

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

25 SEPTEMBER 2020

LSCSB UPDATE: LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview to the Board on the work that is currently being undertaken by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS).

Notable developments and challenges:

Past Year

2. LFRS has a dedicated Community Safety department within the organisation. The department focuses on two main areas of Protection and Prevention.
3. The Protection element allows for community and business engagement. This is a statutory duty of the Fire Service and LFRS is the local enforcement agency of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2004. This applies to commercial premises and buildings where members of the public may gather. This does not apply to single private domestic dwellings.
4. LFRS have an annual Risk Based Inspection Programme. The premises that are highlighted within this programme receive a fire safety visit where an audit of this premises fire safety arrangements is undertaken. As a result of this audit, a number of outcomes are possible, these range from delivering advice to the responsible person, through to informal and formal enforcement action. LFRS have the powers to immediately prohibit a building, if the fire safety arrangements are so lacking.
5. LFRS follow the 3 E principles to fire safety which are, to Educate, then to Encourage, and if necessary to Enforce the legislation.
6. In the 2019/20 financial year LFRS completed 501 fire safety audits. This resulted in 214 either formal or informal enforcement actions with 7 premises receiving prohibition notices. These premises/businesses were all supported so that they had the correct information and advice to comply with the legislation.
7. The Prevention element engages with a wide community audience across Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland and uses a blended approach of dedicated Community Educators and operational firefighters. These do include

entering the homes of members of the community and supporting them with advice.

8. The Prevention activities include Home Fire Safety Checks, a school's education programme, a Fatal Four/Biker Down education programme, youth engagement, the use of virtual reality as a delivery method, the reporting of vulnerable people on to partner agencies and numerous other activities.
9. As a result of these activities, LFRS carried out over 15,000 visits to homes which resulted in over 6400 Home Fire Safety Checks.
10. These Home Fire Safety Checks have now evolved into Safe and Well checks. This allows LFRS to deliver further quality safety advice and encourages follow up visits.
11. This work has just started to be evaluated using an app called 'Snap Survey'. As well as measuring customer satisfaction, we are now able to demonstrate what positive life style habits have been adopted that demonstrates we are achieving our corporate purpose which is 'Safer People, Safer Places'.

Coming Year

12. Protection - LFRS intends to expand its Risk Based Inspection Programme. Following the recent inspection from Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS), it was highlighted that there was a national issue around the reduction in team sizes in Fire Protection. This has resulted in reduced inspections that has been reflected by this reduction in capacity.
13. HMICFRS were clear that this needs to be addressed. LFRS has reallocated its resources to ensure that the capacity of the team grows to address this issue. Additional funding has also been made available to Fire and Rescue Services nationally to increase the capacity of their Fire Protection teams as a result of the Grenfell Towers disaster.
14. These additional resources will see a steady expansion of the Risk Based Inspection Programme over the coming years.
15. Prevention – LFRS will be increasing the number of successful interactions it has when carrying out 'Safe and Well' visits. There is an aspirational target to increase this by 46%. This will be challenging for the Service and will have a better chance of success if done in partnership with other agencies.

Key issues for partnership working or affecting partners

16. If LFRS is able to increase its capacity and activity in both Protection and Prevention, it will support both the business community and vulnerable individuals within society.

17. To achieve both elements LFRS require support from our partner agencies.

a). **Protection:** LFRS has started to work with a number of our partners and we have delivered fire safety problem spotting training to them. This input is a simple 1-hour session from a Fire Protection officer.

This is aimed at those that will enter commercial premises or buildings where members of the public gather. By being able to understand some of the basic issues, we have started to receive referrals of Fire Safety issues from our partners.

This has meant that we are more targeted at dealing with problems, rather than adopting a scatter gun approach which can be time consuming for premises that are already complying to the fire safety requirements.

An internal process is in place to deal with these referrals as a priority.

LFRS would seek the expansion of this scheme and for partners to contact ourselves to receive this input.

b). **Prevention:** COVID-19 has had a serious impact on LFRS entering people's homes to conduct 'Safe and Well' visits. As such, innovative ways of interacting have been developed.

These innovative ways of interaction include carrying out door step visits, leaflet drops, developing a web based approach and telephone consultations.

By utilising the evaluation tool (the Snap Survey app) LFRS have been pleasantly surprised that the most successful approach is the telephone consultation. With COVID-19 likely to present within society for the foreseeable future, this area of work will be maintained and expanded to ensure that we offer the public of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland the best possible service.

To do this, LFRS need the assistance of our partner agencies. We require partners to refer on those that are regarded as falling into the vulnerability groups and in particular the contact details of these people.

LFRS does have information sharing agreements that can be put into place to ensure that there is no conflict with GDPR.

LFRS would seek the expansion of this scheme and for partners to contact ourselves to assist us with this and so we can fully explain what services we are able to offer to not only the members of the community, but also to our partner agencies.

Issues in local areas

18. LFRS attend regular Community Safety Partnership (CSP's) and Joint Action Group Meetings (JAG) which allow for a multi-agency awareness and proactive approach to any local issues that are highlighted. Inclusion also allows for any known future issues arising to be discussed.

Recommendations for the Board

19. The Board is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report;
- b) Encourage Partner Agencies to support the request from LFRS for support in carrying out the collaborative approach towards both Protection and Prevention activities.

Officer to contact

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