

Public Document Pack



To: All Members of the Authority



R. Groves
Monitoring Officer

Tel: 0151 296 4113
Extn: 4113 Shauna Healey

Our ref SH/RG

Date: 4 October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **AUTHORITY** to be held at **1.00 pm** on **THURSDAY, 12TH OCTOBER, 2023** in the Liverpool Suite - Fire Service Headquarters at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle.

This meeting will be available to watch via YouTube at the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/7vufb97iZe4?feature=share>

Yours faithfully,

PP – S. Healey

Monitoring Officer

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY

12 OCTOBER 2023

AGENDA

Members

Cllr James Roberts, Vice Chair
Cllr Brian Kenny, Vice Chair
Cllr Les Byrom CBE Chair
Cllr Sam Gorst
Cllr Gillian Wood
Cllr Barbara Murray
Cllr Susan Murphy
Cllr Terry Byron
Cllr Edna Finneran
Cllr Linda Maloney
Cllr Lynne Thompson
Cllr Jan Grace
Cllr Lesley Rennie
Cllr Paul Tweed, Sefton
Cllr Dave Hanratty
Cllr Pat Moloney
Cllr Ed Lamb
Mr Anthony Boyle
Emily Spurrell PCC

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To consider any apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To consider any Member Declarations of Interest.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 14)
To consider the minutes of the last meeting held on 8th June 2023.
4. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022/23** (Pages 15 - 60)
To consider the annual equality, diversity and inclusion Report for 2022/23 (CFO/046/23).
5. **Adopting, Embedding and Reporting on the Socio-economic duty - update report** (Pages 61 - 72)
To consider a report of the Authority relating to its socio –economic duty (CFO/045/23).

6. **Fatal Fire Analysis** (Pages 73 - 118)
To consider a report providing an analysis of fatal fires (CFO/047/23).

7. **Realigned ICT Capital Budget** (Pages 119 - 124)
To consider a report of the Authority relating to the ICT Capital Budget (CFO/051/23)

8. **Scrutiny Forward Work Plan 2023-25** (Pages 125 - 130)
To consider a report of the Monitoring Officer providing the Authority with the Scrutiny Forward Work Plan for 2023-25 (CFO/049/23).

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8 JUNE 2023

MINUTES

Present: **Councillors Leslie T. Byrom CBE (Chair)** Sam Gorst, Gillian Wood, Edna Finneran, Linda Maloney, Lynne Thompson, Janet Grace, Brian Kenny, Lesley Rennie, James Roberts, Paul Tweed, Dave Hanratty, Lamb, Knight, Murphy, Byron, Pat Moloney, Barbara Murray and Mr Anthony Boyle

Also Present: Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan, Director of Finance and Procurement Ian Cummins, Monitoring Officer Ria Groves

Apologies of absence were received from:
Emily Spurrell (PCC)

1. Apologies

Apologies received from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Emily Spurrell.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gill Wood declared an interest in item 10, noting that she is employed by the Growth Platform and as such would not take part in that item.

3. Appointment of Chair

The Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, asked for nominations for the appointment of Chair of the Authority for 2023/24.

Nominee:

Councillor Les Byrom - nominated by Councillor Dave Hanratty
- seconded by Councillor Linda Maloney

No further nominations were made and Councillor Byrom accepted the position, noting that it was a great privilege to chair such a well achieving Authority.

RESOLVED that Councillor Les Byrom be confirmed as the Chair of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority for the municipal year 2023/24.

4. Appointment of Vice Chair

Nominations were requested for the positions of Vice Chair of the Authority for 2023/24.

Nominees:

Councillor Brian Kenny and Councillor James Roberts

- nominated by Councillor Les Byrom
- seconded by Councillor Linda Maloney

RESOLVED that Councillors Brian Kenny and James Roberts be confirmed as Vice Chairs of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority for the municipal year 2023/24.

5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, made the Members aware of a technical error when issuing the agenda that had caused the below inaccuracies in the minutes. It was agreed that the following amendments be made:

Page 7 Item 2 – date to read Thursday 23rd February 2023

Page 7 Item 3 – date to read Wednesday 22nd March 2023

Page 8 Item 5 – clarify that the proposal is for Merseyside Fire and Rescue FRS and not Liverpool.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 18th May 2023 with the inclusion of the above amendments be agreed as an accurate record.

6. Membership of the Authority

Members considered report CFO/021/23 of the Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, noting the changes to membership resulting from decisions taken by the local authorities.

The Chair placed on record the Authority's thanks to the Members who had left and welcomed those new Members to the Authority.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the contents of this report be noted;
- b) the membership of the Authority further to the appointments of the five district council be noted; and
- c) the appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Merseyside to the Authority continue.

7. Structure of the Authority

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves presented report CFO/022/23 which provided Members with the political balance of the Authority and each Committee. It was confirmed that the largest opposition party for 2023/24 would be the Liberal

Democrats and the Opposition Spokesperson would be Councillor Lynne Thompson and the political balance had remained the same as 2022/23.

Members agreed the following appointments:

Chair of the Authority:	Councillor Les Byrom
Vice Chairs of the Authority: James Roberts	Councillor Brian Kenny and Councillor
Opposition Spokesperson:	Councillor Lynne Thompson

Committee	Members
Community Safety & Protection Committee 9 Members (6,1,1)	1 Cllr (Chair) B Kenny 2 Cllr E Finneran 3 Cllr J Grace 4 Cllr L Maloney 5 Cllr P Tweed 6 Cllr D Knight 7 Cllr L Thompson 8 Cllr Gorst 9. Cllr Lamb
Policy & Resources Committee 9 Members (7,1,1)	1 Cllr (Chair) J Roberts 2 Cllr B Murray 3 Cllr S Murphy 4 Cllr D Hanratty 5 Cllr T Byron 6 Cllr G Wood 7 Cllr L Byrom 8. Cllr P Moloney 9. Cllr Rennie
Audit Committee (proposed increase from 5 to 6) 6 Members (4,1,1) (Plus 1 Independent Person)	1 Cllr (Chair) J Grace 2 Cllr E Finneran 3 Cllr B Murray 4 Cllr S Murphy 5 Cllr P Moloney 6. Cllr Gorst
Scrutiny Committee 9 Members (6,1,1,1) (Plus 1 Independent Person)	1 Cllr (Chair) P Tweed 2 Cllr L Maloney 3 Cllr G Wood 4 Cllr D Hanratty 5 Cllr T Byron 6 Cllr D Knight 7 Cllr P Moloney 8 Cllr Rennie 9. Cllr Lamb

Appointments Committee (3,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Party Group Leaders	1 Cllr (Chair) L Byrom 2 Cllr J Roberts 3 Cllr B Kenny 4 Cllr L Thompson
Appeals Committee (3,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Party Group Leaders	1 Cllr (Chair) L Byrom 2 Cllr J Roberts 3 Cllr B Kenny 4 Cllr L Thompson
Joint Fire & Police Collaboration Committee 4 Members (3,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and 1 Opposition Spokesperson (Plus PCC)	1 Cllr (Chair) L Byrom 2 Cllr (vice) B Kenny 3 Cllr (vice) J Roberts 4 Cllr L Thompson
Member Development & Engagement Group (3,1)	1 Cllr (Chair) B Murray 2 Cllr Finneran 3 Cllr Wood 4 Cllr P Moloney

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Committees the Authority wishes to establish be determined;
- b) the number of voting Members to be appointed be determined;
- c) the number of seats on each Committee to be allocated to each political group in accordance with the political balance regulations be determined;
- d) an alternate from the relevant political group already appointed to the Authority attend a Committee in the absence of the substantive Member be determined;
- e) Members who are to be appointed to Committees and roles, attracting a Special Responsibility Allowance in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group in respect of those seats allocated to that group be confirmed;
- f) Members who are to be appointed to Lead Member roles be confirmed; and to be advised; and
- g) Members inform Democratic Services, prior to the start of any meeting if an alternate Member is attending on their behalf be confirmed.

8. Meeting Dates 23/24 and 24/25

Members considered report CFO/023/23 and were advised that the meeting dates for 2023/24 and 2024/25 had been circulated.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the schedule of meeting dates and events for 2023/24 be considered and approved; and
- b) the draft provisional dates for 2024/25 be considered and noted.

9. Questions on Discharge of Functions

It was agreed that the following Members would represent their districts to answer questions on discharge of functions:

Member	District
Councillor Brian Kenny	Wirral Council
Councillor Les Byrom	Sefton Council
Councillor James Roberts	Liverpool City Council
Councillor Edna Finneran	Knowsley Council
Councillor Linda Maloney	St Helens Council

RESOLVED that the Authority nominates five Members (one from each constituent District Council) as the Member responsible for answering questions within their Council on the discharge of the functions of the Authority be recommended.

10. Appointments of Membership to Outside Bodies

Members considered report CFO/025/23 of the Monitoring Officer which sought to appoint Members to outside organisations to which the Authority was affiliated.

Members agreed to continue the Authority’s affiliation with the following organisations and to the appointment of the following Members and officers:

Organisation	Representative
Local Government Association Fire Services Commission	Councillors Les Byrom, Brian Kenny and James Roberts
North West Employers Forum	Councillor James Roberts
North West Fire and Rescue Advisory Forum	Councillors Les Byrom, Brian Kenny, James Roberts and Lynne Thompson Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan
Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities	Councillor Les Byrom
Liverpool City Region Growth Platform	Area Manager Protection and Area Manager Prevention

Members were advised that a nomination for Merseyside Community Safety Partnership was no longer required from Members although it was noted that the Chief Fire Officer would attend on behalf of MFRS.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the current affiliations to outside bodies be noted:
- b) the continued affiliation with each of the organisations specified in this report be approved; and
- c) the appointments to each of the outside organisations as the Authority's representatives be approved as appropriate.

11. Approved Conference and Outside Meetings

Members considered report CFO/026/23 noting that since Covid there had been a decline in the number of conferences and outside meetings attended by Members.

RESOLVED that the attendance at conferences and outside meetings by representatives of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority are determined by the Chair of the Authority be approved.

12. Meetings with National Politicians at Party Conference

RESOLVED that:

- a) appropriate representatives of the political groups of the Authority to attend meetings with Ministers, Opposition Spokespersons and other relevant national politicians, to be held at the location of their own party political conferences, to discuss issues relating to the business of the Authority be approved;
- b) appropriate travel and subsistence expenses for such meetings but no payment of conference fees be approved; and
- c) issues raised and responses and progress on information received be reported back to the Authority.

13. Members Allowance Payments 2022/23

Members considered report CFO/028/23 which provided a retrospective review of Member's allowance payments for the financial year 2022/23.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the report and at Appendix A is noted.

14. Scheme of Members Allowance 2023/24

Members considered report CFO/029/23 which set out the proposed scheme of allowances for 2023/24.

Councillor Murray noted that the addition of an extra Independent Member to the Authority was a good idea as it would help to strengthen the Authority's arrangements.

RESOLVED that:

- a) continuation with its current Members' Allowance Scheme be approved;
- b) any variations to the Scheme, in line with the structure of the Authority and the approved budget, be identified
- c) any inflationary increase to the Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowance, normally aligned to the previous year's Firefighters' pay and subsistence allowance by the previous year's March CPI, be noted;
- d) a pay increase to the Scheme of Members' Allowances, in line with the Firefighter Pay Award for 2022/23, apply to 2023/24 allowances be approved;
- e) the current roles of Co-opted Member and the Independent Person be combined be approved: and
 - i. to both be appointed to Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee as a non-voting member (subject to approval of the structure);
 - ii. continue to consider any complaints against Members alleged to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct and Relevant Officers under the Relevant Officers Disciplinary Procedure on the Independent Panel as the "Independent Person"; and
 - iii. be paid for conducting such roles, following submission and verification of invoices, at a daily attendance rate of £60 (as and when required) as is the current case;
- f) the appointment of s second Independent Person be advertised locally and interview be approved.
- g)

6. MFRA Constitution 23/24

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, presented report CFO/030/23 and highlighted to the Members the changes that had been made to the Constitution for 2023/24.

It was explained that there were some typographical errors being remedied in Part 1 and 2 of the Constitution. Additionally, it was proposed that the value of contracts in the (Scheme of Delegation) be increased from £250,000 to £300,000 given the impact of inflation.

The report also proposed that the 'Contract Standing Orders' be increased from £10,000 to £12,000.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the draft amended Constitution for 2023/24 be approved;
- b) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to keep the Constitution under review; and
- c) in the event of any relevant changes in legislation a further report be brought to the Authority

16. Staff Survey Results 2022

The Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan presented report CFO/031/23 which presented the key findings from the recent staff survey.

It was reported that the Authority had scored in the top percentile for engagement, scoring higher than the external benchmark in all areas. Members heard that staff felt a strong alignment to the corporate values and there were good channels of communication across the organisation.

Councillor Murphy welcomed the action plan at Appendix A and asked for timelines to be added in order to monitor progress.

The response rate was queried by Councillor Hanratty, who suggested that the Authority consider ways to encourage more staff to engage in the future. It was also suggested that the results of the staff survey be considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief explained that the Authority would review circulating pulse surveys in order to gain feedback on specific topics affecting staff. The Chair agreed that the Authority should try to engage more of its staff to give feedback and that this was an issue across the public and private sector.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the contents and finding of the report be noted; and
- b) actions for continuous improvement within the report be considered and approved.

Close 13.28

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	12 OCTOBER 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/046/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEGAL SERVICES - NICK MERNOCK	REPORT AUTHORS:	MO JOGI & VICKY CAMPBELL
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT, APRIL 2022 TO MARCH 2023
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Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress made against Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority ('MFRA') Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ('ED&I') objectives for 2021-2024 and present the annual report for publication.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the content of the report and;
 - b) approve the ED&I Annual Report for publication on the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MFRS) website in order to demonstrate MFRA's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and how it has met its Public Sector Equality Duty).

Introduction and Background

3. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate MFRA's compliance with the Equality Act 2010 General Duty and to update stakeholders on the key outcomes delivered in the year with regards to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

4. The Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (s.149) states that in the exercise of their functions, public authorities must have **due regard** to the need to:
 - a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - c. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
5. In order for public authorities to demonstrate they are meeting the PSED there is a number of specific duties which require public bodies including MFRA to:
 - a) Publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually
 - b) Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.
6. The PSED states that all information above must be published in a way which makes it easy for people to access it.
7. It is proposed the report is published and promoted on the intranet portal and website and copies will be available for request in braille, large font and different languages on request.
8. This report includes information on the effect that our policies and practices have had on people who share a relevant protected characteristic, to demonstrate the extent to which we have furthered the aims of the general equality duty for our employees.
9. The report also provides our fourth gender pay gap report which is required by all Public Sector Bodies over 250 employees.
10. This year for the first time the report considers the ethnicity pay gap, this is not currently a requirement on the Authority but is seen as best practice by the Service.
11. MFRA recognises that a representative workforce will provide a Fire and Rescue Service that respects and responds to the diversity of the local communities that it serves. For the purposes of comparison in this report, the general population of Merseyside has been used and the national fire and rescue service staff population is used where available as a further benchmark.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. The ED&I Annual Report evidences how MFRA executes the provision of the Equality Act 2010 and in particular shows due regard to the needs of the nine protected groups through the monitoring of the ED&I action plan and our five equality objectives.

Staff Implications

13. Staff have been integral to the creation of this report through a number of processes including attending, Staff Networks and meetings with the Diversity Team and providing regular written communication updates. The data contained in the reports will be used by officers carrying out future Equality Impact Assessments, changes to services or development of employment and service delivery policies.

Legal Implications

14. The reports demonstrate the work that is being conducted to meet the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty requirements.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

15. There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

16. There are no risk management, health & safety or environmental implications arising from this report.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

17. The production of this report demonstrates how MFRA are delivering services in a way that meets its legal duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty requirements, and how best practice is essential for a public sector organisation.
18. The Annual Report also shows how we manage our services to engage with diverse communities, and gives examples of how we serve, how we protect and how we keep those communities safe.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/111/11 If this report follows on from another, list the previous report(s)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AFSA	Asian Fire Service Association
AWoL	Absent Without Leave
BAME	Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic
CFO	Chief Fire Officer

DCFO	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
ED&I	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
FF	Firefighter
FRS	Fire & Rescue Service
HFSC	Home Fire Safety Check
HMICFRS	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
LCR	Liverpool City Region
LFB	London Fire Brigade
LGA	Local Government Association
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, Queer/Questioning +
MFRA	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority
MFRS	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NR	National Resilience
POD	People and Organisational Development
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
PT	Physical Trainers
REACH	Race Equality and Cultural Heritage
SHQ	Service Headquarters
SRT	Search and Rescue Team
TDA	Training and Development Academy
TDP	Training Delivery Partners
UwFR	Unwanted Fire Signals

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report

April 2022 to March 2023



Alternative Formats

We are committed to ensuring that all our information is fully accessible for all communities across Merseyside, we have included this document on our website which can be accessed from our Webpage <http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/equality & diversity>

If you would like a copy in any other formats please contact us at Diversity Team, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle, Liverpool L30 4YD. Telephone 0151 296 4422 or email DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk

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Welcome to the 2022-23 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I) Annual Report.

Foreword

Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan

This report brings together in one document Merseyside Fire and Rescue work on equality, diversity, and inclusion, equally importantly it responds to the duties placed on the Authority in relation to transparency and reporting.

Although we all hope that the pandemic is now behind us, new challenges have arisen.

The cost-of-living crisis has affected everyone, but we know that the poorest people in society suffer the most and they are often also the people who are most at risk of fire in the home.

In response we have led nationally on creating resources to help all fire and rescue services support their communities through the crisis, working with the health service to develop ways of sharing information to help us visit more at-risk people and we will continue to do so in the future.

Not only this, but in direct response the inequalities we see in our communities every day we have adopted the 'socio economic duty' as set out in the equalities act and we are working with the Liverpool City Region to put inequality and opportunity at the forefront of our decision making.

Despite our focus on the most vulnerable sadly, this year we have witnessed more fire deaths than in the previous 12 months. Every fire death is avoidable, and we will continue to learn from these tragic incidents to make sure that every one of our 60,000 contacts (home safety visits) counts.

At the time of writing, the Service is waiting to hear back following the third full inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services. In 2021, we scored three 'outstanding' judgements across the 11-sub themes for fire prevention, response to major and multi-agency incidents and for providing value for money and overall, the Inspectorate judged us as:

- Good at effectively keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks
- Outstanding at efficiently keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks
- Good at looking after its people

We are working hard to continue to improve on the 2021 results.

Organisational culture has been in the spotlight nationally of late, having been identified as an area of focus by HMICFRS in their state of fire report. We remain

steadfast in our determination to create a culture fully inclusive and will operate a policy of zero tolerance when it is not. To further enhance our appeal to underrepresented members of our communities we have recruited a Head of Culture and Inclusion and employed from within our services an attractions team to ensure we are fully representative of our communities.

All staff have received input on our new Leadership Message which explains what is important to us as a Service, what we want to achieve for the people of Merseyside and our own employees and the values and behaviours that will get us there.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is a positive, safe, and supportive place to work. We will continue to work to make sure that our organisational culture is welcoming to people from all backgrounds, and everyone feels that they belong.

Our response to HMICFRS's spotlight report will strengthen this even further in 2024/25.

Our work will also reach further into our communities to remove barriers for employment whilst making them safe in their homes and their communities.

We hope you enjoy reading about our work on ED&I and whatever challenges the next twelve months presents, you can be assured that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service will continue to provide the highest levels of service to the communities of Merseyside and beyond.

Cllr Jan Grace

Authority, Lead Member for Equality and Diversity 2022/23

On the 27th of June this year the Local Government Association organised a Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service conference that I attended along with Cllr Brian Kenny. There were some excellent, informative presentations by diverse speakers including a Deputy Chief Fire Officer who has joined HMICFRS on secondment, an ED&I Strategic Lead at the Police Service in Northern Ireland, a Chief Executive of a Fire and Rescue Service, a National Secretary of the FBU, a National Women's Committee Secretary (FBU), a member of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA), a representative of Unison and Authority members that included several with fire fighter backgrounds.

On the day of the conference a lead story in the media was the report by an Independent Commission on English cricket stating that the game suffers from 'widespread and deep-rooted' racism, sexism, elitism, and class-based discrimination (The Guardian).

The Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade report was published in late 2022 focused on values and cultures in the London Fire Brigade, it was deeply disturbing. It found evidence that LFB is institutionally misogynist and racist. Several of the speakers mentioned the feeling of being here before, of hearing about the need for a change in culture to promote Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, despite so many actively working to change things for many years, this Independent Culture Review demonstrates that progress is not adequate.

There was a consensus from all the speakers that ED&I had to be embedded in training in all Fire and Rescue Services, every F&RS had to be its own unique team, serving both the public and each other.

We will continue to work in this regard moving forward.

