

Fire Safety 20/21

Executive Summary

This report will explain the background of the management of FRAs, highlight the current situation within Denbighshire County Council. It will touch upon the affect the current pandemic has had on the completion of these Assessments.

The report will highlight, the different categories given to premises, along with an explanation of what KPIs are monitored. A recovery plan is included detailing alternative scenarios and explaining how the team will deliver the targets

The report will then present the performance of the department over the last 12 months, and provide a series of tables to demonstrate this. Finally, conclusions will be set out and future priorities for the team detailed.

Background

At the beginning of the 19/20 financial year it was decided to appoint a Fire Safety Manager in order to address the limitations identified in the Fire Risk Assessments which were being undertaken. Historically these had been divided into 2 separate elements:

- Property – Undertaken within the Assets Team, and including a review of fire safety equipment and servicing.
- Management – Undertaken by the Corporate Health & Safety (CH&S) Team and including fire safety processes, training of staff and record keeping.

Following an internal audit, it was determined that this was not sufficient and a more consolidated approach recommended. As a result, the lead officer for Strategic Assets, decided to create a dedicated role in order to address this issue, initially on a secondment, this role was made permanent in December 2019. From the beginning of financial year 19/20 all FRA's produced incorporate both elements.

Staff

In April 2019, Dawn Jones was appointed Fire Safety Manager. Dawn collated all the available information regarding the FRAs in order to address this issue first, all the FRAs were reviewed and categorised into new priorities, and staggered throughout the year. This approach has been successful and has meant that the compliance in this area has improved.

In addition to the appointment of Dawn, her old role was advertised and has now been appointed to Holly Thomas (Property Compliance/ H&S Trainee), this will mean that some of the administrative functions (coordinating appointments and closing off inspections on our property management database) can be undertaken by the new staff member allowing Dawn more time to undertake the training elements and completing them herself.

The limitation with this approach is that whereas there were 3 members of the CH&S team able to complete FRAs and training however now there is only 1 member of staff completing all 165 FRAs as well as providing the training provision.

The Lead Officer of Strategic Assets Tom Booty is keen to retain the skill and knowledge base in CH&S, so it has been agreed that from time to time the CH&S team will complete FRAs in order to keep the knowledge fresh and ensure there is not a single point of failure.

FRAs

Currently there are 3 categories of Fire Risk Assessments:

- **FRA1** – Comprising of Educational Premises and Residential and Care Sites and undertaken on an annual basis.
- **FRA2** – Comprising of Youth Centres, Leisure Centres, Housing Comminals, Tourist Sites, Offices, Town Halls, Library/Museums and Depots which are undertaken on a biennial basis.
- **FRA3** – Comprising of Car Parks, Public Toilets, Changing Rooms and Vacant Sites. These are undertaken every 3 years

All the above categories are subject to annual review, but are based on the perceived risk following an assessment of the use and occupancy of the sites.

KPIs

In order to monitor progress against targets a series of KPIs have been developed and these are monitored monthly and shared with the Fire Safety Manager.

Data:

- Number of Properties Requiring a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)
- Number of Properties Categorised as a Priority 1
- Number of Properties Categorised as a Priority 2
- Number of Properties Categorised as a Priority 3

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of total properties with a valid FRA
- Percentage of properties overdue
- Percentage of Priority 1 properties with a valid FRA
- Percentage of Priority 2 properties with a valid FRA
- Percentage of Priority 3 properties with a valid FRA

Coronavirus

Due to an international pandemic there has been a fall in the completion rate of FRAs meaning a dip in KPIs, there are a number of reasons for this:

Social Distancing

The primary reason was the initial lockdown in March and the inevitable requirement for staff to work from home, this meant that it was only in June that we were able to coordinate appointments and begin re-visiting these sites.

