# CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE/AUTHORITY

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| **MEETING OF:** | **PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW** |
| **DATE:** | **22ND JULY 2020** |
| **REPORT OF:** | **HEAD OF OPERATIONAL POLICY AND ASSURANCE** |
| **AUTHOR:** | **SM HUW COATES** |

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## SUBJECT: PRE-ALERT TRIAL

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## Purpose of Report

1. This report provides a summary of the first 4 month period of the service-wide 'pre-alert' trial, from 1st Feb 2020 – 31st May 2020

## Recommended: that Members

[1] note the results of the pre-alert trial.

## Background

2. Pre-Alerting has been proven to improve the response times of operational crews attending incidents and offers significant benefits to CFRS both for the service user and for the performance of the organisation.

3. The pre-alerting system has been developed by North West Fire Control (NWFC) and their partners to alert a crew to an incoming call prior to the completion of the call handling process. This will give the crew time to prepare to receive the mobilisation message and thereby reduce overall turnout times.

4. The pre-alert system works by identifying caller location information and sending this to the nearest available appliance, via the 'station-ends' or Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) if an appliance is mobile. The initial information received by crews will comprise a 6 figure grid reference with the heading 'Pre-Alert'. No incident details will be available at this point.

5. On-Call stations receive a pre-alert via the existing personal-issue alerters. The tone received is identical to that of a standard mobilisation and crews will respond to station as normal. Once crews are in attendance at station, a pre-alert printer message with limited location information will be available. Depending on time taken to attend station, there may also be a mobilisation message with full incident details.

6. An initial, small-scale trial was introduced within CFRS in April 2019 across 6 stations to prove the benefits of the concept and identify any unintended consequences of the system.

## Initial Trial

7. The 6 stations selected to participate in the initial trial, comprised a mix of wholetime (WT) and On Call (OC) appliances. These were: E01 (Warrington), E05 (Runcorn), E09 (Chester), E12 (Nantwich), E15 (Crewe), and E22 (Poynton).

8. Crews were invited to provide qualitative feedback as well as highlight any issues directly to the Operational Policy and Assurance department throughout the trial period. Results of the trial were shared with participating stations throughout the trial period.

9. The initial pre-alert trial generated improvements in the time taken to mobilise appliances for each of the participating appliances.

10. The improvements in time taken from initial alert to mobilising was based on a comparison of average times taken over the same period in the year 2018, without the pre-alert system in place.

11. The results of this trial confirmed the expected outcome that improvements were significantly greater for On Call appliances, but generated benefits for all duty systems, including stations with 'special' appliances.

## Service-wide Trial

12. Following approval from SMT in November 2019, it was agreed to roll-out the Pre-Alert system throughout the county. Pre-alerting went live throughout CFRS at the end of January, allowing for time to fully communicate the benefits and implications of the system to Operational Crews.

13. It was identified that ongoing communication with crews was of paramount importance. This ensures that all personnel are aware of the performance benefits that pre-alerting offers, but also to ensure that any unintended consequences of pre-alerts in terms of impacts on workload, rest periods and crew welfare were fully considered.

14. A monthly performance report is shared with individual stations and a separate email account has been set up to allow crews to report any issues with the system directly to the Operational Policy and Assurance department. Watch and Crew Managers have been sent regular reminders to submit feedback or to contact either of the two points of contact within the department to discuss any issues.

15. During the initial trial period in 2019, 55.8% of all pre-alerts generated were followed by a CFRS resource being mobilised. The relatively high number of alerts that did not lead to an incident were mostly due to calls received by Alarm Receiving Centres within Cheshire, where the caller location was different to the incident location. These lines were subsequently excluded from the system,

as were a number of other previously unsighted locations of partner agencies where the same issue arose.

16. The service wide trial currently averages at a 63.1% success rate, in terms of pre-alerts received that then lead to an actual incident. This is against a target of 80% successful mobilisations.

17. The system is subject to ongoing review in a bid to further reduce false alarms. Crews highlight specific issues via the Pre-Alert inbox which are then submitted to the Operational Support Team at NWFC to investigate. This approach has thus far highlighted several Alarm Receiving Centres that were previously unknown and some additional technical anomalies that have been escalated to Telent to remedy.