Our ethos of respecting and caring for each member of the workforce is a result of strong leadership, motivating, facing challenging issues, pro-actively promoting ED&I and the involvement of all the management team.

It is great privilege to serve on Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Introduction and Governance of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is pleased to publish this report as a reflection on the work delivered across the organisation in pursuit of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) excellence. This report presents the public and other stakeholders with many success stories about the work we do on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the services we deliver provide our diverse communities with confidence that we are addressing their needs.

Therefore, as part of our commitment to delivering services and employing staff in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, and in line with the responsibilities placed on the Authority by the Act, we have established five Equality Objectives that are both inward looking (staff related) and outward looking (community and service delivery related)

The objectives below demonstrate how we show due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

<p>Equality Objective 1 Create a strong Inclusive organisation that is positive to rising to the future challenges we face</p>	<p>Equality Objective 2 Ensure that people from diverse communities receive equitable services that meet their needs.</p>	<p>Equality Objective 3 Reducing fires and other incidents amongst vulnerable people in the protected groups and deprived areas</p>
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<p>Equality Objective 4 To ensure that all staff can undertake their role whilst understanding the need for and the benefits of equality, diversity, and inclusion:</p>	<p>Equality Objective 5 To continue to aspire for equality, diversity, and inclusion excellence, measuring ourselves against best practise and benchmarking tools within the Fire & Rescue Service and other sectors.</p>
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In addition, the Fire Service Core Code of Ethics also provides a strong foundation to support ED&I governance.

The Core Code sets out five ethical principles, based on the Seven Principles of Public Life, which alongside the accompanying guidance provides a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour.

- Putting our communities first – we put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.
- Integrity – we act with integrity including being open, honest, and consistent in everything we do.
- Dignity and respect - making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.
- Leadership – we are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) – We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI both within the FRSs and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

This year's report provides an overview of:

- The changing regional demographics following the publication of the 2021 census data
- How we have connected with our diverse communities in line with the above ED&I objectives in the last 12 months
- How we have created a positive, resilient and inclusive organisation in line with the above ED&I objectives in the last 12 months

This report also demonstrates our commitment to ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public-Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in relation to:

1. Publishing, at least annually, information to demonstrate our compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the PSED.
2. Preparing and publishing one or more specific and measurable objectives that help to achieve the aims set out in the PSED.
3. Publishing equality information and the objectives in a manner that is accessible to the public.

ED&I is embedded in each area (Function) of the organisation, with ED&I priorities included in Functional annual plans, which in turn become part of our Service Delivery Plan.

In addition, ED&I has been integral part of the work on the leadership message and the associated behaviours. Furthermore, the Fire Standards and Fire Service Core Code of Ethics have also provided other ways of ensuring ED&I and the associated equality objectives are integral part of the business of MFRS.

The Culture & Inclusion Board that is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer meets bimonthly and the membership includes functional heads and staff network chairs as well as colleagues whose role is to ensure ED&I is mainstreamed.

This ensures that ED&I is consistently considered and delivered as part of organisational planning and service development. These priorities form the basis of a comprehensive ED&I action plan.

Discussions on ED&I matters form the basis of regular equality engagement meetings with the Representative Bodies (trade unions and staff associations), Staff Inclusion Networks, and a variety of other stakeholders to ensure that they are aware of the ED&I developments and have an opportunity to contribute to the consideration of the ways in which ED&I influences the provision of our fire and rescue services.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out on policies, strategic plans, and service delivery (including changes). EIAs play a crucial role in the design of services and enabling the Service to measure outcomes but also demonstrate due regard.

EIAs are attached to the governance documents to be considered when approved by the Authority and they are published on our website www.merseyfire.gov.uk with Authority papers.

Finally the publication of the national [spotlight report](#) by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was published in March 2023. This has provided an opportunity to reflect and take action to address how we embed values, culture, fairness, and diversity in our Service. In line with the reporting requirements, we provide regular [updates](#) to the HMICFRS.

Merseyside – Changing Regional Demographics

Since the last annual report, the 2021 census data for the population of Merseyside has been published and we have summarised it below

The revised data highlights changes in the age structure of the population, ethnic composition of the population as well as the significance of disability, socio economic factors and the lives of residents. This information will have implications in terms of workforce representation and how services are delivered as well as wider social cohesion.

Merseyside sits on mouth of the river Mersey and is made up of five councils; Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral. It spans 249 square miles and is a mix of built-up urban areas, suburbs, semi-rural and countryside locations.

The Merseyside population overview has been sourced from the Office of National Statistics 2021 census data.

Population Summary: Census 2021

	Number	Percentage
Total Population	1,423,285	/
Males	690,711	48.5%
Females	732,574	51.5%
Children (0-14 years)	235,594	16.55%
Working age (15-64)	914,332	64.24
Older People (65+)	273,360	19.2%

Gender

Males account for 48.5% of the Merseyside population and females 51.5%.

Age

When looking at the population of Merseyside has the following breakdown in relation to age: children make up 16.6% of the population, 64.4% of the population is of working age and 19.2% is aged over 65.

Ethnicity

The table below outlines the growing diversity of the population of Merseyside. 8.3% of the population of Merseyside is non-white and the population of Liverpool has the most diverse population, with 16% from a non-white background.

Ethnicity		Numbers	%
White	British	1,242,323	87.30%
	Irish	13,508	0.95%
	Other	48,966	3.44%
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	7,280	0.51%
	White and Black African	7,021	0.49%
	White and Asian	7,666	0.54%
	Other	8,528	0.60%
Asian or Asian British	Indian	10,686	0.75%
	Pakistani	4,723	0.33%
	Bangladeshi	3,863	0.27%
	Other	11,986	0.84%
Black or Black British	Black Caribbean	2,364	0.17%
	Black African	16,091	1.13%
	Other	3,447	0.24%
Chinese or other ethnic group	Chinese	13,194	0.92%
	Other ethnic group	21,640	1.52%
<i>total</i>		1,423,287	100%

Sexual Orientation

In the 2021 Census 123,367 people in the Liverpool City Region described their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, queer or did not specify an answer. This represents 8.2% of the region. In comparison, the national figure is 3.2%.

Religion & Belief

Data from the 2021 census reveals the largest religious group in Merseyside is Christian, which accounts for nearly 60% of the population.

Other key figures for consideration are as follows:

- **Buddhist** population stands at 4,585 people or 0.3% of the population in Merseyside
- **Hindu** - 7,356 people or 0.5%,
- **Jewish** - 2,576 people or 0.2%,
- **Muslim** - 33,578 people or 2.4%
- & Other - 523,768 people or 36.8%.

Disability

The 2021 census revealed 22% of the population of Merseyside is declared as disabled under the Equality Act.

Socio Economic

The Liverpool City Region has significant employment, unemployment and economic inactivity gaps remaining for women, those from an ethnic minority, those with a disability, young people, and older people

Evidence indicates deprivation scores across all the LCR local authorities are significantly higher than the England national average and is linked to protected characteristics and wider causes of vulnerability.

Merseyside is one of the most deprived areas in England. When looking at individual councils' areas, Knowsley is the third most deprived local authority in England and Liverpool the fourth. There are areas, for example in West Wirral and North Sefton, which are more economically affluent, but large areas of Merseyside fall within the highest ratings of social deprivation, which has the side effects of high levels of poverty, social exclusion, and crime.

Therefore, our communities are diverse in so many ways and our staff are also part of a team of diverse people undertaking different roles but working together to achieve outstanding impact.

We are part of our community - it's where we are from, it's where we have brought up our families. We reflect our area - looking after each other and showing kindness. Our teams continue to shape our story putting our community at the heart of everything we do.

We have a long and proud history of being bold - a mindset of let's try it - let's do it. For Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, good enough is never good enough.

We are our community, and we know the part we can play - our place, our culture and our people are what make us great.

Connecting with our diverse communities (Equality objectives 2,3 & 5)

For this section we wish to highlight the work of three particular functions of MFRS.

- The Protection Function
- The Prevention Function
- The Strategy & Performance Function

The above functions have connected with our communities in the following ways:

PREVENTION FUNCTION: We are there for you. We are a visible presence that provides reassurance, support, and advice. Alongside our partners, we protect the most vulnerable and reduce inequalities.

Key highlights include:

- ✓ Through **Home Fire Safety Checks 2022 – 23 (HFSC)** we continue to ensure interventions to keep people safe in their home (through Home Fire Safety Checks and Safe and Well visits) are targeted with a particular focus on collecting data in line with protected characteristics. An example of progress includes on 84% of occasions the occupier did state their religion which is a 10.4% improvement on the previous year. (See Annex for detailed reporting & analysis of Home Fire Safety checks)
- ✓ In terms of **Safe and well visits**; on only 97.9% % of occasions the occupier of the dwelling did state their ethnicity.
- ✓ 3.5% of Safe & Well visits have been carried out in homes where the resident identifies as BAME compared to a Merseyside BAME population of 8.3%. It should be noted that Safe and Well visits primarily target the over 65 population, according to the 2021 Census, the over 65 BAME population 2.27% of the total, therefore the 3.5% achieved is an over performance.. (See Annex for detailed reporting & analysis of Safe & Well visits)

- ✓ **Showcasing nationally.** Our work on Home Fire Safety Checks and Safe & Well visits was highlighted at a national workshop in November 2022.
- ✓ **Youth engagement activities** and engaging with the young diverse population shows continuing progress and success. In terms of the work of the **Princes Trust** (for participants in their late teens and early 20's). There were slightly more male attendees than female, with 54.1% being male. In addition, 17.6% were from a LGBT background and 57% considered themselves to be disabled. In terms of the **Fire Cadets** (for teenage participants); 6% of participants were from a BAME background. Similarly, for the **Beacon Course** (younger children); 10% of those who were involved identified from a BAME background and 51% had a disability.

Liverpool Talking Newspapers

During Home Fire Safety Week in June, MFRS adopted a national online tool to allow members of the public to spend 15 minutes completing an assessment of their own property for fire safety from their laptop, tablet, or phone.

For some though, these methods can be difficult to use and they require assistance in accessing the content; particularly the visually impaired community. To this end, the Liverpool Talking Newspaper (based at Speke Training and Education Centre) conducted an interview with staff from Speke Community Fire Station and our Liverpool based Prevention team. In a broad conversation, they discussed how they started their fire service careers, how fires in Liverpool have changed over the last 20 years and gave information on how to stay safe around open water, they also delivered key messages that support the Service in its efforts to reduce fires and inform the community.

PROTECTION FUNCTION: We protect people from harm, provide advice, guidance and when absolutely necessary use enforcement of fire safety legislation to keep the public and our firefighters safe.

Key highlights include:

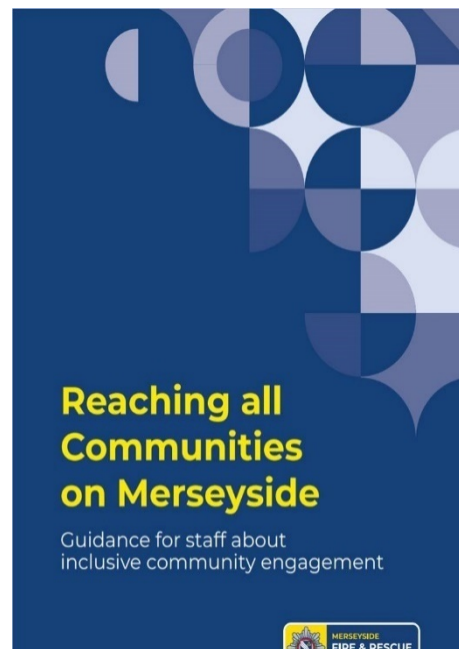
- ✓ Successful delivery of a suite of **business safety engagement events** with diverse businesses and demographics that we have previously not engaged with. This has led to improved partnership working and the potential to be able to provide fire safety awareness training to faith and community leaders across the districts who can then assist us with delivering key fire safety information and safety messaging
- ✓ **Showcasing nationally and sharing good practice** about the work on Business safety and engagement with diverse communities through an interactive workshop at a national workshop in June 2023.
- ✓ Inclusion of **ED&I questions in our fire safety audits** and subsequently built in to our management information platform. Consequently, we can now build data over time that can further inform elements such as our risk-based inspection programme methodology and enable us to identify themes, trends and patterns which will further enhance our business safety engagement approach
- ✓ Seeing **significant reductions in the numbers of unwanted fire signals (UwFS)**. These are usually false alarms caused by alarm systems. By cross-directorate working with Response, Prevention and Strategy and Performance, we have been able to scrutinise premises that have larger than average numbers of UwFS. As a result of then being able to target such premises from a more informed perspective, we have seen early indications of reductions in specific premises of up to 84%.

STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE FUNCTION - Key areas of achievement in 2022-23 by the Strategy and Performance Function have fallen into three areas, our community engagement, the recent Accessibility Audit of our website and communications and our premises Access Accessibility Audit.

Key highlights include:

✓ **Community engagement**

The Service has always worked hard to engage with our communities, particularly those that are hard to reach, to help us focus on how we can help improve outcomes. We also want to know what our communities think about our plans and for them to help influence those plans. This year we began a process of improving that engagement whilst helping our staff develop a better understanding of the different communities on Merseyside



We have updated and reissued our comprehensive guidance document for staff, “Reaching all communities on Merseyside”, spoken to staff about the ways in which they currently engage with their communities and what they might like to do in the future, and we’ve considered how that fits with our plans. We’ve attended community events to meet representatives of those communities and the people who live there. We’ve met with colleagues in the Police and Ambulance services, and we are using their community networks to help build and develop our own. Our Community Impact Fund was relaunched this year and fire stations are engaging with community groups to help support the places where they work. We have developed an action plan to make sure this work progresses and makes a difference for our communities, and we will be consulting with the public about our new Community Risk Management Plan in 2023, asking our new contacts for their views on our proposals in addition to our usual consultation processes.

- ✓ **Website and communications accessibility** - In early 2023 we commissioned independent audits of our website and communications to make sure they are both accessible to all users. There are areas in which we can improve, and we have put plans in place to do that, but we are pleased that in general the audit found: “Across your communication channels we found your style to be inclusive and culturally aware both in the language you use and visual imagery.”

Good practice on our website includes:

- ✓ Additional accessibility features
 - ✓ Font style (sans serif)
 - ✓ Full keyboard navigation
 - ✓ Showing links in both a different colour and underlined
 - ✓ Well-structured website
 - ✓ A sitemap to help users to easily find content
 - ✓ The user can go directly to the information on the page and bypass the menu bar
- **Building Accessibility** - Following on from an accessibility audit, this year we established a Building Accessibility Reference Group to help us make the best choices when refurbishing our existing buildings and building new ones. Members of staff who have an interest in building accessibility were invited to join the group which has been invaluable in helping us understand how we can use the laws and regulations around accessibility but enhance them to produce better outcomes for building users. An example was using darker shades of paint than are legally required, to make sure that different areas of a building can be seen by people with differing levels of vision. This group has been particularly useful as we started our biggest build for many years, a new Training and Development Academy and fire station on the same site in Aintree.

Creating a positive, resilient & inclusive organisation (Equality objectives 1 & 4)

For this section the following three functions – (a) Operational Preparedness, (b) Response and (c) People & Organisational development will be highlighted for the focused work on inclusion and employment. All three functions have made real progress in terms of taking action to foster a more inclusive organisation in the following ways:

PREPAREDNESS FUNCTION: We will always be the best that we can be by having highly skilled and trained people who plan for every risk and keep our teams safe and effective.

Key highlights include:

- ✓ **Positive Action evaluation with Liverpool University.** MFRS has started a research project with the assistance of a Masters student from Liverpool University. The study will evaluate the perspectives and experiences of our female firefighters and use these experiences to inform the strategies and approaches taken by the Service to recruit women more as firefighters and ensure appropriate support is in place to allow those women to achieve their full potential within the Service.
- ✓ **Showcasing nationally** the research on positive action has led to an invitation to share findings at a national workshop in November 2023.

NATIONAL RESILIENCE (NR) FUNCTION – the UK Government enhanced the capability of the Fire and Rescue services by launching its New Dimension project in response to international and UK terror attacks and other major incidents. This resulted in the provision of specialist vehicles and capabilities across the country. Once the project concluded, these specialist capabilities became known as the National Resilience assets. NR is coordinated by MFRS on behalf of the Government.

Key highlights include:

- ✓ NR Co-operative Group meeting has been established to provide a forum for the principal departments from MFRS to oversee and provide governance and direction to the development of National Resilience. **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is a standard agenda item** for the meetings.
- ✓ **Engagement with the Gender staff network group** steered additional sub-groups supporting women in the Service, which subsequently led to a business case on uniform for female firefighters being submitted. Data statistics have identified that the percentage of female representation at Search and Rescue Team (SRT) has risen significantly to 22%.
- ✓ Sub-group meetings have also been initiated with the **Positive Action** Team and REACH¹ staff network group to look at the demographics in NR and SRT and see how we can improve involvement of fire service staff from minority groups and offer opportunities for progression and growth in roles.
- ✓ NR attended the **AFSA Conference at Chester Racecourse** in November 2022, setting up an exhibition stand and advert to raise awareness of NR and encourage wider participation. . An expressions of interest database will manage contact with interested parties as shadowing, mentoring or job opportunities arise
- ✓ Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with National Resilience training delivery partners (TDPs) and users have been reviewed and the fire and rescue services that host training will ensure appropriate **equality impact assessments** are undertaken as a pre-requisite requirement of maintaining TDP status

¹ Race, Equality and Cultural Heritage Staff Network

RESPONSE FUNCTION - We will be there when you need us most, pulling out all the stops to save lives. Whether we are taking 999 calls, or attending incidents, we keep our communities safe.

Key highlights include:

- ✓ Operational Response have contributed to supporting our Vision of '**One Team**', and will continue to enhance knowledge, understanding and application of this concept for station-based staff through working alongside the Positive Action working group, our human resources teams and station-based personnel to identify Positive Action events and opportunities within our local communities.
- ✓ Building on from work started in 2022-23 the robust planning of **Station Area Recruitment Days**, will allow members of the public to attend an event within their local area, maybe at a local gym, football or rugby club or community centre. At these events they are able to learn more about careers at MFRS, talk to operational staff and members of the recruitment team. They can also sign up for the **District Have a Go Days**. At MFRS we have held have a go days at our training development academy for a number of years. These events will allow people considering a career at MFRS to have a go at the fitness tests and learn more about what it take to become a firefighter, by holding one within each Council area, we are making these events more accessible and will reduce travel time and costs. The **Station Open Days** will be unique to each station area and will be designed to help our staff understand the community in which they are based and for the community to engage and learn more about MFRS. This planning feeds into our approach to '**Knowing our Communities**' with the emphasis on operational crews going out into their station areas, meeting, and building relationships with religious groups, charities and other representatives of our diverse communities.

PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION – We have an overview of all people related areas, includes overseeing occupational health services, people services, recruitment and development of staff, professional standards, industrial relations, and human resource systems.

Key highlights include:

- ✓ In 2021-22 we had 71 female firefighters; which represented 11.4% of our total firefighters and we now have 76. This equates to 12.6% of firefighters. Nationally the percentage for female fighters is 8.2% (March 2022)
- ✓ In 2021-22 we had 10 women in the roles of Crew and Watch Manger, representing 5.3% of middle managers. We now have 18 women in these roles representing 9.4%; an increase of 4.1%
- ✓ BAME and firefighter representation. In 2021-22 we had 36 firefighters from Black & Minority Ethnic Backgrounds (BAME); which was 5.7% of firefighters. We now have 43 firefighters who are from a BAME background. This equates to 7.1% of operational firefighters.
- ✓ BAME and support services representation. In 2021-22, 10 BAME members of staff worked in support services representing 3.1% of the total. We now have 13 BAME staff working in support services. This equates to 4.0% of the total staff in this area.
- ✓ When the 2022/23 gender pay gap ²is compared to the previous year it has reduced from 10.3% to 9.1% overall. For Support Staff the gap fell from 13.2% during 2021/22 to 11.0% during 2022/23. For operational staff, the gender pay gap also fell from 13.2% during 2021/22 to 11.0% during 2022/23. (See Annex for detailed reporting and analysis of the gender pay gap)
- ✓ We have once again voluntarily reported on the ethnicity pay gap. We are mindful of the gaps like the gender pay gap and will be taking necessary steps in line with our work on Positive Action and our People Plan. (See Annex for detailed reporting and analysis of the gender pay gap)

² The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 came into force on 31st March 2017. The regulations stipulate that organisations that employ more than 250 people must publish a report on their gender pay gap. There is a slight difference in the regulation for public sector organisations, in so much as we must publish an annual “snapshot” of our gender pay as at the 31st March each year in our annual report.