Obtaining Appointments

The next issue was being able to get appointments at the institutions which required visits. Normally school appointments would have been arranged and conducted prior to the summer holidays however due to social distancing rules, along with the limited staff available at the schools due to the pandemic, this has not been possible. We are now finding that schools are not returning our calls or allowing us to arrange appointments, this may be due to the summer break.

Capacity

Along with the other issues listed above, we also have the issue of capacity, as we only have 1 member of staff to complete these FRAs. Attempting to catch up (even where appointments can be made), has been challenging.

Recovery

The Fire Safety Manager and the Property Health and Safety Manager have had extensive discussions about the best way forward and the following decisions have been made.

The full list of overdue Risk Assessments has been reviewed and prioritised, these will be updated with the new dates, however these will still be included on an accelerated programme to try and ensure that the delay is not significant.

From the 1st October, we are asking our Property Compliance / H&S Trainee, to book all the appointments for the Fire Safety Manager, this will ensure that her time is spent completing FRAs rather than chasing sites for appointment bookings. The Fire Safety Manager will dedicate time throughout September 2020 to train our team member to complete the bookings correctly and allocate enough time for the write up of the report.

The performance of this initiative will be reviewed on 1st November, if we can see no significant improvement, support may be obtained through the instruction of an external contractor to aid the completion of those outstanding FRAs, or the team will call upon the skill base retained within the council.

Finally, we are suggesting that there is a delay in drawing final conclusions until December 2020, by which time it is anticipated those properties overdue should be completed and the KPI across all properties will be >90%

Statistics/KPIs

Data

The following details the data informing the KPIs and percentages listed below:

Fire Risk Assessments Data		
1	Number of Properties Requiring a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)	165
2	Number of Properties Categorised as a Priority 1	66
3	Number of Properties Categorised as a Priority 2	63
4	Number of Properties Categorised as a Priority 3	36

Performance Measures

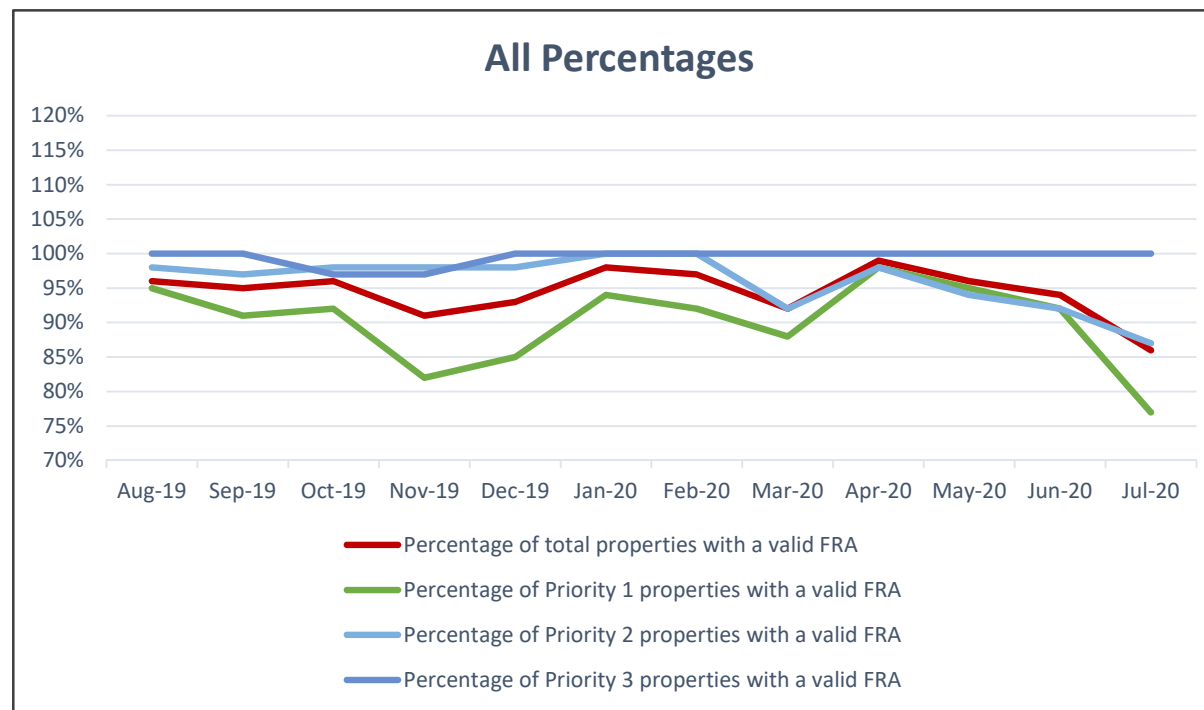
The following KPIs are colour coded as per the following thresholds as agreed by the Lead Officer for Strategic Assets:

