number of work-related accident & injuries, and any associated absence.

- Continue to maintain the positive culture of Near Miss reporting.

- Use an intelligence led approach and data analysis to help minimise appliance collisions, with a real focus on collisions during blue light response.

- Continue to engage and support H&S representatives at Service locations, and those of Trade Unions, to achieve Organisational and Departmental objectives and common H&S goals.

- Ensure learning identified through H&S related incidents is used to improve the safety of staff.

- Work closely with H&S practitioners through established NFCC Regional and National structures, ensuring shared learning and understanding of H&S matters.

- Monitor compliance and adherence to policies and procedure, through Ops Assurance with the aim of reducing exposure to fire contaminants.

- Introduce further COSHH risk assessments to the Service, with a suite of new assessments planned for 26/27 covering specific contaminant risks arising from fire and rescue activities.

- Assessments in production for 26/27 include asbestos exposure, agricultural and rural incidents, carbon monoxide, contaminated PPE, diesel exhaust emissions, lithium-ion battery fires, and water and mud rescue operations within the River Mersey and surrounding estuarine environment.

- Continue to reduce operational road risk through evidence-led interventions. Road Risk Review meetings will continue to be held on a rotational basis at Community Fire Stations, focusing initially on those with the highest collision rates. These sessions will review collision data, identify root causes, share organisational learning and promote improvement ideas from operational crews. Stations will also receive presentations on their historical collision performance and the associated financial costs to increase awareness and support safer driving behaviours.

- Introduce seasonal road safety communications, with targeted guidance issued each September to highlight the increased risks associated with changing weather conditions, reduced daylight hours and seasonal driving hazards.

- A high number of Routine Activities occurred in October (8 incidents). Guidance will be issued to crews In September, highlighting seasonal changes in driving conditions due to factors such as weather and reduced daylight hours.

- Following reviews of CCTV footage, SM Hollis has been engaging with crews directly where breaches of procedures have been identified.

- In accordance with **SI 0040 – Management of Occupational Road Risk**, driver support plans have been, and continue to be, issued for drivers who reach the specified triggers.

- The Service will work towards developing a bespoke MFRS Health and Safety Plan. The plan will set out a 5-year vision for all aspects of Health & Safety. The plan will set out our approach to dealing with our existing risk profile and looks forward to emerging challenges that could impact on safety and wellbeing of staff. This document will form part of a suite of delivery plans, which supports the MFRS People Strategy and the aims and objectives within the MFRS H&S Policy.

- The plan sets out what our drivers and influences are, how we control risks and what are our aspirations for continual improvement, particularly in relation to the key developing areas of risk within the Sector.

Furthermore, and in line with the Operational Response Functional Plan (FDP), we will work to achieve in the following areas:

- **OSHENS System:** Work with Data & Technology Department to Procure a Suitable Health and Safety Software System. Engaging with internal and external stakeholders to establish the most appropriate product / solution and route to market.

- **Develop and Deliver Health and Safety Training:** Further enhance staff's knowledge / competence of HS&W before, during and after incidents in line with the NFCC leadership framework (leading self, others, function, and service)

MFRS remains committed to the principle of continuous improvement in all aspects of health, safety and wellbeing performance.

Analysis of the Service's health and safety performance is undertaken throughout the year and is subject to scrutiny by the Service Health and Safety Committee and associated governance groups.

The findings from performance monitoring, incident investigations, audits and inspections are used to identify emerging risks, share organisational learning and implement targeted improvement activities.

The positive performance achieved during the reporting period reflects the ongoing commitment of managers, employees and representative bodies to maintaining a safe working environment.

The Service recognises, however, that there are always opportunities to improve. Consequently, performance trends will continue to be closely monitored, with lessons learned translated into practical actions aimed at further reducing accidents, injuries and vehicle-related incidents.

Through a proactive approach to health and safety management, MFRS will continue to strengthen its safety culture, support employee wellbeing and drive improvements in operational and organisational performance.

GM Danila Breathnacht

Health and Safety Manager

SM Kev Hollis

Health and Safety Team

K. Hollis

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