- ✓ Discipline cases fell by 31% compared to the previous year and the likelihood of both female and staff from a BAME background entering the disciplinary process also reduced. (See Annex for detailed reporting and analysis of discipline cases and protected characteristics)
- ✓ In terms of grievances, we witnessed a 95% reduction compared to the previous year. Again, both female and staff from a BAME background were less likely to enter the grievance process. (See Annex for detailed reporting & analysis of disciplinaries & protected characteristics).

We have:

- ✓ Developed and rolled out a Positive Action Strategy
- ✓ Showcased our work on 'Cognitive Diversity' and colours training at a national conference in November 2022. Cognitive diversity is a company's variety of employees—all of whom have different perspectives, backgrounds, ethnicities, and education levels.
- ✓ Embedded a revised equality impact analysis process
- ✓ Co designed a 'Race awareness conversation' to be delivered in-house by an operational fire fighter
- ✓ Developed our associated support to help embed our Leadership Message and positive behaviours.
- ✓ Developed and implemented an inclusive High Potential programme
- ✓ Worked with the Liverpool City Region to develop a framework to embed the socio-economic duty into our decision making
- ✓ Showcased work on inclusion and prevention at the AFSA Winter Conference in November 2022.
- ✓ Submitted evidence to achieve Fair Employment Charter status through the Liverpool City Region

High Potential Programme

The High Potential programme aims to provide a clear, open, and transparent talent management provision available to all staff demonstrating the requisite behaviours and values

The programme establishes a means of identifying, developing, and nurturing the next generation of leaders. This aligns with the wholesale recruitment the organisation has embarked on with a rich diversity of talent.

It offers a core programme but is driven by individual need and therefore addresses any barriers that may impede individuals' growth and advancement. The programme begins with an individual meeting with a trained talent adviser, with the outcome being a bespoke development plan and tailored development. Not everyone recognises their own capability, and the programme gives them encouragement to develop further.

The programme is always open, as talent is recognised at different times. It is also applicable to all staff. It promotes an inclusive approach to talent management ensuring that all staff have regular talent management conversations.

Key Highlights

- Currently 132 staff across all roles are in the programme.
- 50 members of the programme are women; representing 38% of the cohort
- 11 are BAME; representing 8% of the cohort
- A recent supervisory management process saw the first impacts of this programme, with 109 promotions in total.
15 of these are women (20% of our female firefighter total) and five
5 are BAME (12% of our BAME firefighter total).



Positive Action Attraction Strategy

Over the last 12 months we have worked with staff from across the organisation and developed a 'Workforce Positive Attraction Strategy'. This sets out how we are going to target certain areas across Merseyside and attract the best candidates from diverse backgrounds. We are looking to hold community events at all community fire stations and 'Have a Go' days, at selected fire stations across the area. In addition, we have set up our own 'Attractions Team'. The team involves two firefighters working in the community to help generate interest and encourage those who may have never considered the fire and rescue service as a possible career. We also have an internal 'Positive Action Working Group' to help us steer our activities.

As well as the strategy a Positive Action Toolkit has been developed which has been designed to help staff to embed an inclusive and sustainable approach to diversifying our workforce. We recognise that having a diverse workforce also builds trust and confidence in communities and all staff can support these aims through their interactions with the public, through their roles in the community and by being role models for others. The toolkit:

- Explains simply what Positive Action is
- Provides case studies of what we already do
- Gives suggestions on how staff can deliver Positive Action in their own roles
- Provides answers to Frequently Asked Questions
- Gives details about where people can find further information.

Case Studies – Connecting with communities and fostering an inclusive organisation

Celebrating Ramadan

During Ramadan, firefighters from Toxteth joined community members at Masjid Al Rahma LMS (Liverpool Muslim Society) to give out boxes of dates before Friday prayers; dates are commonly eaten to break fast during Ramadan. The initiative was put forward by a member of staff from Toxteth Community Fire Station. Labels with various Ramadan-related fire safety messages were attached to each of the boxes of dates before they were handed out to members of the local community. Well, done to everyone - including those behind the scenes - who worked incredibly hard to bring this idea to life.

The Menopause: Continuing the Conversation

Members of our Menopause Lounge invited colleagues to come together for a series of events in support of World Menopause Day.. Since the Menopause Lounge was launched in 2020, we have come to value the opportunity to talk to someone who understands and who is passionate about improving wellbeing in the workplace and at home. Staff were encouraged to join together for lunch and a brew in the SHQ canteen. The session gave colleagues the opportunity to find out more about the aim of the Lounge, find out how to access helpful and supportive information and have a chat about both the big and small impacts of the various stages of the menopause.

World Food Week

As well as celebrating Black History Month, October 2022 also saw MFRS mark World Food Day with a week of culinary delights from around the world. In the lead up to World Food Day, our REACH (Race Equality and Cultural Heritage) staff network worked with the canteen to showcase different international cuisines.. As a result, staff at headquarters were able to try lunch plates from Hong Kong, Trinidad and Tobago, and Brazil, One the network involved in the event said: "When you get together with family and friends, who are like extended family, it's like one big party! Today was like an extension of that. Family have come together to cook food and everyone is happy eating." "For me, today was showing how the part of the world I come from, this is what we do and this is how we share – that's the love." Well, done to everyone involved!

New Staff Networks

This year we have been able to build on the success of our original three staff networks and two forums. With the support of staff and our senior sponsors have been able to launch three further staff networks. Our Health and Wellbeing network launched in October 2022, the Neurodiversity Network launched in March 2023 and our Socio-economic network held their first official meeting in April 2023.

MFRS at Pride

Staff from across all areas of MFRS joined together on Saturday 30th July 2022 to celebrate the return of Liverpool Pride, after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, it was fantastic to see everyone having such a good time in what was our 11th year of attendance. Our giant banner was hoisted up in pride of place at Liverpool City Fire Station, where our marchers (many donning their specially made MFRS Fire Proud t-shirts and rainbow coloured make-up) met before the parade for breakfast, to set them up for the day's events. The theme was 'Come Together'; chosen not only to represent the return of in-person events, but the need to come together as one united community, now more than ever. The march started from St George's Plateau and travelled around Liverpool city centre, raising awareness of issues faced by members of the LGBTQ+ community, including hate crime, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. MFRS is fully committed to celebrating the diversity of staff and our community. By having a highly visible presence on the day, we played our part in sending the strong message that discrimination has no place within our organisation or in society as a whole.

Fire Cadets – Golden Jubilee

Firefighters from Belle Vale attended Autism Adventures' Jubilee Party on Saturday 4th June 2022. The crew took our Autism Champion fire engine to the event on Riversdale Rd, L19, giving children and young people the chance to look at some of the equipment and try on fire kit.

Driving Licence Bursaries

This year we reviewed our recruitment practices and identified that individuals experiencing socio-economic disadvantage were underrepresented in firefighter applications. Drawing on government data which indicated that women, people from ethnic minorities, and people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds were less likely to have driving licences, MFRS identified that the driving licence requirement for firefighter roles was a significant barrier to applying. We have therefore removed the driving licence requirement for prospective firefighters and now offers driving licence bursaries for successful applicants from 20 deprived areas of Merseyside with driving lessons offered in the MFRS training and development academy with MFRS paying the cost of driving tests and licence fees. This has led to an extra 195 applications in 2022, 48 per cent of which came from the 10% most deprived areas of Merseyside.

Closing Statement & Summary

We hope this EDI Annual Report has shown you we are continuously working hard across the organisation to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone. In addition to complying with our statutory obligations, the evidence listed above highlights how we have invested time and dedication to several initiatives and activities to increase diversity, inclusion and belonging in the organisation.

Building on the work of the last 12 months we will continue to:

- Build on our progress, focusing on deeper cultural and systemic changes necessary to enable equality, diversity, and inclusion to thrive and be embedded within the Service and its system.
- Achieve our objectives through the relationships and influence we have across the organisational functional leads enabling them to continue to lead real systemic changes.
- Continue to recognise the tremendous reservoir of good intentions within MFRS and work to transform that into a living reality.
- Seek to bring to life the requirement for flatter, faster ways of working and increased emphasis on an inclusivity and belonging.

This work will continue and our review of our progress and achievements will be shared annually in this report in line with the People plan and the ED&I Action plan

If you have any question or queries regarding this report, or feel anything should be added in the years to come, please get in touch.

ANNEX

Home Fire Safety Checks 2022 – 23

A home fire safety check (HFSC) is a service provided to help people stay safe and reduce the risk of fire in their home. During the visit MFRS staff provide fire safety advice, check smoke alarms are working and replace/install new ones if needed.

Data is collected in terms of protected characteristics, , race and religion to ensure equality of access for the diverse communities we serve

The following data tables below show that 47,364 HFSC's were carried out by our operational staff during the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 (these figures were correct on the date of extraction (24th May 2023)), from the Service's information management system.

Data table: HFSC's Conducted by Operational Crews by Religion

Religion	% Overall	% Omitting "PNTS"	% of Merseyside Resident Population
Christian	56.6%	67.4%	59.8%
Atheist / None	19.6%	23.3%	31.0%
Other	6.8%	8.1%	0.4%
Islam	0.6%	0.7%	2.4%
Jewish	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Buddhist	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Hindu	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
Sikh	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>16.0%</i>		5.3%

Key Results – HFSC Equality Data for Religion

Data in the table above identifies that at the time the data was extracted from the MFRS information management system:

- On 87% of occasions the occupier did state their religion which is a 10.4% improvement on the previous year.

Based on valid data i.e. omitting the “Unknown” category:

- 67.4% of responses indicated that they were Christian
- 23.3% were Atheist or had no religion
- Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hindu, and Sikh accounted for 3.5% of valid data
- The remaining 8.1% indicated “other” (data is not available to explore further)

We are working to improve the number of responses we get when we ask people about their ethnicity and religion and we are confident that our continued efforts to introduce more diversity into our workforce (including actions in our Integrated Risk Management and People Plans), plus providing more information to explain why we want this data and further guidance for staff will help improve these responses.

Safe and Well Visits 2022 – 23

During 2022/23, the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Prevention team conducted 9268 Safe and Well (S&W) visits, the following data tables analyse this data (the figures were correct on the date of extraction (24th May 2023)), from the Service’s information management system.

Data table: Safe and Well Visits conducted by Prevention Team by Ethnicity

Key Results – Safe and Well Equality data for Ethnicity

Ethnicity	% Overall	% Omitting "PNTS"	% of Merseyside Resident Population	% of Over 65 Population
White - British	92.7%	94.7%	87.3%	95.6%
White - Irish	0.6%	0.6%	0.9%	1.3%
White - Other	1.2%	1.2%	3.4%	0.8%
Asian - Bangladeshi	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%
Asian - Chinese	0.3%	0.3%	0.9%	0.5%
Asian - Indian	0.3%	0.3%	0.8%	0.3%
Asian - Other	0.5%	0.5%	0.8%	0.1%
Asian - Pakistani	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%
Black - African	0.5%	0.5%	1.1%	0.2%
Black - Caribbean	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
Black - Other	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
Mixed - Other	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.1%
Mixed - White & Asian	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%
Mixed - White & Black African	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.1%
Other Ethnic Group	0.4%	0.4%	1.5%	0.3%

Prefer not to say	2.1%			
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The Data table above identifies that:

- On only 97.9% of occasions the occupier of the dwelling did state their ethnicity.
- 92.7% of Safe and Well visits have been carried out in homes where the resident identifies as White British, this increases to 94.7% if prefer not to say data is omitted
- 3.5% of Safe & Well visits have been carried out in homes where the resident identifies as BAME compared to a Merseyside BAME population of 8.3%. It should be noted that Safe and Well visits primarily target the over 65 population, according to the 2021 Census, the over 65 BAME population 2.27% of the total, therefore the 3.5% achieved is an over performance.

Data table: Safe and Well Visits Conducted by Prevention Team by Religion

Religion	% Overall	% Omitting "PNTS"	% of Merseyside Resident Population
Christian	61.2%	65.6%	59.8%
Atheist / None	29.7%	31.8%	31.0%
Other	0.7%	0.8%	0.4%
Islam	1.1%	1.2%	2.4%
Jewish	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
Buddhist	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
Hindu	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%
Sikh	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Prefer not to say	6.7%		5.3%

Key Results – Safe and Well Equality Data for Religion

The Data table above identifies that at the time the data was extracted from the MFRS information management system:

- On 6.7% of occasions the occupier did not state their religion.
Based on valid data:
- 65.6% of people responding indicated that they were Christian
- 31.8% said they were Atheist or had no religion.
- Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hindu, and Sikh accounted for 1.8% of valid data
0.7% indicated other (data is not available to explore further).

Gender & Ethnicity Pay Gap – Data

The gender pay gap reporting obligations are included in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This section reports on our sixth gender pay gap exercise which is based on data taken on 31st March 2023. Gender pay gap figures are based on a total of 935³ staff in scope for this exercise; 677 (72.4%) were male and 258 (27.6%) were female.

In 2022-23, the gap among full-time employees increased to 8.3%, up from 7.7% in 2021. This is still below the gap of 9.0% in 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic.

Measure 1: Mean gender pay gap

This measure is the difference between the mean (average) hourly rates of pay for male and female full pay relevant employees. A positive percentage indicates that women are paid less than men and a negative pay gap reflects the opposite.

Data table 7: Mean Gender Pay Gap 2022/23

Staff group	Male hourly pay £	Female hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %	2021/22 Pay Gap
All staff	£17.86	£16.23	-£1.63	-9.1%	-10.3%
Operational Staff (inc Fire Control)	£17.80	£16.43	-£1.37	-7.7%	-9.5%
Support staff	£18.10	£16.11	-£1.99	-11.0%	-13.2%

Key points:

³ A number of employees weren't included in the Gender Pay Gap Figures because they were not "Full Pay Relevant". This means that, for the reasons detailed below an individual did not receive a full month's salary for the reporting period.

- Staff who joined the service part way through the pay period
- Staff who left the service part way through the pay period
- Staff in receipt of childcare vouchers
- Staff on maternity leave
- Staff with deductions for unpaid leave / jury service
- Staff with deductions for half/no pay due to sickness

- Across the organisation, the mean gender pay gap is 9.1% or £1.63 per hour. For operational staff only, the gap is 7.7% and for support staff the gap is wider at 11%.
- When the 2022/23 gender pay, gap is compared to the previous year, the table identifies that overall, the gender pay gap has reduced from 10.3% to 9.1%. For Support Staff the gap fell from 13.2% during 2021/22 to 11.0% during 2022/23. For operational staff, the gender pay gap also fell from 13.2% during 2021/22 to 11.0% during 2022/23.
- The pay gap may be due to typically longer service for men and incremental pay rises as a result. Research suggests that women may take longer to reach the top of their grade if they take time out for: maternity, adoption, or career breaks, for example. For 2022/23 there has been an increase in female staff in senior positions; reducing the gap. The impact of having relatively low numbers of female staff at higher grades also has an important bearing on the overall Gender Pay Gap for operational staff and this is being addressed through our Equality Objective 1 – in relation to our Positive Action strategy and the People Plan.

Measure 2. Median gender pay gap

This is the difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male and female full-pay relevant employees.

Data table 8: Median Gender Pay Gap 2022/23

Staff group	Male hourly pay £	Female hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %	2021/22 Pay Gap
All staff	£16.25	£15.87	-£0.38	-2.3%	-2.3%
Operational Staff (inc Fire Control)	£16.25	£16.10	-£0.15	-0.9%	-2.3%
Support staff	£16.31	£15.25	-£1.06	-6.5%	-8.7%

- When compared to the mean gender pay gap, the difference between male and female staff is narrower, with a 2.3% difference at an MFRA level, a 0.9% difference for operational staff and 6.5% difference for support staff.

Measure 3. Mean bonus gap

This is the difference between the mean bonus paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees. This measure is not applicable as there are no bonus payments made to MFRA staff.

Measure 4. Median bonus gap

This is the difference between the median bonus paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees. This measure is not applicable as there are no bonus payments made to MFRA staff.

Measure 5. Bonus proportions

The proportions of male and female relevant employees who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period. This measure is not applicable as there are no bonus payments made to MFRA staff.

Measure 6. Quartile⁴ pay bands

The proportions of male and female full-pay relevant employees in the Lower (1), Lower Middle (2), Upper Middle (3) and Upper (4) quartile pay bands.

Quartile pay bands

Data table 9: Quartile Pay Bands 2022/23

Quartile pay Bands	From hourly rate £'s	To hourly rate £'s	# of males	%	# of females	%
4. Upper	£18.79	£85.07	185	79.1%	49	20.9%
3. Upper Middle	£16.12	£18.79	171	73.1%	63	26.9%
2. Lower Middle	£15.30	£16.12	191	81.6%	43	18.4%
1. Lower	£6.82	£15.25	130	55.8%	103	44.2%

The table identifies that the gender pay gap within quartiles 2 (Lower Middle) and 3 (Upper Middle), the hourly rates are very similar; suggesting that pay parity is close between male and female staff, within these two quartiles. Within the Lower quartile

⁴ If a set of data is split into 4 equal parts, then each part is a quartile. The Lower / 1st Quartile is the first quarter of a dataset, the Lower Middle / 2nd Quartile is the equivalent of the Median, the Upper Middle / 3rd Quartile is the 3rd Quarter of a dataset and the Upper / 4th Quartile is the final quarter of the dataset.

there is a difference between hourly rates of £8.43, this increases in the Upper quartile (where there is a difference of £66.28 between hourly rates).

Ethnicity Pay Gap

In May 2022, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee called on the government to make ethnicity pay gap reporting mandatory by April 2023 as a first step to addressing pay disparities between employees from different ethnic backgrounds.. The ethnicity pay gap reporting remains voluntary and as an organisation we have taken the decision to be proactive and expand on our pay gap reporting to include Ethnicity as part of our best practise. . This section reports on our second ethnicity pay gap exercise which based on data taken as of 31st March 2023. Ethnicity pay gap figures are based on a total of 935⁵ staff in scope for this exercise; 880 (94.1%) were non BAME and 55 (4.6%) were BAME.

Measure 1: Mean ethnicity pay gap

This measure is the difference between the mean (average) hourly rates of pay for Non BAME and BAME full pay relevant employees. A negative percentage indicates that BAME staff are paid more than Non BAME, and a positive pay gap reflects the opposite.

Data table 10: Mean Ethnicity Pay Gap 2022/23

Staff group	Non BAME hourly pay £	BAME hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
All staff	£17.47	£16.48	-£0.99	-5.7%
Operational Staff (inc Fire Control)	£17.63	£16.81	-£0.82	-4.7%
Support staff	£17.16	£15.43	-£1.73	-10.1%

⁵ A number of employees weren't included in the Gender Pay Gap Figures because they were not "Full Pay Relevant". This means that, for the reasons detailed below an individual did not receive a full month's salary for the reporting period.

- Staff who joined the service part way through the pay period
- Staff who left the service part way through the pay period
- Staff in receipt of childcare vouchers
- Staff on maternity leave
- Staff with deductions for unpaid leave / jury service
- Staff with deductions for half/no pay due to sickness

- Across the organisation, the mean ethnicity pay gap is -5.7% or £0.99 per hour. For operational staff only, the gap is -4.7% and for support staff the gap is wider at 10.1%.

Measure 2. Median Ethnicity pay gap

This is the difference between the median hourly rate of pay of BAME staff and non BAME full-pay relevant employees.

Data table 11: Median Ethnicity Pay Gap 2022/23

Staff group	Non BAME hourly pay £	BAME hourly pay £	Pay gap £	Pay gap %
All staff	£16.12	£16.11	-£0.01	-0.1%
Operational Staff (inc Fire Control)	£16.25	£15.98	-£0.27	-1.7%
Support staff	£16.12	£16.12	£0.00	0.0%

- When compared to the mean gender pay gap, the difference between Non BAME and BAME staff is narrower, with a -0.1% difference at a MFRA level, 1.7% for operational staff and equilibrium for support staff.

Measure 3. Mean bonus gap

This is the difference between the mean bonus paid to Non BAME relevant employees and that paid to BAME relevant employees. This measure is not applicable as there are no bonus payments made to MFRA staff.

Measure 4. Median bonus gap

This is the difference between the median bonus paid to Non BAME relevant employees and that paid to BAME relevant employees. This measure is not applicable as there are no bonus payments made to MFRA staff.

Measure 5. Bonus proportions

The proportions of Non BAME and BAME relevant employees who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period. This measure is not applicable as there are no bonus payments made to MFRA staff.

Measure 6. Quartile⁶ pay bands

The proportions of Non BAME and BAME full-pay relevant employees in the Lower (1), Lower Middle (2), Upper Middle (3) and Upper (4) quartile pay bands.