18. The first 4 months of the service wide trial have yielded the following improvements in mobilising times, in comparison to the same period last year where pre-alerts were not in place, (see also appendix A):

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|---|---|
| Whole-time stations, (average improvement in seconds) | 20.9 |
| Day Crewing stations, (average improvement in seconds) | 64.3 |
| On Call Stations, (average improvement in seconds) | 73.9 |

## Further Considerations

19. The reduction in time to book mobile to any incident for OC crews could be utilised to extend the catchment area for recruitment.

20. The reduction in time to book mobile for the OC crews could alternatively be used as a rationale to reduce the mobilising time that NWFC have built into the system for these resources. This in turn could increase their number of incidents and operational exposure and improve service retention of OC staff.

21. It is recommended that an additional 6 months data is collected and analysed before making recommendations in this area.

## Financial Implications

22. Initial configuration costs for the system were paid for by Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service.

23. There is an ongoing annual cost of £18,000, split between 3 Fire & Rescue Services. The figure paid by CFRS in the year 2018-19 was £3,500.

24. On Call crews are attending station with greater frequency as a result of the Pre-Alert system. A comparison of pay-claims from On Call stations shows that in the first 4 months of this trial circa 10k was paid for attendances that did not result in incidents. This figure is anticipated to reduce as the system is refined.

## Legal Implications

25. None

## Equality & Diversity Implications

26. Equality impact assessment carried out. No issues identified.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**

**Item x**
**Appendix A**

## Pre-Alert Data

| | 1st February 2020 - 31st May 2020 |
|---|---|
| Pre-alerts sent | 2694 |
| Pre-alerts which did not require NWFC or CFRS activity | 114 (4.2%) |
| Pre-alerts which did not require CFRS activity | 880 (32.7%) |
| Pre-alerts which did occur and then a CFRS resource was subsequently mobilised | 1700 (63.1%) |
| ▪ Same pump as pre-alerted pump mobilised | 1463 of 1700 (86.1%) |
| ▪ Different pump as pre-alerted pump mobilised | 237 of 1700 (13.9%) |

Breakdown of resource mobilising times in comparison to same period of previous year. Note, 'decrease' refers to an overall improvement in mobilising times.

| Alert to Mobile | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Call Sign | Time Change | + or - | Incidents |
| E01P1 | 00:00:14 | Decrease | 177 |
| E02P1 | 00:00:16 | Decrease | 43 |
| E03P1 | 00:01:27 | Decrease | 25 |
| E04P1 | 00:00:26 | Decrease | 102 |
| E05P1 | 00:00:16 | Decrease | 117 |
| E05P2 | 00:01:24 | Decrease | 10 |
| E06P1 | 00:00:22 | Increase* | 20 |
| E07P1 | 00:00:27 | Decrease | 30 |
| E08P1 | 00:00:15 | Decrease | 16 |
| E08P2 | 00:00:15 | Decrease | 86 |
| E09P1 | 00:00:10 | Decrease | 137 |
| E10P1 | 00:01:07 | Decrease | 8 |
| E11P1 | 00:01:21 | Decrease | 9 |

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|---|---|---|---|
| E12P1 | 00:00:16 | Decrease | 41 |
| E13P1 | 00:02:31 | Decrease | 5 |
| E14P1 | 00:01:37 | Decrease | 19 |
| E15P1 | 00:00:10 | Decrease | 13 |
| E15P2 | 00:00:17 | Decrease | 105 |
| E16P1 | 00:00:46 | Decrease | 30 |
| E17P1 | 00:01:13 | Decrease | 26 |
| E18P1 | 00:01:40 | Decrease | 31 |
| E19P1 | 00:00:32 | Decrease | 74 |
| E20P1 | 00:01:38 | Decrease | 22 |
| E22P1 | 00:00:41 | Decrease | 18 |
| E23P1 | 00:00:31 | Decrease | 70 |
| E24P1 | 00:00:58 | Decrease | 22 |
| E25P1 | 00:01:06 | Decrease | 79 |
| E25P2 | 00:04:38 | Decrease | 2 |
| E26P1 | 00:00:58 | Decrease | 15 |
| E27P1 | 00:00:27 | Decrease | 59 |
| E27P2 | 00:01:15 | Decrease | 1 |
| E28P1 | 00:00:35 | Decrease | 47 |
| E29P1 | 00:00:08 | Decrease | 32 |
| E29P2 | 00:00:26 | Decrease | 5 |

*reason for increase under investigation. There have been no significant changes in personnel or notable incidents where there has been a failure to respond. Local crews have suggested that increased traffic flow immediately in front of the station could be a contributing factor.