KPIs	RED	AMBER	GREEN
Percentage properties with a valid Fire Risk Assessment	<85%	>85%	>95%

The below table and chart highlights the overall performance across all areas and demonstrates that there has been a drop in July 20, this is due to all the reasons mentioned earlier in the report, but is not a significant drop and still in the 80 percentile. This is arguably the most important KPIs as it shows the performance across the whole council and monitors the completion of all 165 sites.

All Properties	Aug 19	Sept 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	April 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20
Number of Properties Requiring a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)	164	164	164	164	164	164	164	164	165	165	165	165
Percentage of total properties with a valid FRA	96%	95%	96%	91%	93%	98%	97%	92%	99%	96%	94%	86%
Percentage of properties overdue	4%	5%	0%	9%	7%	2%	3%	8%	1%	4%	6%	14%

The above figures highlighted on a chart:



FRA 1 - KPIS

The following properties are those categorised as FRA1 comprising of Educational Premises, Residential and Care Sites and undertaken on an annual basis. There is a drop in performance as the care sites are still inaccessible so these have fallen overdue in July, along with the difficulty in gaining access to the schools both of which are categorised as FRA1s.

Priority 1 Properties	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20
Number of Properties Categorised as a Priority 1	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66
Percentage of Priority 1 properties with a valid FRA	95%	91%	92%	82%	85%	94%	92%	88%	98%	95%	92%	77%

FRA 2 - KPIS

The following properties are those categorised as FRA2 comprising of Youth Centres, Leisure Centres, Tourist Sites, Offices, Town Halls, Library/Museums and Depots which are undertaken on a biennial basis. This may show a drop in future as the FRA1s are prioritised, but are currently holding steady with only a minor drop.

Priority 2 Properties	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20
Number of Properties Categorised as a Priority 2	63	63	63	63	63	64	64	64	63	64	64	64
Percentage of Priority 2 properties with a valid FRA	98%	97%	98%	98%	98%	100%	100%	92%	98%	94%	92%	87%

Conclusions

To contextualise, the performance of these KPIs is significantly better than any other period throughout Denbighshire's history, when the new Fire Safety Manager took over this area the average completion on time across the whole portfolio was around 70%, with only 136 premises included in the assessments. This has now increased to 165. Another consideration is that there was initially 3 people completing these FRAs, whereas now there is only 1 person and performance is still better overall.

Stricter timescales have been implemented as highlighted above, with all premises having a review of their FRA every 3 years as a minimum, whereas historically some intervals were significantly longer than this.

Similarly, there is always a slight drop in performance around June and July as schools become reluctant to allow access for completion. This can also be noted around the November and December months also.

Overall, the impact of the coronavirus is still in the early days, as per the proposed recovery plan, if performance is not above 80% by the end of October, we will seek to contract some completions out to a third party or request the assistance of the in-house expertise.

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Key Priorities:

- Return performance to >90% by the end of the calendar year
 - Move over to a digital method of completing FRAs in 21/22
 - Improve the recording and allocation of FRA Actions 21/22
 - Deliver Fire Training (ongoing)
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