Quartile pay bands

Data table 12: Quartile Pay Bands 2022/23

Quartile pay Bands	From hourly rate £'s	To hourly rate £'s	# Non BAME	%	# BAME	%
4. Upper	£18.79	£85.07	223	95.3%	11	4.7%
3. Upper Middle	£16.12	£18.79	222	94.9%	12	5.1%
2. Lower Middle	£15.30	£16.12	217	92.7%	17	7.3%
1. Lower	£6.82	£15.25	218	93.6%	15	6.4%

Based on the overall percentage of BAME staff (4.7%), there is a higher-than-expected proportion of BAME staff in the 4th Upper Quartile (5.1%, 13) and 737% in the 2nd Lower Middle Quartile.

⁶ If a set of data is split into 4 equal parts, then each part is a quartile. The Lower / 1st Quartile is the first quarter of a dataset, the Lower Middle / 2nd Quartile is the equivalent of the Median, the Upper Middle / 3rd Quartile is the 3rd Quarter of a dataset and the Upper / 4th Quartile is the final quarter of the dataset.

Workforce Data – Discipline and Grievance

During 2022/23 there was a total of 11 discipline cases, which represents 1.12% of the workforce, this was a reduction when compared to the five-year average of 16 per year. The following section analyses this data by gender, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation - as well as reference to the reasons for and outcomes from the disciplinary cases.

Key Results – Disciplinary cases by cause and protected characteristic

Data shows that during 2022/23:

- There was a total of 11 disciplinary cases
 - The most common disciplinary cases were related to Absence Related (AWOL) and Police Action – Driving with two each.

When looking at the 11 disciplinary cases by gender:

- 10 (90.9%) were related to men or 1.43% of the overall workforce
- 1 (9.1%) was related to women or 0.3% of the overall workforce

When comparing the disciplinary cases by age:

- There were 0 cases involving an employee who was less than 20 years
- 2 cases involved 20–29-year-olds
- 3 cases involved 30–39-year-olds
- 0 cases involved 40–49-year-olds
- 6 cases involved 50–59-year-olds
- No cases involving employees above the age of 60

Concerning Ethnic Origin:

- All 11 were White British / Irish

Concerning sexual orientation:

- 8 cases involved heterosexual people or 1.34% of the overall workforce
- 1 person preferred not to say 2.945 of the overall workforce
- The data is unavailable for the remaining cases

Key Results – Disciplinary cases by outcome and protected characteristics

The data shows the Disciplinary cases by outcome and protected characteristics and shows that:

- 6 cases are still ongoing
- 2 involved no further action
- 1 was issued with a Final Written Warning
- 1 was informally resolved,
- 1 resigned (ongoing)

Staff Grievance

During 2022/23 there were 19 reported grievances, which represents 1.93% of the workforce. The following section analyses this data by gender, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation as well as reference to the reasons and outcomes from the grievance.

Key Results – Grievances by cause and protected characteristic

The data shows that during 2022/23:

- There were 19 grievances.
 - The majority fell into the Expired Public Holiday Leave category (10).
 - The next most common grievance was Bullying & Harassment (5)
 - 2 were posting related

When looking at the grievances by gender:

- The majority involved men (15)

When grievances are split by age:

- 2 grievances involved 20–29-year-olds
- 7 cases involved 30–39-year-olds
- 5 cases involved 40–49-year-olds
- 3 cases involved 50–59-year-olds
- 2 grievances involved individuals above the age of 60

Taking ethnicity into account:

- All 19 grievances were raised by staff who were White British/Irish

Concerning sexual orientation, less information was available. Of the valid data:

- 9 were heterosexual or 1.5% of the workforce
- 1 was Gay / Lesbian or 2.3% of the workforce who have identified as LGBTQ+
- 1 preferred not to say or 2.94% of the workforce

Key Results – Grievance outcomes by protected characteristic

The data shows that concerning outcomes

- 5 grievances that were ongoing at the time the data was collected
- 8 were Upheld
- 4 were Not Upheld
- 1 was Part Upheld
- 1 was Withdrawn

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	12 OCTOBER 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/045/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEGAL SERVICES , NICK MERNOCK	REPORT AUTHOR:	ASSOCIATE HEAD OF CULTURE AND TRANSFORMATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, MO JOGI
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	DEB APPLETON, NICK MERNOCK, MARK THOMAS, BEN RYDER, KEV LONGSHAW AND MARK BUCHANAN (CHAIR SOCIO ECONOMIC NETWORK)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	ADOPTING, EMBEDDING AND REPORTING ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY - UPDATE REPORT		

APPENDICES:	NONE
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the ongoing progress of the plans to formally adopt the Socio-economic Duty working with Liverpool City Region (LCR) and associated partners and what this will mean in terms of embedding the duty across Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

Recommendation

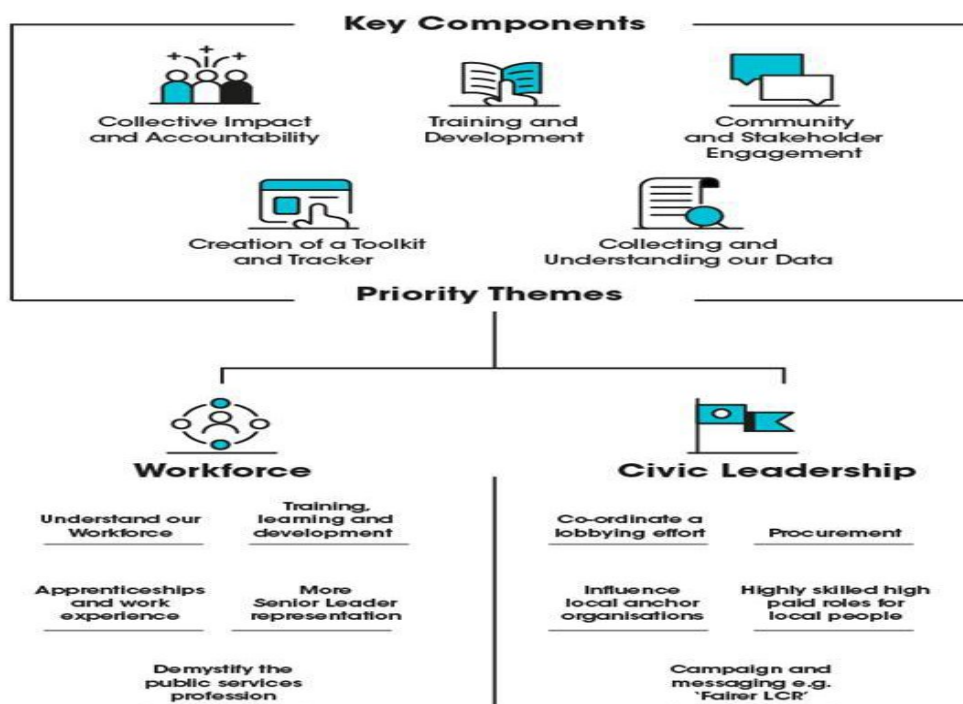
2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note, the progress that has been made since the first report to Authority in October 2022 and;
 - b) note, the proposed next steps.

Introduction and Background

3. A paper was presented in October 2022, to the Authority, which included details of a report and series of recommendations presented to Liverpool City Region, Metro Mayor, Leaders and Mayor by the Chief Fire Office Phil Garrigan on the 18th of August 2022 regarding the adoption of the Socio-economic Duty and the proposed next steps.

4. Subsequently on the 22nd of January 2023, a workshop was held involving representative from all five local authorities, the Liverpool City Region and members from the Merseyside & Cheshire Health & Wellbeing Board. The purpose of the workshop was (a) develop a shared understanding on socio-economic duty and what it means for LCR (b) learn from how other areas are approaching they duty (c) work together to identify shared opportunities, challenges, and joint solutions (d) develop action plans to progress the adoption of socio-economic duty and embed this alongside the other nine protected characteristics.

5. The following key components were agreed as part of a Liverpool City Region approach alongside diving deeper into two priority themes as follows:



6. Following the meeting and reflections it was decided to set out how MFRS could set out is own plan to embed the Socio-economic Duty (the Duty) and share the plan with partners with the intention to work together.

7. To recap the Socio-economic Duty (the Duty) is set out in Part 1, Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010. It *requires specified public bodies, when making strategic decisions, such as deciding priorities and setting objectives, to pay due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome that result from socioeconomic disadvantage.* The overall aim of the Duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that those taking strategic decisions:

- Take account of evidence and potential impact through consultation and engagement.
- Understand the views and needs of those impacted by the decision, particularly those who suffer socio-economic disadvantage;
- Welcome challenge and scrutiny; and
- Drive a change in the way that decisions are made and the way that decision makers operate
- Such inequalities could include inequalities in employment, education, health, housing, or crime rates.
- Although this section of the Act was passed with the rest of the Equality Act in 2010, it has never been enforced in England, even though it represents a real opportunity for tackling inequality
- Several local authorities and combined authorities (including North of Tyne) have adopted the duty voluntarily within their Public Sector Equality Duty.

8. Liverpool City Region & Plan for Prosperity

Realising our vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Fairer City Region. • A Cleaner City Region. • A Stronger City Region. 	
Capitalising on our distinctive proposition	A place of Pioneers: our deep, holistic and distinctive innovation offer.	
Achieving our strategic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inclusive city region where levelling up means no one and no place is left behind. • Pioneers of the Green Industrial Revolution. • A global, confident and outward looking city region. 	
Strengthening the pillars of our economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising impacts of innovation for people, places and businesses. • Turning people's potential into prosperity. • Thriving, sustainable and resilient places. • Integrated infrastructure for a connected city region. 	
Enhancing our resilience	Renewing our economy	Delivering shared prosperity

- A shared blueprint for local engagement with Government on 'levelling up' – an inclusive city region where no one and no place is left behind
- In LCR too many communities have remained excluded from economic opportunity for too long, with concentrations of significant deprivation, low levels of skills and difficulty accessing employment locations
- A combination of health-related economic inactivity and not enough high-quality jobs, means productivity is too low and too many people and places have fallen behind
- Shared prosperity is conditional on improving health, skills, infrastructures, and quality of place.

9. Underlying problems relating to deprivation

- A person's socio-economic background is a key factor in determining their life chances – how they get on at school, the chances of continuing with their education, employment prospects and their health
- LCR has significant employment, unemployment and economic inactivity gaps remaining for women, those from an ethnic minority, those with a disability, young people, and older people

- Nationally, median weekly earnings for female employees working full-time were £558 at April 2021, compared to £652 for male full-time employees (ONS)
- Social mobility refers to change in a person's socio-economic situation, either in relation to their parents (inter-generational mobility) or throughout their lifetime (intra-generational mobility). Social mobility is linked to equality of opportunity: the extent to which people have the same chances to do well in life regardless of the socio-economic background of their parents, their gender, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, birthplace, or other circumstances beyond their control.
- Social mobility and equality of opportunity can be measured in terms of earnings, income, or social class, but can also be understood to encompass other well-being dimensions such as health and education.

10. **Cost of living crisis**

- The majority of LCR neighbourhoods are more at risk from rising cost of living than the national average. Risks around north Liverpool, south Sefton, east Wirral, and north Knowsley.
- This analysis is based on LCRCA's Cost of Living Index, which pulls together a range of datasets to assess an area's resilience to rising cost of living.
- Neighbourhoods are given a score for each indicator relative to the national average (above 0 means higher vulnerability). Indicators are grouped into three categories:

<p><u>Income & employment</u></p> <p><i>(Universal Credit, Household income, income deprivation, employment deprivation, free school meals)</i></p>
<p><u>Housing</u></p> <p><i>(Housing energy score, electricity prepayment meters, overcrowded dwellings, private rental costs, older dwellings)</i></p>

Energy & fuel

(Annual energy bills, energy as % of income, fuel poverty, car ownership)

***LCRCA Cost of Living Index Score below, higher the score the more the risk &
20 high risk areas & 13 Community Fire Stations***

Council Ward	Local Authority	MFRS station(s)	Cost of living index
1. Walton South	Liverpool	Aintree	1.08
2. Anfield East	Liverpool	Liverpool City Centre	0.97
3. Kensington	Liverpool	Kensington	0.96
4. Bidston Hill	Wirral	Saughall Massie	0.92
5. Fairfield West & Newsham Park	Liverpool	Kensington	0.92
6. Poulton	Wirral	Wallasey	0.90
7. Toxteth Park	Liverpool	Toxteth	0.90
8. Walton Hall	Liverpool	Aintree	0.89
9. Birkenhead South	Wirral	Birkenhead	0.88
10. Norris Green West	Liverpool	Croxteth	0.88
11. Anfield West	Liverpool	Kensington	0.88
12. Bootle North	Sefton	Crosby	0.87
13. Seacombe	Wirral	Wallasey	0.86
14. Egremont	Wirral	Wallasey	0.86
15. Tranmere	Wirral	Birkenhead	0.83
16. Page Moss & Fincham	Knowsley	Prescot	0.80
17. Wavertree South	Liverpool	Old Swan	0.77
18. Bootle East	Sefton	Aintree	0.77

19. Southport High Park	Sefton	Southport	0.75
20. Tuebrook	Liverpool	Old Swan	0.74

11. **Next Steps - Advancing fairness & opportunity across MFRS & key principles**

- Using the principles of SED, MFRS can deliver advancing fairness, opportunity and reducing gaps in outcomes across the deprived people and places.
- Encourage strong and visible leadership
- Using data effectively as a tool for focusing on certain areas of Merseyside aiding decision-making and accountability
- Develop capacity across the organisation through working with LCR & plans for learning and development sessions for managers and policy writers to apply and report on the SED.
- Look at routinely including SED in decision-making:
 - Business planning cycle
 - Policy making process
 - Service delivery
 - Investment decisions and appraisal process
 - Procurement
 - Equality Impact Assessments
- Engaging with residents, civil society and voluntary and community sector organisations from the outset focused on high-risk areas & make the most of opportunities to undertake joint activities with partners across LCR
- Measuring the socio-economic background employees and potential recruits
- Integrate the work on workplace culture & knowing our communities
- Annual Report - monitoring impact and compliance – identify ‘what works.

12. **Next steps and Action Plan 2023-24 – Year 1 & leads**

- **Align existing priorities within the functional plans for Prevention, Protection and People & Organisational Development (POD) focusing on**

the 20 high risk areas & 13 community fire stations identified by LCRCA's Cost of Living Index.

Actions to include:

- ✓ **Prevention** - *Cross reference & report across the top 20 high risk areas identified by LCRCA's Cost of Living Index with existing activity focusing on home safety, community safety, safeguarding & youth engagement & what activities take place and also what % of overall activity takes place across the top 20 high risk areas*

Lead: AM Mark Thomas

- ✓ **Protection** - *Align the work on the socioeconomic duty & the business safety engagement work & in particular the Business Safety Engagement (BSE) framework and associated plan documents.*

Lead: AM Kev Longshaw

- ✓ **Response**: *Commit to focusing positive action recruitment activities across the top 20 high risk areas & associated 13 community fire stations identified within the LCRCA's Cost of Living Index*

Lead: AM Ben Ryder

- ✓ **POD** - *Include a question on the recruitment application form which focuses on social mobility.*

Lead: Sara Fielding

- ✓ **POD** - *Achieve Level 3 & Disability Confident standard Social Mobility Index benchmark & Fair Employment Charter to support the measurement of progress*

Lead: Vicky Campbell

Internal Groups - Influence the work of MFRS the Cost-of-living working group (external facing) and the socio-economic staff network (internal)

Actions to include:

- ✓ *Influence Cost-of-living working group (external facing) to cross reference proposed activity across the top 20 high risk areas identified by LCRCA's Cost of Living Index & report activity as part of its evaluation.*

Lead: AM Mark Thomas

- ✓ *Encourage parties to focus resources associated with the Community impact fund across the top 20 high risk areas identified by LCRCA's Cost of Living Index & report activity as part of its evaluation.*

Lead: AM Ben Ryder

- ✓ *Encourage the socio-economic staff network (internal) to measure & determine a baseline of internal social mobility of staff to help develop its work addressing in house poverty.*

Leads: Mark Buchannan

- **Embed the impact socio economic disadvantage can have, clearly articulating what this means in terms of Business planning cycle, policy making process and Equality Impact Assessments & knowledge and skills**

Actions to include:

- ✓ *Give further prominence including advice and support within the existing Equality Impact Assessment Template & the socio-economic duty*
- ✓ *Taking part in training and development activities on how best to apply and report on the socio-economic duty with a focus on policy writers and managers in conjunction with the LCR*

Leads: Vicky Campbell

- **Annual Report & socio-economic duty**

Actions to include:

- ✓ *Baseline assessment for the first year of activities and how the basement influences business planning.*
- ✓ *Case studies of activity*
- ✓ *Sharing progress with function and members*

Leads: Mo Jogi & Vicky Campbell

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. There is considerable overlap between inequality because of having protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage. The two directly intersect in the racialised, gendered, and disability inflected nature of poverty.

Staff Implications

14. The proposed work on the socio-economic duty has implications for staff as the proposal includes plans to; (a) measure the social mobility background of staff (b) to undertake the Social Mobility Maturity Commission Assessment Framework to help measure our approach.

Legal Implications

15. The approach demonstrates MFRA is going beyond the requirements of the Equality Act and acknowledging equality is multifaceted.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

16. There will be no financial implications this year.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

17. There are no risk management, health and safety or environmental implications arising from this report.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

18. The report demonstrates strong civic leadership across the region. Through making the case for embracing socio-economic disadvantage, the duty will allow organisations to take an increasingly intersectional approach.
19. Deprivation interacts with equality-protected characteristics, and certain communities and geographies may also experience worse outcomes than in other areas. The intersectionality between deprivation and other characteristics can be thought of as a web, where different areas connect, compounding and exacerbating each other.

20. Finally working across the region and focusing on how a duty on socio-economic disadvantage can help work on all aspects of life, including health, life expectancy and educational attainment.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/046/22 Adopting, Embedding and Reporting on the Socio-economic duty - update with Liverpool City Region

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CA	Combined Authority
CFO	Chief Fire Officer
EHRC	Equality Human Rights Commission
FSD	Fairer Scotland Duty
HCP	Health and Care Partnership
HR	Human Resources
LCR	Liverpool City Region
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is the service provided by MFRA. When writing reports MFRS is the “action”
OD	Organisational Development
SED	Socio-economic Duty

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	12 OCTOBER 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/47/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	ACFO DAVE MOTTRAM	REPORT AUTHOR:	AREA MANAGER, MARK THOMAS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	2022/23 FATAL FIRE AND FIFTEEN YEAR TREND ANALYSIS FATAL FIRE REPORT		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A	FATALITY REPORT 2022/23
	APPENDIX B	FIFTEEN YEAR TREND ANALYSIS

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with:
 - 1.1. a briefing of the last reporting year in relation to accidental dwelling fires and associated fatalities;
 - 1.2. a briefing regarding the trend analysis of fatalities in accidental dwelling fires over a fifteen-year period; and
 - 1.3. an assurance that Prevention activities are targeted in line with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) expectations for efficiency and effectiveness.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report and appendices attached.

Introduction and Background

3. Each year, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) incident information (such as fire reports and fatal fire investigations) is analysed by the Business Intelligence team in consultation with Prevention managers to produce the following annual reports:
 - Fatal Fire Review for the previous financial year and
 - Fatal Fire Review for the previous 15 years.

4. The Business Intelligence Team have provided a fifteen-year trend analysis report enabling larger data analysis and scrutiny to be applied. The two documents are attached as appendices A and B respectively.
5. The data captured within these reports is used to analyse and identify any trends, which then informs the continual review of the Home Safety Plan. Fatal fire data is considered the tip of the risk profile, to prevent fire fatality data misleading our targeting methodology, additional factors are also considered which account for the broader risk across our vulnerable communities such as Accidental Dwelling Fire (ADF) data in the broader context.
6. Members will note consistencies between the 15-year report and the previous financial year report in terms of underlying causes of fatalities in accidental dwelling fires (age, deprivation, and lifestyle issues, such as smoking).
7. Members will also note that last year, cooking featured more prominently than other ignition sources. National data is being scrutinised to explore similar increases in these fires and their relationship to a rise in the Cost of Living. MFRA Prevention officers use real time incident review to ensure we are acting on any changing behaviours or increasing incident causes and our approach and advice has been updated to reflect the rise in these types of incidents.
8. Given the ongoing rising Cost of Living challenges, the use of mobile heaters etc. was expected to increase and therefore lead to a potential increase in risk. However, there were no deaths attributed to heating sources.
9. It is noteworthy that lower age range and more fatalities are recorded in more deprived areas. Enhanced CIPHA data sharing agreements with partners will support our accessing of these individuals in accordance with Prevention Functional Plan objectives. The accessing of CIPHA data will commence following sign-off by NHS GP surgeries.
10. Crews currently seek to deliver HFSCs to 60% of those over the age of 65. Therefore, the remaining 40% of HFSC activity will be focussed towards the demographic referred to above i.e. 45+ in areas of higher deprivation.
11. Campaigns will continue to be aligned to reports of ADF and associated fatalities. As an example, Older Persons Day is held in October whereas most ADF fatalities occur between November and April. Additional campaigns will be delivered through winter (such as Winter Warmth) to ensure that work done in October is reinforced during the higher risk months. This will be complemented by Cost of Living work streams which will be more appropriate during the colder months.
12. HMICFRS have previously cited concerns with evaluation of Prevention activity across the Fire Sector, recommending greater use of wider datasets to better inform the targeting of Fire and Rescue Service resources. Our use of 15-year data analysis and our evaluation plans will allow us to make our evaluation more effective and evidence based. This 'lookback' over 15 years data is believed to be unique to MFRA.

