



LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

22nd MARCH 2024

LRSCSB UPDATE: LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Background

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).
2. LFRS has a dedicated Community Safety department within the organisation. The department focuses on two main areas of Protection (buildings) and Prevention (people).
3. The Protection element allows for community and business engagement. This is a statutory duty of fire and rescue services and LFRS is the local enforcement agency of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This applies to commercial premises and buildings where members of the public may gather. It does not apply to single private domestic dwellings.
4. The Prevention element engages with a wide community audience across Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland and uses a blended approach of resolute Community Educators and operational firefighters. This includes entering people's homes and providing them with specific advice or equipment relative to their needs; referred to as a Home Safety Check (HSC).

Notable developments and challenges:

Past Year

5. One of our priorities is to improve home fire safety and reduce accidental fires. Since April 2023 LFRS have completed over 14,000 Home Safety Checks (HSC) against an annual target of 13,200. These HSC are conducted following an assessment of a person's risk or a referral from a partner agency, e.g., a key health partner provides around 600 referrals per quarter.
6. The successful completion of our HSC annual target underscores a commitment to risk mitigation and community engagement. Targeting vulnerable communities

ensures that resources are effectively allocated to areas with the highest need, enhancing overall community resilience.

7. Diverse outreach efforts, including school visits, public events, and fire cadet programs, reflect a comprehensive approach to community safety. These initiatives not only raise awareness but also foster positive relationships with community members, promoting a culture of safety and cooperation, e.g., in Quarter 3 (October – December 2023):
 - 58 Key stage 1 and 2 school visits (5,875 students);
 - 71 schools visited Warning Zone (3086 students);
 - Supported events promoting candle and diva advice through Celebrate Safely such as Diwali which attracts over 30k people;
 - 21 Fatal four presentations and short courses such as Youth Justice individuals attending a Safety and Survival course;
 - Coalville and Western Fire Cadets continues to run successfully, promotion progress continues to reopen Central station cadets;
 - Monthly hoarding peer group continues to develop;
 - New graphics and video series covering Lithium-ion battery risks reached 52,899 people.
8. 52 Vulnerable Person (VP) submissions were received into the LFRS in Quarter 3 (October – December 2023). Each case is supported by a partner agency liaison approach and updated accordingly. In Q3 44 cases were closed following completion of the LFRS activity to reduce the threat of fire in homes via education and installation of smoke alarms.
9. Home Safety Check literature has been reviewed. A new Fire Safety booklet has been completed and is available. The content includes current risk information for example e-cigarettes, emollient creams, and lithium-ion batteries.
10. A domestic fire risk training presentation was produced and is being rolled out to partner agencies. The objective is to increase understanding of domestic fire risk and risk identification within the home. The training will consist of a module on process of HSC referral pathways for partners with the overall outcome leading to an increase in high quality referrals into the service.
11. The revised and refreshed Joint Arson Strategy was signed by LFRS and Leicestershire Police which reinforces the partnership work undertaken to tackle and report on arson.
12. A 3-year custodial sentence was given to a man who deliberately set fire to a flat in North West Leicestershire district. Fire Investigation supports criminal cases and successful convictions reduces the community risk from Arson.
13. Community Educators (CE) deal with complex multi-visit cases. A recent example of perseverance leading to success involved a 70+ year old male who has had extensive work undertaken on their home due to our engagement with

the lead housing officer. This has improved their immediate wellbeing and health and lowered their likelihood of hospital admission.

14. January 2024 was one of our busiest January's for several years. This is due to increases in non-fire incidents and more specifically flooding incidents and rescue or evacuation from water incidents. Adverse weather conditions, with significant rain, high winds and stormy weather led to 88 flooding related incidents and a further 33 incidents where rescues or evacuation from flood water were required (car/home).
15. 671 Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) were attended by LFRS between April and January 2024. This is an increase of 106 on our 3-year average year-to-date figure of 565. Unfortunately, there have been 16 fatalities (3 more than the last reporting period) between April 2023 and January 2024.
16. Collaborating with the Police, Road Safety Partnership, and other agencies we continue to deliver road safety initiatives. The focus during January and February has been the Fatal Four campaign. These campaigns cover: drink and drug driving; mobile phones / distraction; speeding; and seat belts.
17. The LFRS work with Children & Young people can be separated into four distinct areas: Fire Cadets, Fire-Skills, Education and Fire-Care. In addition, supporting Warning Zone safety centre with a seconded Community Educator to support the innovative delivery of safety education on understanding risks from Fire, Road, and Water.
18. Part of our school's road education delivery involves engaging with 12–16-year-olds via the Hazard express virtual reality vehicle. This is supported by LFRS promoting Staywise website, a resource bringing together blue-light agencies to provide learning resources for teachers and community safety practitioners.
19. As well as prevention activities we collaborate with Responsible Persons in protecting the built environment. LFRS conduct Fire Safety Inspections (Audits) and completed 1019 audits (April – March). After the audit, follow up activity to ensure community safety improvements are provided used over 900 hours of Fire Protection Officer time this year. This includes engagement and education to Responsible Persons.
20. Where there is an immediate risk to life, LFRS Fire Protection Inspection Officers will prohibit the use or area of use of a premises which can lead to a need to find emergency accommodation. It is crucial that when this occurs, and where necessary, effective communication and cooperation is provided across partners e.g., local authority etc. This will reduce the impact to our communities when their safety may already be compromised. There were 50 prohibition notices served between April and March.

Key issues for partnership working or affecting partners

21. Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) are a key issue and LFRS want to continue collaborating with partners to undertake initiatives to reduce road traffic collisions

across the county. LFRS will actively engage with, for example, the Road Safety Partnership to support reducing harm from RTC.

22. Fire false alarms continue to increase and are the highest for years. 2817 fire false alarm incidents occurred April 2023 to January 2024, 1437, were due to issues with an apparatus (such as a smoke alarm), 1298 were good intent and 82 were malicious. The 3-year average is 2531, so compared to the average, figures have increased by 286.
23. In 2024/25 the LFRS will provide more focus to this area. False alarm incidents prevent fire appliances from attending emergencies and crews from conducting community safety activity. It should be noted that the population of LLR continues to increase as does regulation to provide fire detection, and finally our Fire Protection teams work increases apparatus in premises. Therefore, an increase in accidental false alarms is predictable, however, the current trend needs to be reversed.
24. Premises which have multiple such incidents per year include hospitals, residential care, Houses in Multiple Occupation, and flats. Partners may be able to assist in ensuring local management is effective and issues are resolved quickly.

Issues in local areas

25. The Road Safety partnership data provides a good insight into where the Road Traffic Collision incidents occur and provide a breakdown of data which will aid targeted initiatives. From a common data set we can target areas more effectively and coordinate activity to increase effectiveness.

Recommendations for the Board

26. It is recommended that the board:
 - (a) Notes the content of the report;
 - (b) Considers how the themes impact their areas of activity and where closer partnership working opportunities can be explored.

Officer to contact

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