13. MFRA officers are actively engaged with the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) to inform Prevention policy, directly influencing the professionalising of Prevention activity, and sharing MFRA good practice across the sector. This has been most prominent through the development of the Person-Centred Approach to Home Safety.
14. To support the delivery of the Prevention functional plan and as referenced within this report, the importance of MFRS accessing other data sets (such as dementia, frailty, hospital discharges, care network etc.) should not be underestimated.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. The fatal fire analysis identifies that people with protected characteristics such as age and disability are disproportionately at risk of fire. Over 15 years most fatal fire victims were also White British. The continued monitoring of data is used to underpin and influence our targeting strategies.

Staff Implications

16. This report has no significant changes that will impact on staff, however, staff undertaking Home Fire Safety activity will be subject to levels of training as identified through the Prevention directorate. At the time of writing, NFCC prevention committee members are engaged in the development and delivery of a competency framework for Fire and Rescue Staff to enable a professional delivery of Prevention Services.
17. At the time of writing, Prevention directorate are developing a suite of training materials including Learnpro modules to support delivery of prevention activities in line with local needs and national competency requirements.

Legal Implications

18. Section 6 (2) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that:

A fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area..... a fire and rescue authority must in particular, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, make arrangements for— (a) the provision of information, publicity and encouragement in respect of the steps to be taken to prevent fires and death or injury by fire; (b) the giving of advice, on request, about— (i) how to prevent fires and restrict their spread in buildings and other property;

19. MFRA Home Safety Strategy demonstrates compliance under the act and will continue to deliver its Home Safety activity using a legitimised, targeted approach.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

20. The recommendations in this report will continue to demonstrate the effectiveness of Prevention interventions which in turn are likely to reduce operational demand and improve community safety.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

21. During 2022/23, the service experienced 10 fatal fire incidents which was an increase from the previous year of 4.

22. Delivery of HFSC was impacted at the start of the current three yearly IRMP and it may not be known for some time the wider implications of this reduction in activity at that time.

23. To help mitigate risk, the function has carried out leaflet drops to over 300,000 properties reminding the community to the dangers of fire and has uplifted safety messaging on social media platforms.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

24. The use of the fatal fires analysis to enhance the effectiveness of Prevention interventions assists the Service to make significant and direct contribution towards the Services' mission.

25. The Service is held in high regard within the Sector in relation to Prevention activity. Subsequent HMICFRS awards of Outstanding, secure the Service as a sector leader, this is reinforced by MFRS influence in terms of Policy development and National leadership.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services
NFCC	National Fire Chief's Council
HFSC	Home Fire Safety Check

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Analysis of Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023

**TO BE PRESENTED TO:
Authority
Strategic Leadership Team**

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**PREVENTION
STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE**

Date work received: 01/04/2023
Date work completed: **/**/2023

Document Control

Amendment History

Version / Issue No.	Date	Author	Remarks / Reason for Change
1.0	TBC	J Fielding	Following comments from AM Thomas, GM Woodward and Deb Appleton

Sign-Off List

Name	Position
ACFO D Mottram	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Deb Appleton	Director of Strategy & Performance
AM M Thomas	Area Manager – Prevention
GM L Woodward	Group Manager – Prevention

Distribution List

Name	Position	I / R
Strategic Leadership Team		
Fire Authority		

Related Documents

Reference No.	Title	Author	Version & Date
1	Historical Analysis of Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 2008/09 and 2022/23	J Fielding	TBC

Ownership

Has it been agreed with the client that this is a publicly owned document?

Yes/No

If Yes please state URL: <http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk>
(once agreed by authority)

If No please state reason why:

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1. Agreement

For the purpose of this report the following agreement was made between the client and the Strategy and Performance Directorate.

This work was requested by AM Thomas and received on 01/04/2023.

The Manager¹ has approved this report/ piece of work can be undertaken by the Strategy and Performance Directorate.

If the scope of the work changes, authorisation must be again obtained and would be noted within the version control document sheet.

It was agreed that this report would be produced in draft format by May 2023 and would be sent electronically to the Director of Strategy and Performance Directorate and Client for comment.

The Manager / Client agreed that their comments would be received back by May 2023.

The final report, which will always be in PDF format, would be produced by May 2023, subject to receiving comments.

¹ Deb Appleton

2. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis regarding the circumstances of fatalities in accidental dwelling fires across Merseyside during 2022/23. In summary, the findings within this report are as follows:

- During 2022/23, there were 10 fatalities as a result of accidental dwelling fires, an increase of 6 on the previous year. These deaths were the result of 9 fire incidents.
- By district, Knowsley and St Helens saw 1 fatal incident each, Liverpool and Sefton saw 2 fatal incidents (though there was a double fatality in 1 of the incidents in Sefton) and Wirral saw 3 fatal incidents as below:

District	Number of Fatalities	Number of Fatal Incidents
Knowsley	1	1
Liverpool	2	2
Sefton	3	2
St Helens	1	1
Wirral	3	3
Merseyside Wide	10	9

- The ages of the victims ranged between 23 and 78; 3 victims were known to be above the age of 70, 5 were above the age of 65.
- Concerning sex; 1 victim was female and 9 were male. In terms of racial profile, all 10 were White British. It was known that 5 victims had mobility issues.
- Based on the National Index of Multiple Deprivation, the majority of victims resided in high deprivation neighbourhoods.
- Taking ignition source into account; 3 fatal incidents were related to smokers' materials, 4 were due to cooking and 2 were related to electrical faults (1 of which was due to a ruptured E-bike lithium ion battery).
- 5 of the 9 households had previously received a Home Fire Safety Check.
- 8 of the households had working smoke alarms, 1 property had one installed but the batteries were flat.
- In 7 incidents the victim lived alone, and was alone at the time of the incident.
- 8 of the 9 properties were rented.
- There were no deaths attributed to heating sources. Given the ongoing Cost of Living crisis, the use of mobile heaters etc. was expected to increase and therefore lead to a potential increase in risk. However there were no deaths attributed to this cause.

3. Introduction

This report analyses fire related fatalities across Merseyside during 2022/23. The focus of this report are fatalities that occurred as a result of an Accidental Dwelling Fire (ADF).

This report contains information relating to the circumstances of individuals who have regrettably died in a fire, as well as other information, including: Equality & Diversity protected characteristics, ignition source and temporal analysis, all of which will support the on-going and proactive actions of the staff involved in Prevention activity and their actions to reduce the risk of fire.

4. Case Studies

The following section outlines case studies of incidents where people died as a result of an accidental dwelling fire during 2022/23. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has continued to play a significant role in reducing the number of fatalities caused by fire and works closely with partner agencies to ensure that measures have been put in place to reduce the risks associated with fire.

Case 1: May 2022 Wirral

The deceased was a 78-year-old male, who was the sole inhabitant of the sheltered accommodation flat where he lived; the victim was alone at the time of the incident, the victim was known to have mobility issues. At 20:44 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident. The property had previously received a Home Fire Safety Check; the fitted smoke alarms actuated during the incident. The fire occurred in the bedroom with the victim being located in the same room. The suspected cause of the fire was due to a dropped cigarette (smokers materials) igniting bedding.

Case 2: November 2022 Liverpool

The deceased was a 62-year-old male, who was the sole inhabitant of the sheltered accommodation flat where he lived; the victim was alone at the time of the incident, the victim was known to have mobility issues. At 17:34 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident. The property had not received a prior Home Fire Safety Check; though there were smoke alarms fitted, which successfully actuated. The fire occurred in the living room, with the victim being found in the same room. The suspected cause of the fire was due to a dropped cigarette (smokers materials) igniting bedding.

Case 3: November 2022 Liverpool

The deceased was a 54-year-old male, who was the sole inhabitant of the flat where he lived; the victim was alone at the time of the incident. At 11:49 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident, this incident was a late call, meaning that operational crews attended the incident sometime after the fire had already extinguished itself. The property had not received a prior Home Fire Safety Check; though there were smoke alarms fitted, which successfully actuated. The fire occurred in the kitchen with the victim being located in the bathroom. The suspected cause of the fire was due to cooking - leaving food unattended on a hob.

Case 4: December 2022 Wirral

The deceased was a 66-year-old male, who was the sole inhabitant of the terraced house where he lived; the victim was alone at the time of the incident. At 9:30 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident. The property had not received a prior Home Fire Safety Check; though there were smoke alarms fitted, which successfully actuated. The fire occurred in the kitchen with the victim being found in the same room. The suspected cause of the fire was due to the victim leaving combustible articles too close to the hob which then ignited.

Case 5: December 2022 St Helens

The deceased was a 70-year-old male, who was the sole inhabitant of the semi-detached house where he lived; the victim was alone at the time of the incident. At

14:14 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident. The property had previously received a Home Fire Safety Check; during the safety check smoke alarms were provided free of charge, which actuated during the incident. The fire occurred in the kitchen with the victim being located in the living room. The suspected cause of the fire was due to cooking - leaving a chip pan unattended on a hob.

Case 6: January 2023 Sefton

The deceased was a 65-year-old male, who was the sole inhabitant of the bungalow where he lived; the victim was alone at the time of the incident. At 18:45 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident. The property had previously received a Home Fire Safety Check; during the safety check smoke alarms were provided free of charge, however the smoke alarm was found to not have batteries installed, there had been multiple attempts in ensuing years to revisit the property but the occupier refused further visits. The fire occurred in the kitchen with the victim being located same room. The suspected cause of the fire was due to cooking - leaving food unattended on a hob.

Case 7: January 2023 Sefton

The deceased was a 60-year-old male, the victim lived with his family in the semi-detached house where he lived; the victim was not alone in the property at the time of the incident, the victim was known to have mobility issues. At 03:00 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident. The property had previously received a Home Fire Safety Check; during the safety check smoke alarms were provided free of charge, which actuated during the incident. The fire occurred in the living room with the victim being located in the upstairs bedroom with his son. The suspected cause of the fire was due to an electrical fault with an E-Bike Lithium Ion battery.

Case 8: January 2023 Sefton

The deceased was a 23-year-old male, the victim lived with his family in the semi-detached house where he lived; the victim was not alone in the property at the time of the incident. At 03:00 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident. The property had previously received a Home Fire Safety Check; during the safety check smoke alarms were provided free of charge, which actuated during the incident. The fire occurred in the living room with the victim being located in the bedroom with his father, the victim was rescued alive but passed away in hospital. The suspected cause of the fire was due to an electrical fault with an E-Bike Lithium Ion battery.

Case 9: January 2023 Knowsley

The deceased was a 56-year-old female, the victim lived with her family in the semi-detached house; the victim was not alone in the property at the time of the incident, the victim was known to have mobility issues. At 06:10 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident. The property had not received a prior Home Fire Safety Check; though there were smoke alarms fitted, which successfully actuated. The fire occurred in the hallway with the victim being located in the upstairs bedroom. The suspected cause of the fire was due to an electrical fault originating within the property's electricity consumer unit.

Case 10: March 2023 Wirral

The deceased was a 75-year-old male, who was the sole inhabitant of the sheltered accommodation flat where he lived; the victim was alone at the time of the incident, the victim was known to have mobility issues. At 16:39 hrs, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service received a call to attend the incident. The property had previously received a Home Fire Safety Check; the fitted smoke alarms actuated during the incident. The fire occurred in the hallway with the victim being in the same area. The suspected cause of the fire was due to a dropped cigarette (smokers materials) igniting clothing which had been impregnated by emollients.

5. Methodology

Data used in this report was supplied by the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Incident Investigation Team; with the Coroner ultimately determining the cause of death).

Fatalities in accidental dwelling fires were originally reported under the Best Value Performance Indicator 143(ii). Since 2008, this performance indicator has become defunct at a national level; however Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority still measure this as Key Performance Indicator DC12. Qualification for this performance indicator is decided by members of MFRA Incident Investigation Team (IIT) and the Coroner.

Some data within this report is still awaiting Coroner agreement and as such some figures may be subject to change.

The Long Time Series Analysis counts have been obtained from the following:

- Between 1991/92 – 1999/2000: Freedom of Information Request from Department for Communities and Local Government
- Between 2000/01 – present: MFRA Incident Investigation Team archives

The ratio of incidents to fatalities is: count of total accidental dwelling fires / count of fatalities

Index of Deprivation 2019 (IOD 2019) has been used to measure the levels of deprivation where fire fatalities took place².

The IOD 2019 data was then analysed in two ways:

- At a local level the IOD 2019 data was restricted to solely Merseyside, this data was then split into 10 bands with equal counts, each representing a decile of relative localised deprivation. This data is merged with fatality incident data and analysed.
- At a national level the IOD 2019 data has not been restricted to Merseyside, the national dataset is split into 10 equal bands, with each band being a decile of deprivation. This data is merged with fatality incident data and analysed.

The Index of Deprivation 2019 was sourced from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The software used to complete the analysis, was Microsoft Office Excel 2016 and MapInfo Professional 17.0 for filtering and mapping the data.

² IOD ranks deprivation in the form of an index, where low numbers indicate Super Output Areas (LSOA) which have high levels of deprivation and high numbers indicating Super Output Areas with least deprivation

6. Results

6.1 Retrospective

Long Time Series Analysis

Chart 1: Long Time Series of fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 1991/92 and 2022/23

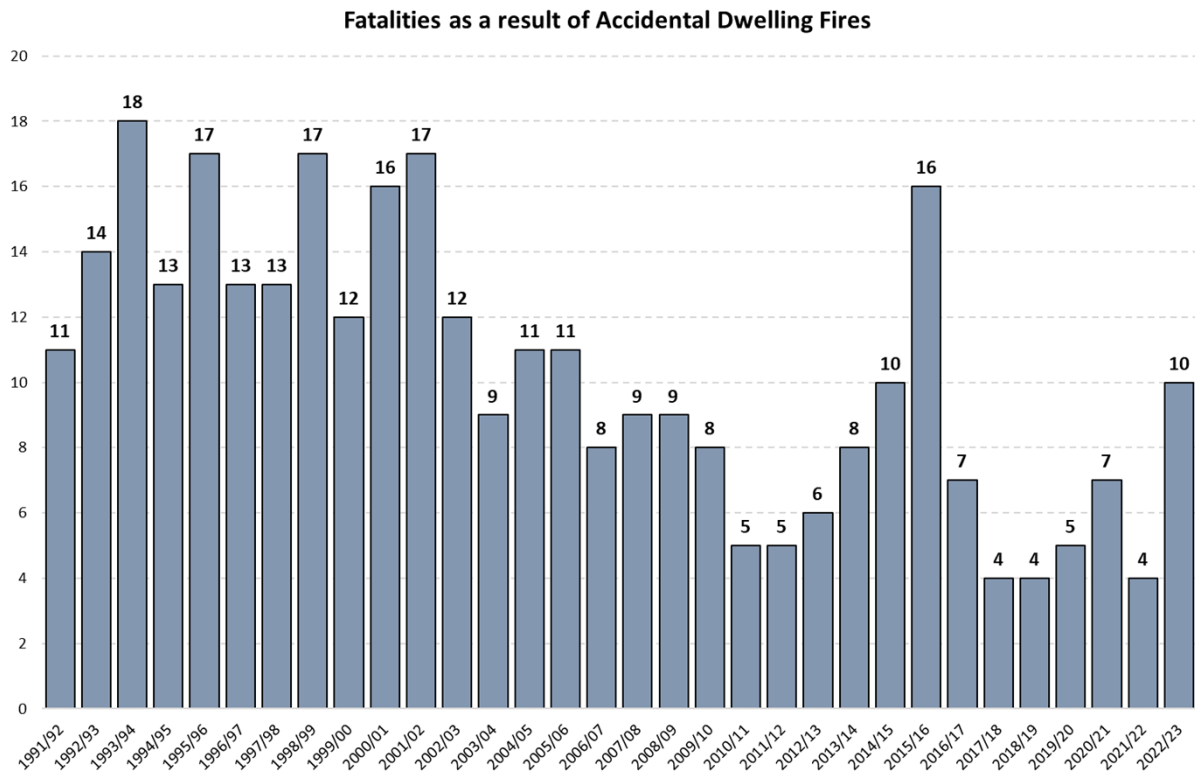


Chart 1 provides a count of accidental dwelling fire fatalities between 1991/92 and 2022/23. What is evident is that over this period, fatalities on the whole have reduced.

In recent years, 2015/16 saw the greatest number of fire fatalities with 16. Prior to 2016/17, there was an upward trend in the count of fatalities, however this upward trend was halted with the 7 deaths for 2016/17 and then a low of 4 during 2017/18 – which has since been repeated during 2018/19 and 2021/22. During 2022/23 there were 10 fatalities as a result of accidental dwelling fires.

Over the period, 1993/94 had the highest number of fatalities with 18, followed by 1995/96, 1998/99 and 2001/02 with 17 each.

10 Year Retrospective

Chart 2: Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 2013/14 and 2022/23 by district

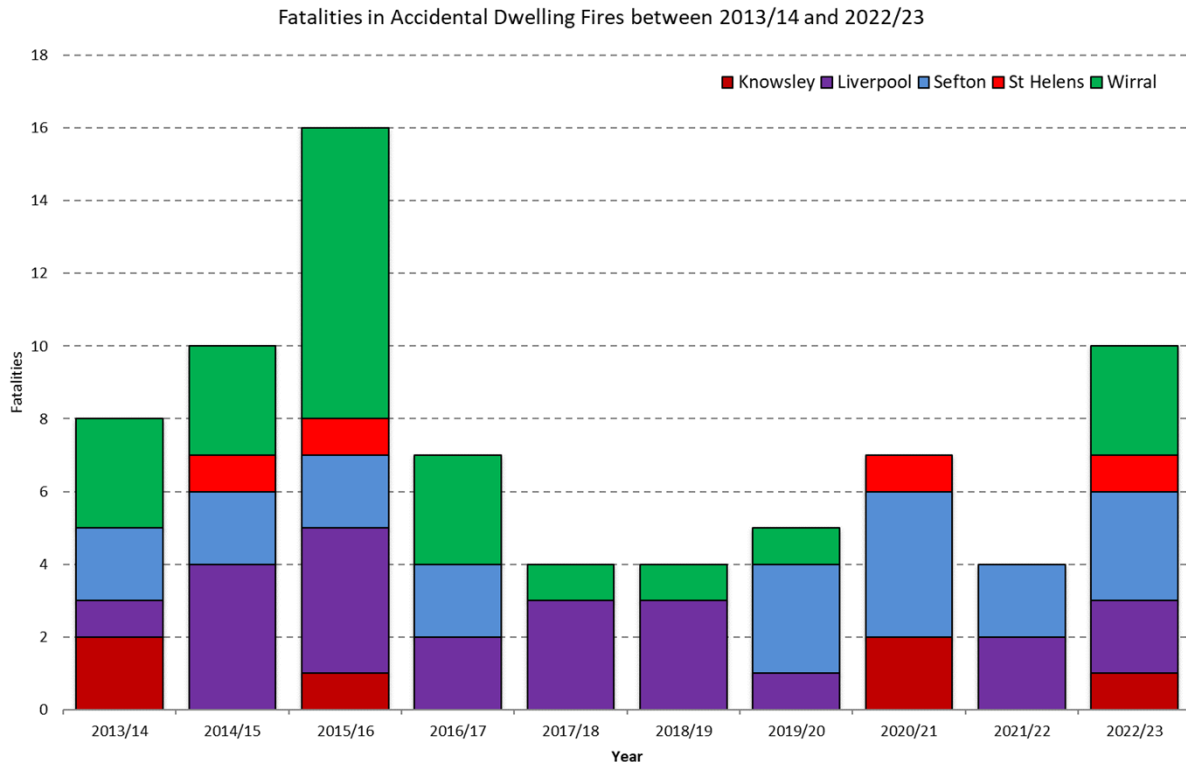


Chart 2 identifies that since 2015/16, when 16 fatalities occurred, there have been sizeable reductions. Between 2018/19 to 2020/21, there was a gradual rising trend, with 5 during 2019/20 and 7 during 2020/21. For 2021/22, there were 4 deaths, which is the joint lowest number of deaths along with 2017/18 and 2018/19. The low counts of incident ended during 2022/23 where 10 fatalities took place.

When analysed by district, the counts vary. Prior to 2020/21, Wirral consistently saw fire deaths, until the years 2020/21 to 2021/22, during 2022/23 there were 3 deaths in the district. Knowsley and St Helens have had the fewest fatalities over the 10 year period.

During 2022/23, there were fatalities in all districts. Knowsley and St Helens saw a single death each, Liverpool saw 2 and both Sefton and Wirral saw 3 deaths each. It should be noted that one of the incidents in Sefton resulted in 2 deaths.

6.2 Spatial Analysis

Table 1: Ratio of Accidental Dwelling Fire Incidents to Fatal Incidents during 2022/23

Counts	Knowsley	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral	Total
Overall Fatal Incidents	1	2	2	1	3	9
Accidental Dwelling Fires	76	309	152	77	165	779
Ratio	1:76	1:155	1:76	1:77	1:55	1:78

Table 1 provides the ratio of accidental dwelling fire incidents against related fire deaths across Merseyside. The table identifies that Wirral had the highest ratio of incidents to fatalities with 1 fatal fire per 55 incidents, Knowsley, Sefton and St Helens all had very similar ratios with 1 fatal incident per 76 to 77 accidental dwelling fire incidents and Liverpool had the lowest ratio of 1 fatal incident per 155 accidental dwelling fires. Merseyside wide the ratio was 1 death per 78 incidents, which is very similar to the ratios for Knowsley, Sefton and St Helens.

Deprivation Analysis

Chart 3: Accidental Dwelling Fires Fatal incidents during 2022/23 in relation to Indices of Deprivation (IOD) 2019

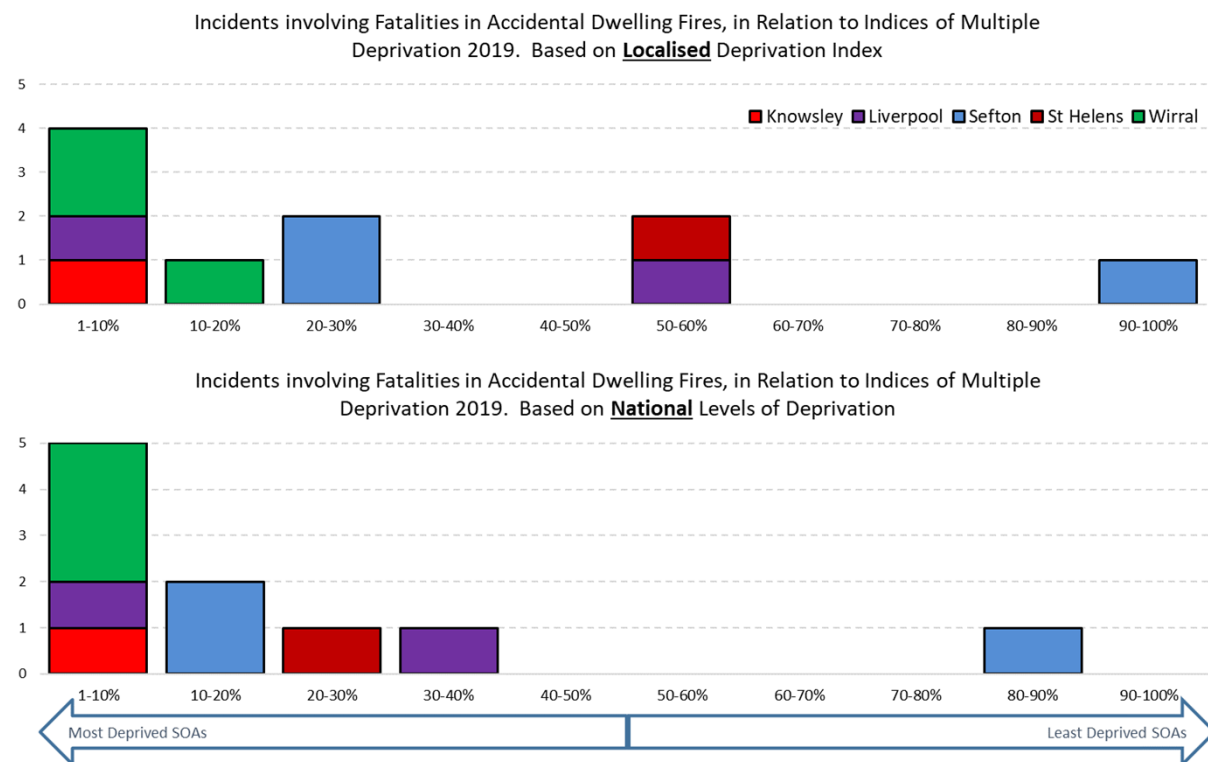


Chart 3 analyses the levels of deprivation where an incident involving a fatality took place, based on:

- A localised – Merseyside based index of deprivation
- Against national levels of deprivation

Regardless of whether the data is analysed from a national or local deprivation perspective, the majority of fire deaths occur in areas of greater deprivation.

6.3 Incident Analysis

The following section summarises the status and circumstances of victims:

Circumstances

Table 2: Fire room of origin and victim location

Room of Ignition	Room where victim was located					Total
	Bedroom	Living Room	Bathroom	Hallway	Kitchen	
Kitchen	1	1	1		1	4
Living Room	2	1				3
Hallway	1			1		2
Bedroom	1					1
Total	5	2	1	1	1	10

Concerning the fire room of origin; 4 incidents started in the kitchen, 3 in the living room, 2 in the hallway and 1 in the bedroom. In 4 incidents the victims were located by MFRA operational crews in the room of origin.

Table 3: Fire room of origin and ignition source³

Room of Ignition	Cause			Total
	Electrical Fault	Cooking	Smokers Materials	
Kitchen		4		4
Living Room	1		1	2
Hallway	1		1	2
Bedroom			1	1
Total	2	4	3	9

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the ignition sources in relation to the room where the incident took place. The most common cause of fatal incident was cooking in the kitchen (especially leaving cooking unattended (3) or combustible items left close to a naked flame). Smokers materials also accounted for 3 fatal incidents, though there is no commonality in the room where the fire took place. Finally electrical faults accounted for 2 fatal incidents, though resulted in 3 deaths, 1 incident was related to an e-bike on charge which ruptured and the ensuing fire claimed the lives of 2 people, a further incident related to an issue with a consumer board.

The Victims

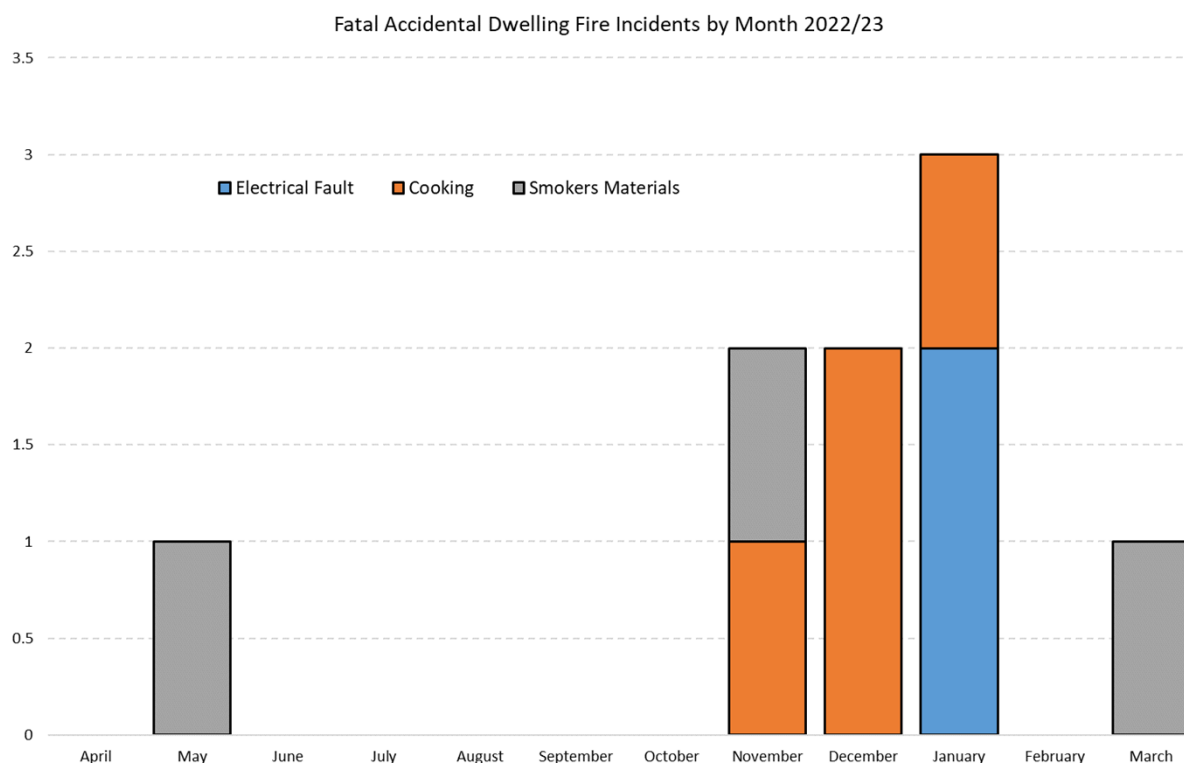
- There were 9 male and 1 female victims.
- The age range of male victims was between 23 and 78. The female victim was 56. 3 victims were above the age of 70, 4 were between 60 to 69, 2 were between 50 to 59 and 1 was aged between 20 to 29
- All 10 victims were White British in ethnic origin.
- It was known that 5 of the victims had serious mobility issues
- In 7 of the incidents, the victim lived alone, and was alone at the time of the fire.

³ For analysis purposes the causes have been summarised; for more detail, please refer to the Section 4 Case Studies for additional details

- Concerning home ownership, 8 of the properties were rented and 1 was owner occupied.

Temporal Analysis

Chart 4: Fatal accidental dwelling fire incidents by month



- Chart 4 shows a clear clustering during the winter months for. Concerning the incidents that took place between December and January, all 5 incidents (resulting in 6 deaths) took place over a 6 week period, with 2 incidents taking place just prior to Christmas and the other 3 throughout January. Historical analysis of fatal fire incidents has shown that there tend to be more fire deaths during winter months with relatively few taking place towards the end of spring, summer and early autumn.⁴
- Incidents took place throughout the day during the following hours: 03:00 – 03:59, 06:00 – 06:59, 09:00 – 09:59, 11:00 – 11:59, 14:00 – 14:59, 16:00 – 16:59, 17:00 – 17:59, 18:00 – 18:59 and 20:00 – 20:59.

Fire Safety

Table 4: Fire Safety – Home Fire Safety Check & Smoke Alarm status

Smoke Alarm Status	HFSC Received		Total
	Yes	No	
Fitted & Actuated	4	4	8

⁴ Though not featured in this report, an analysis into injuries resulted from Accidental Secondary Fires was performed, and identified that there was no significant increase in injuries during the winter months of 2022/23. Looking at overall counts of Accidental Dwelling Fire, during December there were marginally elevated counts of incidents however by January overall counts were below expected levels.

Fitted & Battery Flat	1 ⁵		1
Total	5	4	9

Table 4 identifies that in the majority of cases there operational smoke alarms fitted in the properties, with only 1 property not having a functional smoke alarm. Overall 5 of the 9 properties were visited by fire & rescue personnel prior to the fatal incidents.

7. **Information Sharing & Identification of those at fire risk**

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) continues to work closely with key partners to ensure that the risk of fire is reduced within the community.

To identify those at risk of fire, a key area of work has been through establishing and agreeing information sharing protocols with a number of key partners. These protocols have ensured that there is a formal legal framework to share information securely.

By establishing these protocols and receiving this data, staff within MFRA can engage with vulnerable people who are already known by other professionals. This has greatly assisted in identifying those who are most vulnerable to the risks associated with fire.

Home Safety Advocates and other staff who deal directly with the most vulnerable people within the community have outlined that without the secure sharing of data, MFRA would find it more difficult to find out about and **engage** with a person at high risk of fire.

MFRA Home Safety Strategy primarily focuses on individuals aged over 65 years old and through the use of NHS GPs over-65s data and the Authority targets people from that age range that also have either needs that place them at higher risk of fire, or have not been visited by MFRA in the last 24 months. More recently, the strategy has been adjusted to also include those who also live in the most deprived areas of Merseyside.

Moving forward; MFRA is working to incorporate CIPHA⁶ data available from the NHS into future targeting of home visits. The ambition is to use data to identify people at greatest risk so that interventions can be introduced before a fire takes place.

⁵ In this case the initial visit occurred in 2017. Follow up visits were rejected in subsequent years by the occupier

⁶ <https://www.cipha.nhs.uk/>

Appendix A: Comparison against Injuries in Accidental Dwelling Fires

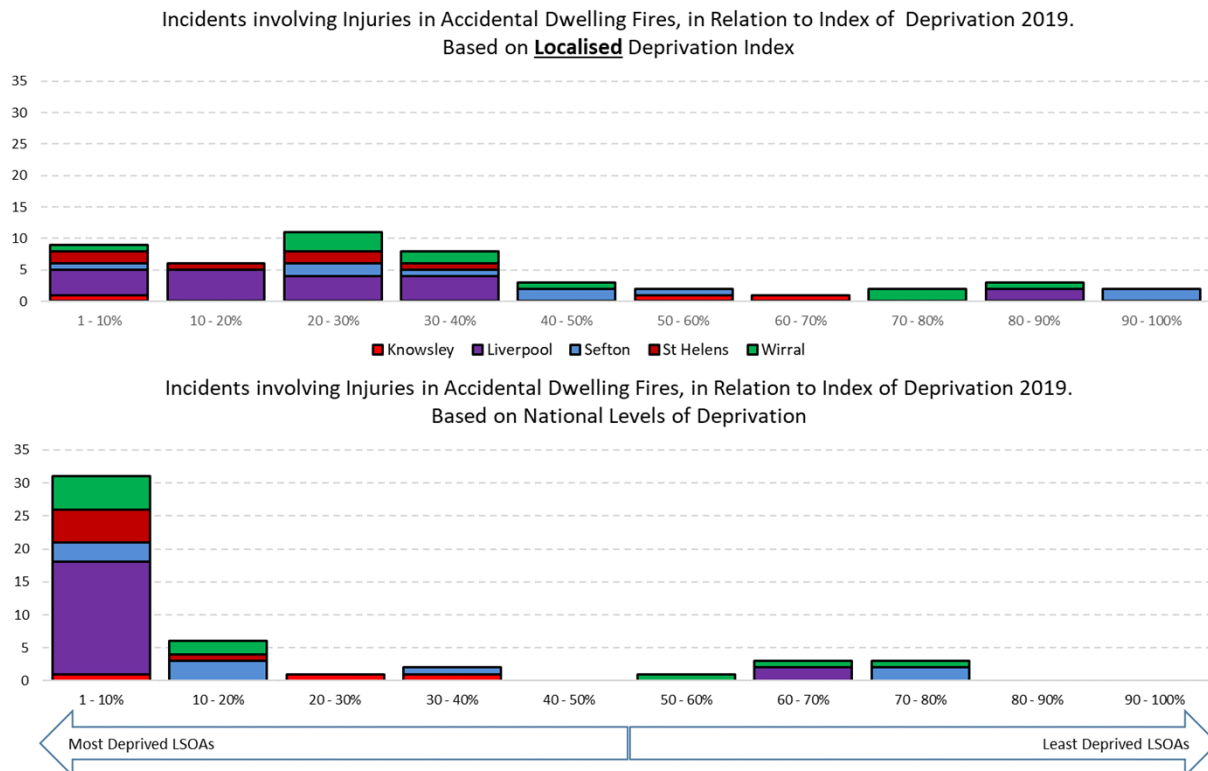
Though every death is a tragedy, the learning from such an occurrence is incorporated into our future planning where we aim to avoid any further deaths by implementing initiatives and activities to target individuals at greatest risk. Though the fatality data is key in identifying risk trends, it is not the only piece of data that is considered. Injury data from accidental dwelling data provides a far greater data set which adds richness to the analysis. The following section briefly analyses injuries as a result of accidental dwelling fires and identifies commonalities between fire victims.

Table 5: Ratio of Accidental Dwelling Fire Incidents to Injury Incidents during 2022/23

Counts	Knowsley	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral	Total
ADF involving injury	3	19	9	6	10	47
Accidental Dwelling Fires	76	309	152	77	165	779
Ratio	1:25	1:16	1:17	1:13	1:17	1:17
Overall Injuries	3	27	10	10	19	69

Table 5 provides the ratios of incidents where injuries have occurred. The table shows that fire injuries occurred less frequently in Knowsley, with a ratio of 1 injury for every 25 incidents. Sefton and Wirral had the next lowest ratio of 1 injury per 17 incidents, this was then followed by Liverpool and St Helens.

Chart 5: Accidental Dwelling Fires Injury incidents during 2022/23 in relation to Indices of Deprivation (IOD) 2019



Like Chart 3 earlier in this report, Chart 5 identifies that scrutiny of national IOD data indicates a clear link between fire injuries and deprivation, with the majority of injuries occurring within the most deprived decile.

When a localised deprivation index is applied the chart is flatter in shape, though there is still a clear link between there being more fire injuries in more deprived areas than not.



Historical Analysis of Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 2008/09 and 2022/23

AUDIENCE

**TO BE PRESENTED TO:
Authority
Strategic Leadership Team**

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**PREVENTION
STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE**

Date work received: 01/04/2023

Date work completed:

Page 1 of 23

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Version / Issue No.	Date	Author	Remarks / Reason for Change
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Sign-Off List

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Related Documents

Reference No.	Title	Author	Version & Date
1.0	Analysis of Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 1 st April 2022 and 31 st March 2023	J Fielding	TBC

Ownership

Has it been agreed with the client that this is a publicly owned document?
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1. Agreement

For the purpose of this report, the following agreement was made between the client and the Strategy & Performance Directorate.

This work was requested by AM Thomas and received on 01/04/2023.

The Manager¹ has approved this report/ piece of work can be undertaken by the Strategy & Performance Directorate.

If the scope of the work changes, authorisation must be again obtained and would be noted within the version control document sheet.

It was agreed that this report would be produced in draft format by May 2023, and would be sent electronically to the Director of Strategy & Performance and Client for comment.

The Manager / Client agreed that their comments would be received back by May 2023.

The final report, which will always be in PDF format, would be produced by May 2023, subject to receiving comments.

¹ Deb Appleton

2. Summary

The purpose of this report is to analyse the circumstances and contributing factors concerning deaths in accidental dwelling fires attended, between 2008/09 and 2022/23. Fatalities in accidental dwelling fires are relatively rare compared to other incidents that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service attends, though their impact is most severe to the families and friends of the deceased.

In summary, this report presents the following findings:

Victim Summary

- Between 2008/09 and 2022/23 there were **108** fire deaths due to accidental dwelling fires; these deaths are attributed to **101** fire incidents.
- Between 2006/07 and 2010/11, the number of fire deaths was falling, with (at the time) lows of 5 deaths during both 2010/11 and 2011/12. However, from 2012/13 the count of fatalities increased year on year leading to a 15 year high of 16 deaths during 2015/16. Since 2015/16 fire deaths have dropped, with 7 during 2016/17 and lows of 4 for 2017/18 2018/19 and 2021/22. During 2022/23, there were 10 recorded deaths, the highest since 2015/16.
- When analysed by district, Wirral saw 34 deaths, followed by Liverpool with 31. When aggregated to incidents per 100,000 population; Wirral has the greatest number of deaths with 10.6 deaths per 100,000 population, while Liverpool's ratio is much lower, with 6.4 per 100,000 population. Sefton is the 2nd highest with 9.0 deaths per 100,000 population,
- The risk of death in accidental dwelling fires increases with age, 75 and above age range being at greatest risk.
- Concerning the demographic of fire fatalities, there is a bias towards male victims with 65 fatalities (60.2% overall). Female victims accounted for 43 deaths (39.8% overall).
- Concerning racial profile, the vast majority of victims were White British – accounting for 102 victims or 94.4% overall. A further victim was White Irish and 5 were Black Asian Minority Ethnicity (BAME). Proportionally, the 5 BAME victims equate to 4.6% of deaths, this is just short of the Merseyside proportion of BAME population which according to the 2021 Census sits at 8.3%.
- In 68 out of 108 fire fatalities, the victim was the sole occupier. Taking all living circumstances into account, 76 victims were alone at the time of the fire that claimed their lives.

Incident Summary

- Concerning deprivation and the use of Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Index of Deprivation (IOD) 2019, the general trend is that fatalities tend to occur more often in deprived areas, with fewer fire deaths occurring in areas of less deprivation. When the average age of victims is added to the equation it has been found that victims tend to die younger in deprived areas with older victims being found in areas of less deprivation.

- In 62 incidents a smoke alarm was fitted and actuated (61.4% in total). There were 7 incidents where smoke alarms were fitted and did not actuate. On 15 occurrences there was no smoke alarm and a further 6 incidents where the fitted smoke alarm was inoperable (i.e. no batteries). There were 9 occurrences where it was unknown whether the smoke alarm actuated and 2 incidents where the level of damage done to the property was so severe it was unknown whether a smoke alarm had been fitted.
- 64 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) were completed with victims prior to the incidents, which claimed their lives. 37 did not have an HFSC.
- When analysing ignition sources it was found that of the 101 fatal incidents, 48 were from of smokers' materials. Since 2009/10, when 7 deaths were the result of smokers' materials, there was a gradual reduction with only 1 death attributable to this ignition source during both 2011/12 and 2012/13. However, since 2013/14, deaths from smoker's materials have increased leading to a high of 8 during 2015/16, though this has fallen since. During 2022/23, 3 deaths were attributed to smokers' materials.
- When analysing the ignition source and room of origin; smokers' materials were responsible for the majority of fire fatalities in both the living room and the bedroom.
- When smokers' materials are combined with alcohol, overall 28 incidents (27.7%) were the result of this combination.
- Victims aged above 65 are more likely to be involved in a fire where the careless use of heating appliance has taken place; this ignition source is most predominant in the living room.
- By month, the greatest number of deaths occurred during the autumn/winter months, particularly between November and January. The month of April also tends to have high counts of fire deaths.
- Peak times for incidents where a fatality occurs are between 02:00 - 03:59, 07:00 - 08:59, 15:00 - 15:59 and 21:00 – 21:59.

3. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to analyse fatalities from accidental dwelling fires (ADF) between 2008/09 and 2022/23; analysing the circumstances and demographic background of such occurrences, using business intelligence to target risk and prevention work.

Compared to other incident types that Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) attends, fire fatalities are relatively low in number, although their impact is most significant to family members, friends and the community of the deceased.

Fatalities in accidental dwelling fires are reported in Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's Service Delivery Plan as Key Performance Indicator DC12, which is reported to Authority on a quarterly and annual basis.

4. Methodology

The software used in this report includes:

- Microsoft Excel 2016 to interpret and graphically represent figures.
- MapInfo Professional 17 which was used to tag incidents with geographical information

The calculation for fatalities per 100,000 population is:

*(sum of Fatalities / sum of Population) * 100,000*

Population figures are based on Census 2021 estimates published by the Office for National Statistics. Although this data takes place over a 15 year period, for clarity a single year of population is used for calculations.

Index of Deprivation 2019 (IOD 2019) has been used to measure the levels of deprivation where fire fatalities took place².

The IOD 2019 data was then analysed in two ways:

- At a local level the IOD 2019 data was restricted to solely Merseyside, this data was then split into 10 bands with equal counts, each representing a decile of relative localised deprivation. This data is merged with fatality incident data and analysed.
- At a national level the IOD 2019 data has not been restricted to Merseyside, the national dataset is split into 10 equal bands, with each band being a decile of deprivation. This data was merged with fatality incident data and analysed.

The Index of Deprivation 2019 was sourced from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Data used in this report was supplied by the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Incident Investigation Team; with the Coroner ultimately determining the cause of death.

Data used within this report is based on fatal incidents occurring in the home where the motive for the incident is judged to have been accidental. Please note the data contained within this report includes some information that is still awaiting Coroner agreement and as such the figures contained may be subject to change.

Fire fatalities include any person who has died as the direct or indirect result of injuries caused by a fire incident even if death occurred weeks or months later. There are also occasional cases where it transpires subsequently that fire was not the cause of death. For all of these reasons, fatalities data may therefore be subject to revision.

Concerning the Long Time Series Analysis, counts are sourced from the following:

² IOD ranks deprivation in the form of an index, where low numbers indicate Super Output Areas (LSOA) which have high levels of deprivation and high numbers indicating Super Output Areas with least deprivation

- Between 1991/1992 – 1999/2000: Freedom of Information Request from Department for Communities and Local Government
- Between 2000/2001 – present: Incident Investigation Team archives

The time of call analysis is based on incidents, which were **NOT** late calls, accounting for 86 incidents within the entire dataset.

Data Limitations:

The findings within this report is based on available data. As fire fatalities are a relatively rare occurrence the volume of data is small. Therefore, some conclusions based on the data should be approached with caution.

The injury analysis within Appendix A is based on criteria used to measure Performance Indicator: DC13 Number of injuries from accidental dwelling fires. This is based on a count of persons injured by fire and required hospital treatment.

5. Results

5.1 Victims of Fatal Accidental Dwelling Fires

The following section is based on the details of victims who died because of an accidental dwelling fire. In total between 2008/09 and 2022/23 there were **108** victims and as such the following tables and charts all equate to this figure.

5.1.1 Long Time Series Analysis

Chart 1: Long Time Series of fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 1991/92 and 2022/23

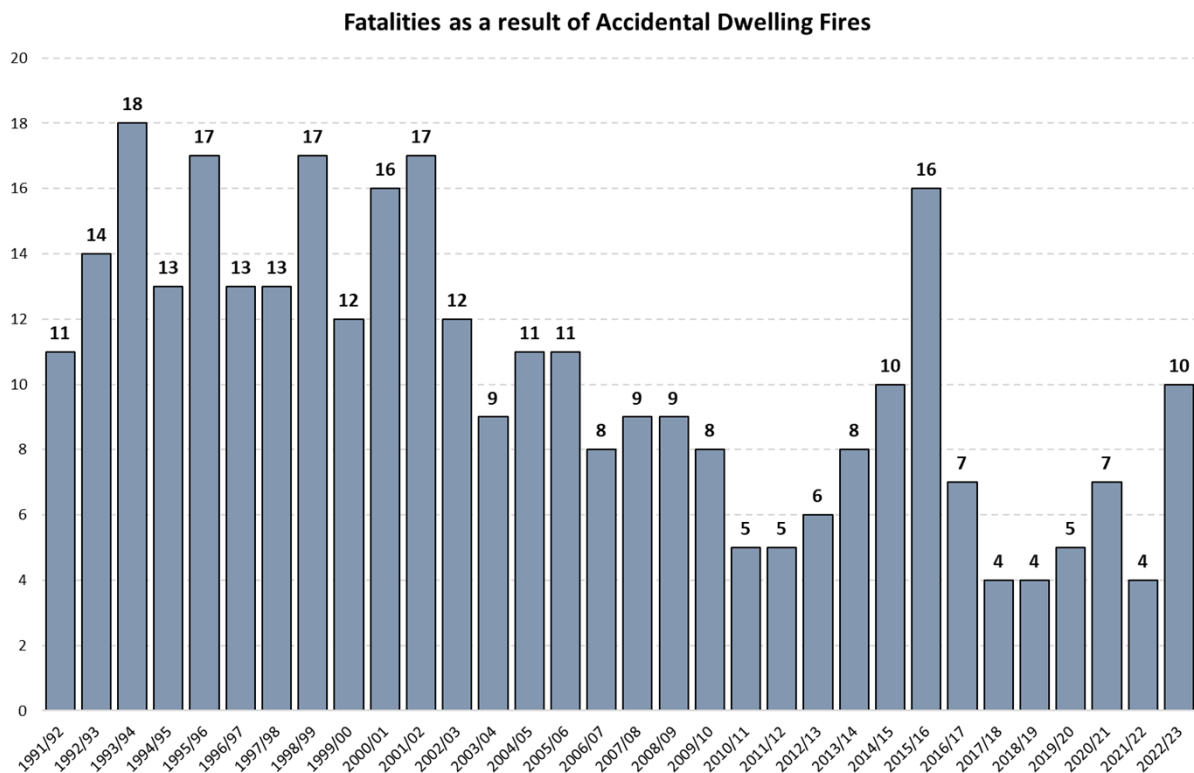


Chart 1 provides a count of accidental dwelling fire fatalities between 1991/92 and 2022/23. The chart identifies that 2015/16 resulted in the greatest number of fire fatalities in recent years (though in the past there were higher counts). Prior to 2016/17, there was an upward trend in the count of fatalities; though this upward trend was halted with the 7 deaths during 2016/17, this was then followed by lows of 4 deaths between 2017/18 to 2018/19 as well as 2021/22.

Over the 32-year period, 1993/94 had the highest number of fatalities with 18, followed by 1995/96, 1998/99 and 2001/02 with 17 each. Prior to 2022/23, in the last five years, deaths have remained low with 4 deaths in each of 2018/19 and 2021/22, there were 5 during 2019/20, 7 during 2020/21³ and 10 during 2022/23.

³ It is unknown whether the impacts of the Covid 19 lockdowns have had an impact on 2020/21.

5.1.2 Comparison of Fatalities by District

Chart 2: Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 2008/09 and 2022/23 by District

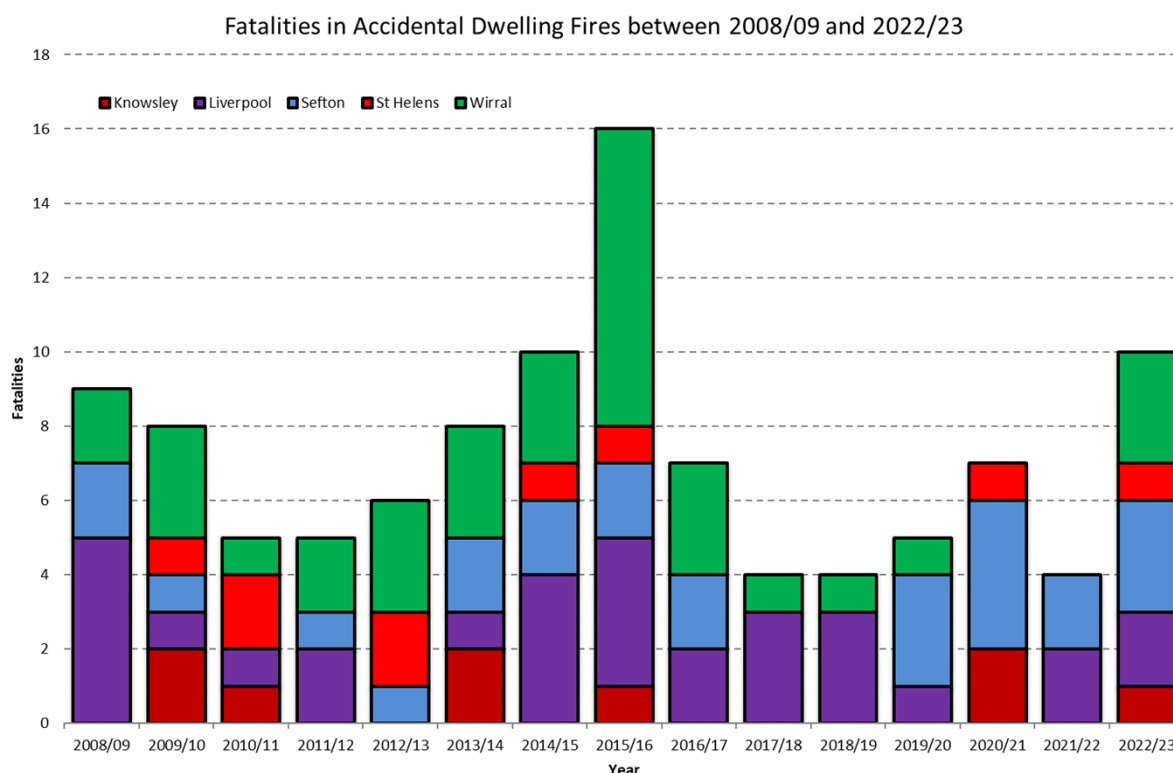


Chart 2 identifies that over the 15-year period, fatalities have fluctuated. Prior to 2010/11, accidental dwelling fire fatalities were on a downward trend, only for an upward trend to occur between 2012/13 and 2015/16. Since the high of 16 during 2015/16, fire deaths have fallen - leading to lows of 4 for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2021/22. The most recent year, 2022/23 saw 10 fatalities.⁴

During 2022/23 all districts saw fatal incidents (the first year since 2015), with 3 deaths in both Wirral and Sefton, 2 in Liverpool and 1 in each of Knowsley and St Helens.

Table 1: Comparison of overall fatality counts by district and population

Counts	Knowsley	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral	Total
Overall Fatalities	9	31	25	9	34	108
Rate per 100,000 population	5.8	6.4	9.0	4.9	10.6	7.6
Fatal Incidents	9	29	22	9	32	101
Population	154,500	486,100	279,300	183,200	320,200	1,423,300

Table 1 allows a direct comparison of overall fatality counts between the Merseyside districts by aggregating the data to deaths per 100,000 head of population for direct comparison.

⁴ Based on the limited data available, it is not possible to determine if any of these deaths were related to the cost of living crisis. Any increase in deaths and the crisis are purely coincidental.

The table shows that there have been 34 accidental dwelling fire deaths in Wirral, closely followed by Liverpool with 31. When population counts are considered – Wirral proportionally has had the greatest number of fatalities with 10.6 per 100,000 population over the 15-year period compared to Liverpool, which had a lower ratio of 6.4 per 100,000 population. Sefton saw the 2nd highest ratio with 9.0 per 100,000 population.

Taking into account the number of fatal incidents by district, the table identifies that of the 101 incidents, 7 incidents involved 2 victims.

5.1.3 Demographic Analysis

Table 2: Fatalities by Age and Sex (with fatalities per 100,000 population ratio)

Age group	Male		Female		Total	
5-9	0	(0)	1	(2.7)	1	(1.3)
20-24	1	(2.1)	0	(0)	1	(1.1)
25-29	0	(0)	2	(4.2)	2	(2)
30-34	2	(4.2)	0	(0)	2	(2.2)
35-39	1	(2.3)	1	(2.1)	2	(2.5)
40-44	5	(12.6)	2	(4.8)	7	(8.4)
45-49	4	(9.8)	5	(11.7)	9	(9.3)
50-54	9	(19.2)	0	(0)	9	(8.9)
55-59	2	(4.1)	4	(7.6)	6	(6.6)
60-64	6	(13.6)	5	(10.7)	11	(14.4)
65-69	4	(10.9)	3	(7.6)	7	(9.6)
70-74	5	(14.4)	2	(5.2)	7	(13.7)
75-79	11	(47.2)	3	(10.8)	14	(36.8)
80-84	5	(30.9)	7	(32)	12	(34.4)
85+	10	(79.5)	8	(35.9)	18	(51.6)
Total	65	(9.4)	43	(5.9)	108	(7.6)

Table 2 provides the count of fire deaths by age and sex along with the ratio of fire deaths per 100,000 head of population. The table identifies several age groups at greatest risk from a fatality particularly the 75 and above age groups (and especially the 85+ group with a ratio of 51.6 deaths per 100,000 population).

When the ratio of deaths to proportion of population is taken into account it is apparent that with age the risk of mortality as a result of an accidental dwelling fire increases significantly. Applying a regression analysis to the available data a R² value of 0.81 is achieved indicating a relatively strong statistical link between age and fire related mortality.

There is a bias towards male victims with 65 or 60.2% of total fatalities. Female victims accounted for 43 or 39.8% of accidental dwelling fire fatalities.

Concerning the racial profile of the deceased; 102 victims were described as White – British, 1 was described as White – Irish and 5 being Black Asian

Minority Ethnicity (BAME). When analysed proportionally 94.4% of victims were White British, which is higher than the Census 2021 population ratio of 87.3% and Census 2011 proportion of 91.8.

5.1.4 Habitation and Carer Status

Table 3: Habitation and carer status

Status	Lived alone		Cohabited		Other Circumstance		Total
	Alone at Time	Accompanied	Alone at Time	Accompanied	Alone at Time	Accompanied	
Carer							
Yes	26		1	8			35
No	38	1	5	22	2	1	69
Unknown	4						4
Grand Total	68	1	6	30	2	1	108

Table 3 identifies that the majority of victims (68, 63%) lived alone and were alone at the time of the incident. Of the victims who cohabited, 6 were alone at the time and 30 were accompanied. In combination, 76 of the 108 victims (70.4%) were alone at the time of the incident.

Concerning whether a victim had need of a carer or not, the majority of victims did not have a carer (69, 63.9%). Concerning victims who lived alone, 26 from 68 (or 38.2%) were known to need a carer.

Table 4: Habitation and carer status– OVER 70 Age Group Only

Status	Lived alone		Cohabited		Total
	Alone at Time	Accompanied	Alone at Time	Accompanied	
Carer					
Yes	17		1	7	25
No	17		1	5	23
Unknown	3				3
Grand Total	37	0	2	12	51

Table 4 identifies that the majority of victims above the age of 70, 72.5% (37) lived alone and were alone at the time of the incident. Of the victims above the age of 70 who cohabited, 12 were accompanied with 2 being alone at the time. Overall, 39 of the 51 victims (76.5%) were alone at the time of the incident. In the age group analysed, 25 victims (49%) required carers in some capacity.

5.2 Incident Related Analysis

The following analysis is based on the **count** of incidents, not the count of victims – as in the previous section therefore, the counts in the following analysis equate to **101**.

5.2.1 Comparison of Fatal Incidents and Deprivation

Chart 3: Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fire incidents between 2008/09 and 2022/23 linked to deprivation⁵

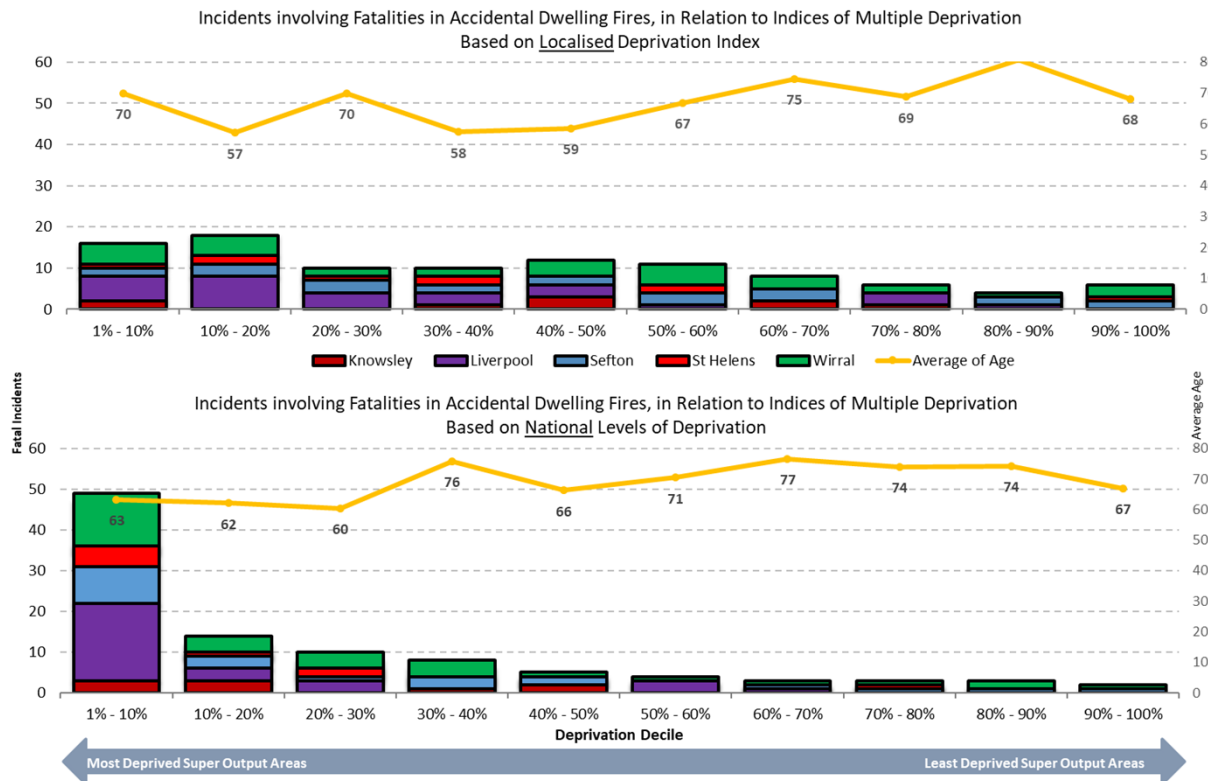


Chart 3 ranks the location of fire fatalities to the level of deprivation in the area in which the incident took place using the Index of Deprivation 2019 (IOD). Utilising a localised deprivation index, the chart demonstrates that (in general) as deprivation increases the number of fire deaths gradually increase. When applying the national IOD dataset to the fatality data, there is far more skewing⁶ of the data particularly within the 10% most deprived areas. **As such, based on national levels of deprivation, the most deprived 10% decile accounted for 49 fatal incidents – 48.5% of total deaths within Merseyside.**

The chart also identifies the average ages of the victims by each deprivation decile group. In general terms, the chart identifies that fatal fire victims in deprived areas tend to be younger. By contrast, in less deprived areas victims tend to be slightly older.

⁵ As per the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities document Index of Deprivation 2019

⁶ Due to the high levels of deprivation, the National IOD chart is skewed because Merseyside has more locations within the 10% most deprived areas of England.

When analysed at a district level;

District	Local Index of Deprivation	National Index of Deprivation
Knowsley	Two thirds of fatal fire incidents in Knowsley occurred within the 50% most deprived areas of Merseyside	All of the fatal fire incidents in Knowsley took place in 50% most deprived areas
Liverpool	Fatal fire incidents in Liverpool tend to occur in areas of higher deprivation, though this is due in part to the district being one of the most deprived Local Authorities in England. Within Liverpool, 24 fatal fire incidents took place within the 50% most deprived areas and 4 took place in the 50% least deprived areas.	In Liverpool, the majority of fatal fire incidents (19) took place in the 10% most deprived area. Overall 25 from 29 fatal fire incidents took place in the 50% most deprived parts of Merseyside (equal to 86.2%)
Sefton	Sefton has a more balanced profile, with 12 taking place in the most deprived 50% of Merseyside and 10 occurring in the 50% least deprived. Sefton is unusual as it has two deprivation related peaks within the 10% - 30% quintile and 50% to 70% quintile - both quintiles seeing 6 fatal incidents each	Within Sefton 18 of the 22 fatal fire incidents (81.8%) took place in the 50% most deprived areas.
St Helens	Two thirds of fatal fire incidents in St Helens occurred in the 50% most deprived areas.	The vast majority of fatal fire incidents in St Helens took place in the 50% most deprived areas, especially the 1% - 10% decile, where 5 took place.
Wirral	Wirral has a sporadic pattern, with concentrations occurring in the most deprived 1% - 20% and 40% - 60% quintiles. Within Wirral, fatal fire incidents are spread more evenly with 18 incidents taking place in the 50% most deprived areas and a further 14 taking place in the 50% least deprived areas.	The majority of fatal fire incidents in Wirral took place in the 50% most deprived areas accounting for 26 of the 32 deaths (81.3%), the 1% - 10% decile accounted for 13 incidents overall. There were 3 deaths in Wirral that took place in the 2 least deprived deciles for deprivation.

5.2.2 Smoke Alarm Analysis

Smoke alarms provide an important early warning to residents should a fire occur within a property. It must be emphasised that in the vast majority of incidents the actuation of a smoke alarm can and does save lives; however this is not always the case, as personal mitigating circumstances like: mobility,

underlying medical conditions, prescription medicines and alcohol consumption can impede a victim escaping regardless of the actuation of a smoke alarm.

The following section analyses the performance of smoke alarms as well as whether a HFSC (Home Fire Safety Check) had taken place.

Table 5: Smoke Alarm Functionality & HFSC Status

Status	HFSC		Grand Total	%
	Yes	No		
Fitted & Actuated	51	11	62	61.4%
Fitted Did Not Actuate	4	3	7	6.9%
Fitted No Batteries	2	4	6	5.9%
Fitted Unknown if Actuated	6	3	9	8.9%
None Fitted	1	14	15	14.9%
Unknown		2	2	2.0%
Grand Total	64	37	101	

Table 5 identifies that in the majority of properties (62 or 61.4%) a smoke alarm was fitted and operational. In 7 cases the smoke alarm was fitted and failed to actuate, though this is more likely due to the nature of the incident rather than the performance of the smoke alarm.⁷

In 6 properties (5.9%), there were smoke alarms fitted, but with no batteries therefore not providing the early warning system a smoke alarm provides, additionally in 4 of these cases a HFSC had not taken place.

In 15 cases there was no smoke alarm fitted – again meaning no early warning system being available in the property. During 2 incidents, the level of damage done to the property was so great, it was unknown whether a smoke alarm had been fitted or not.

When analysing smoke alarm functionality against HFSC status, 63.4% (64 from 101) of properties had previously had a HFSC. Of these properties, 51 had a smoke alarm fitted, which actuated successfully. 37 properties (36.6%) did not have a HFSC visit prior to the incident.

⁷ 81 from 101 (82%) properties had a fitted smoke alarm – regardless of whether it was operational. This is a lower proportion than the 2017/18 English Housing Survey where 89% of owner occupier dwellings had fitted smoke alarms

5.2.3 Ignition Source

Table 6: List of Fatal Incident Ignition Sources

Ignition Source	Detail	Total
Smokers Materials	Smokers Materials	47
	Explosion of lighter fluid, whilst filling a lighter	1
	Sub Total	48
Careless Use Of Heating Appliance	Careless Use Of Heating Appliance	12
	Electrical Heater too Close to combustibles	3
	Coal or Spark From Open Fire	1
	Collapsed Onto Gas Fire	1
	Sub Total	17
Cooking	Cooking - unattended food left on hob - misadventure	8
	Cooking - Accidental Ignition Of Clothing	3
	Chip Pan Left Unattended in Kitchen	2
	Combustible Materials Left on Hob	1
	Candle or Butane Camping Stove igniting flammable materials	1
	Cooking - Misuse of Microwave	1
	Sub Total	16
Electrical Fault	Electrical	3
	Fault with old wiring	2
	Overloaded Multi-tap	1
	Mains Electric Fault Overload	1
	Overloaded E-Cigarette Battery leading to rupture	1
	Rupture of Lithium Ion battery on Ebike	1
	Sub Total	9
Candles	Candles	6
	Sub Total	6
Radiated Heat	Heat Lamp Igniting Combustible Materials	1
	Radiated Heat - from halogen spotlight igniting bedding which was in contact with it	1
	Radiated Heat - from table top lamp	1
	Sub Total	3
Explosion Of Leaking Gas	Explosion of Gas released from broken main	1
	Sub Total	1
Burning Waste	Burning waste in garden which then got out of hand	1
	Sub Total	1
Grand Total		101

Table 6 lists the ignition sources along with limited detail concerning these circumstances. During the 15-year period analysed smokers' materials account for the majority of fatal incidents with 48 or 47.5%. Careless use of heating appliances follows, with 17 incidents and cooking with 16 incidents.

The average age of victims, where the cause of the fire was related to the careless use of a heating appliance was 77 years. The average age where smokers' materials were involved was 64 and for cooking it was 61. Therefore, the data suggests people above the age of 65 are more likely to be involved in a fire where the careless use of heating appliance has taken place.

5.2.4 Room of Origin and Ignition Source

Table 7: Room of Origin with Ignition Source and whether alcohol consumption had taken place - prior to the incident

Room Of Origin	Ignition Cause	Total	Of which involved consumption of Alcohol		
			Yes	No	Unknown
Living Room	Smokers' Materials	24	13	10	1
	Careless Use Of Heating Appliance	12	3	9	
	Candles	3	1	2	
	Electrical Fault	2		2	
	Collapsed Onto Gas Fire	1		1	
	Sub Total	42	17	24	1
Bedroom	Smokers Materials	19	6	12	1
	Careless Use Of Heating Appliance	5	1	4	
	Electrical Fault	3	1	2	
	Candles	2	1	1	
	Radiated Heat	2		2	
	Cooking	1		1	
	Sub Total	32	9	22	1
Kitchen	Cooking	14	9	4	1
	Electrical Fault	2	1	1	
	Smokers Materials	2	1	1	
	Sub Total	18	11	6	1
Hallway	Electrical Fault	2		2	
	Smokers Materials	2	1	1	
	Sub Total	4	1	3	0
Bathroom	Explosion Of Leaking Gas	1		1	
	Candles	1	1		
	Sub Total	2	1	1	0
Bedsit	Smokers Materials	1	1		
	Sub Total	1	1	0	0
Garden	Burning Waste	1		1	
	Sub Total	1	0	1	0
Caravan	Cooking	1		1	
	Sub Total	1	0	1	0
Grand Total		101	40	58	3

Table 7 provides a breakdown including: room of origin, respective ignition source and whether a victim was under the influence of alcohol at the time. The table identifies that smokers' materials have a root cause in the majority of fires in the living room (24 from 42, 57.1%) and bedroom (19 from 32, 59.4%), with the cause of careless use of heating appliance also being common to these rooms.

Forty (39.6%) fatal incidents were linked to the consumption of alcohol. Where alcohol consumption is combined with smoker's' materials, then 21.8% (22) of incidents are linked to this combination of factors.

Within the living room, approximately two fifths (17 or 40.5%) of fatal fire incidents involved the consumption of alcohol. A similar trend also occurred for the bedroom, where 28.1% (9) fatal fire deaths were associated with alcohol consumption.

Within the kitchen, cooking is the most common cause of fatal fire incident with 14 overall; though 9 of these still involved the consumption of alcohol.

5.2.5 Fatal Incidents by Year and Ignition Source

Chart 4: Breakdown of Ignition Source by Year

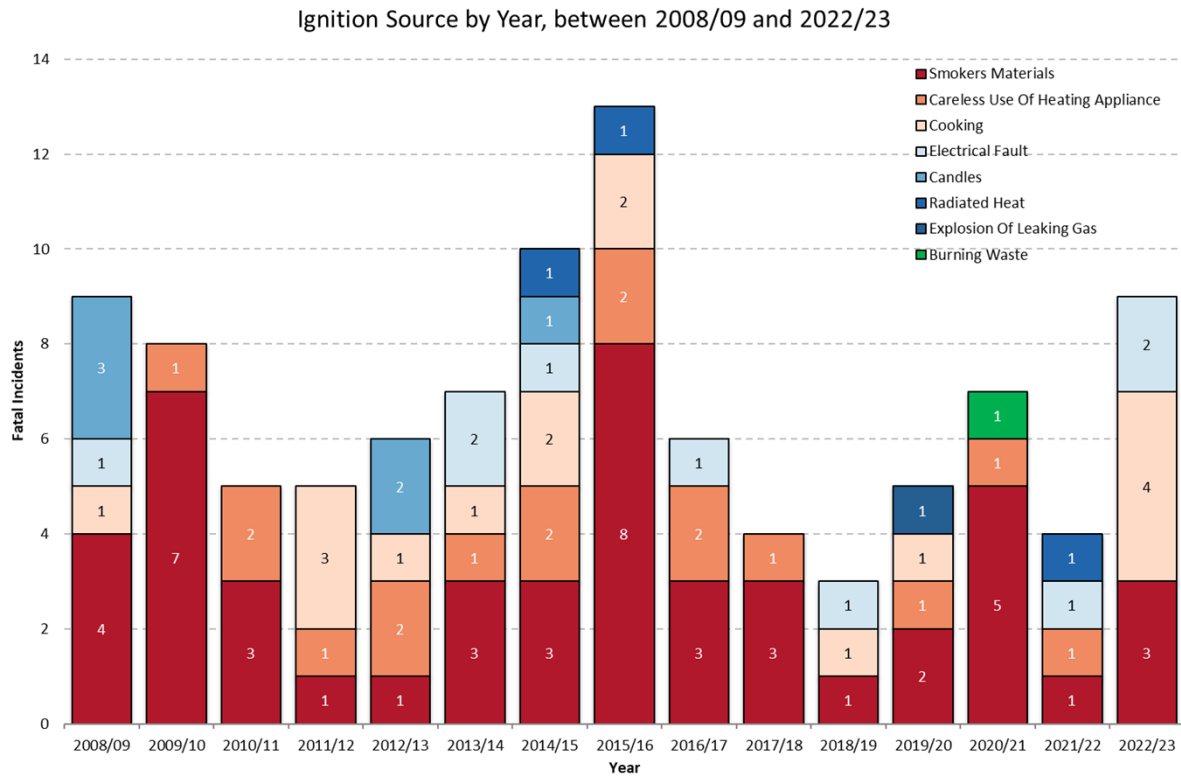


Chart 4 provides an annual breakdown of the ignition sources involved in fatal fires. The chart identifies that fatal incidents relating to smokers’ materials had been falling between 2009/10 and 2011/12, however since 2013/14, these incidents were on the rise culminating in a high of 8 during 2015/16. Since 2015/16 the overall numbers of fatal incidents related to smokers’ materials have fallen, although there were 5 deaths related to smokers’ materials during 2020/21.

Incidents involving careless use of heating appliances have remained relatively consistent, with the exceptions of 2018/19 and 2022/23 where no deaths were attributed to this cause.

Fatal incidents linked directly to cooking and cooking practices have fluctuated between the years, with the exceptions of 4 incidents during 2022/23.

Of note was that during 2022/23, one of the incidents related to an Electrical Fault was due to a lithium ion battery rupturing on an E-Bike. This incident resulted in 2 deaths.

5.2.6 Fatalities by Month and Ignition Source

Chart 5: Fatal Fire Incidents by Month and Ignition Source

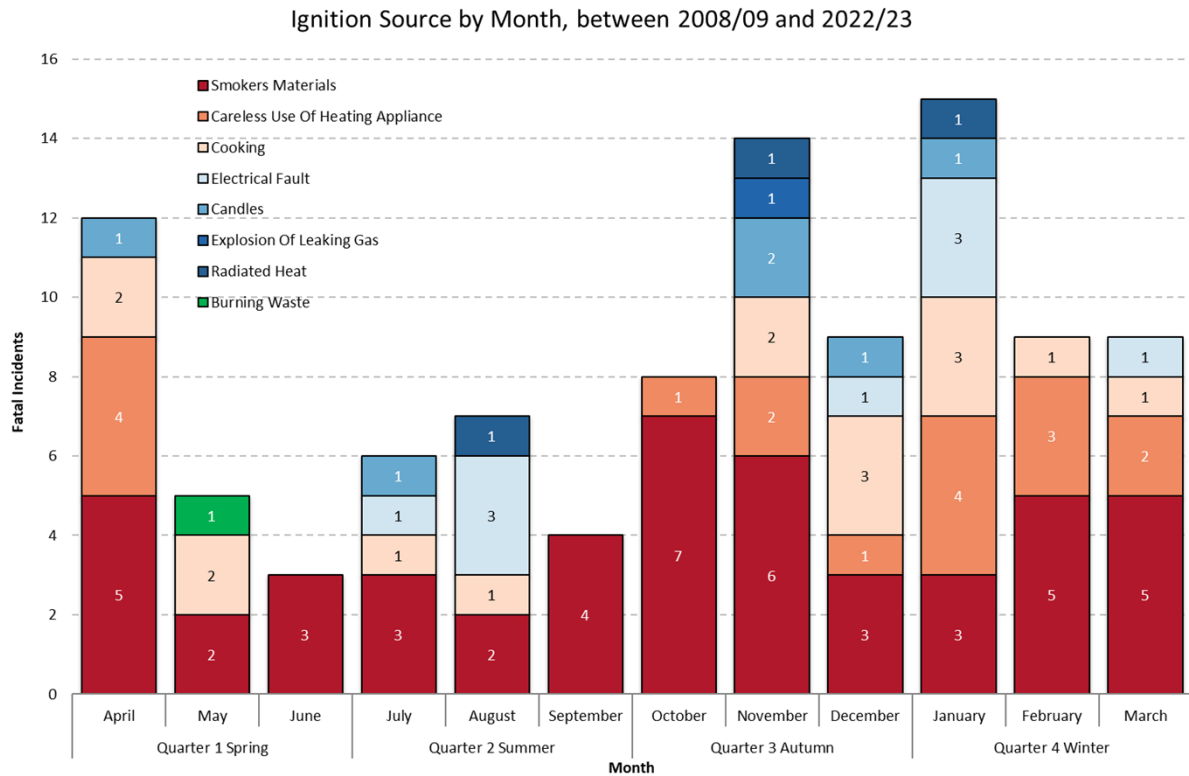


Chart 5 identifies that there are more fatal fire incidents taking place during quarters 3 (Autumn) and 4 (Winter).

When smokers' materials are analysed by quarter; the overall numbers of fatalities are relatively consistent, with: 10 incidents in Quarter 1, 9 in Quarter 2, 16 in Quarter 3 and 13 in Quarter 4.

Fatalities involving smokers' materials are lower during the spring and summer months, especially during: May and August. The months of: October, November, April, February and March have the highest counts.

During winter/early spring, when the weather is most inclement - careless use of heating appliances is more common.

Cooking related deaths are sporadic, and incidents involving electrical faults are most common during August and January, peak months for Summer and Winter respectively.

5.2.7 Analysis of Incidents by Time of Call

Chart 6: Fatalities by hour and whether Alcohol Consumption occurred⁸

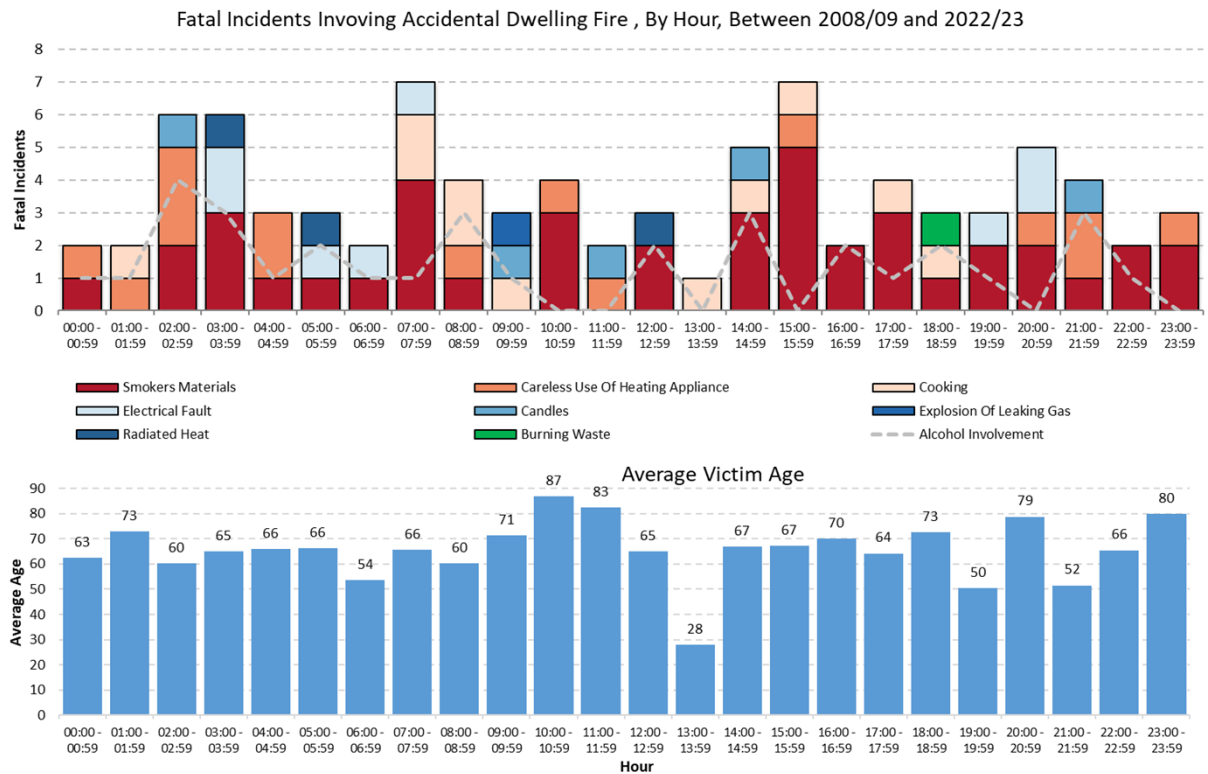


Chart 6 provides an overview by hour of when a fatal fire incident has taken place. The chart also details the ignition source and whether alcohol consumption had taken place as well as the average age of victims.

In summary, the chart provides the following findings:

- Peaks in incidents occur between 02:00 - 03:59, 07:00 - 07:59, 14:00 - 15:59 and 20:00 - 20:59.
- Where there are peaks in fatal incidents, the average age of the victims is younger⁹, with an average age of 60 for victims between the hours of 02:00 - 02:59, 66 between 07:00 - 07:59 and 67 between 15:00 - 15:59.
- Alcohol consumption and fire death tend to peak in the early hours (02:00 - 02:59; particularly in combination with smoking), the morning (08:00 - 08:59) and evening (21:00 - 21:59; again smoking is the predominant cause of fire). Relatively few incidents take place during the early afternoon and early evening.
- There was a single victim aged 28 during the 13:00 -13:59 hour, this is why this hour appears anomalous.

⁸ This analysis is based on the time of call to a live incident, this does not include late calls, please refer to methodology for details

⁹ The average age for this subset of data is 67 years of age

6. Appendix A: 15 Year analysis of Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries

Though every death is a tragedy, the learning from such an occurrence is incorporated into our future planning where our aim is to prevent further deaths by implementing initiatives and activities to target individuals at greatest risk. Though the fatality data is key in identifying risk trends, it is not the only piece of data under consideration. Injury data from accidental dwelling fire data provides a far greater data set, which adds richness to the analysis. The following section briefly analyses injuries from accidental dwelling fires and identifies commonalities between fire victims.

Chart 7: Accidental Dwelling Fires and Injuries Long Time Series

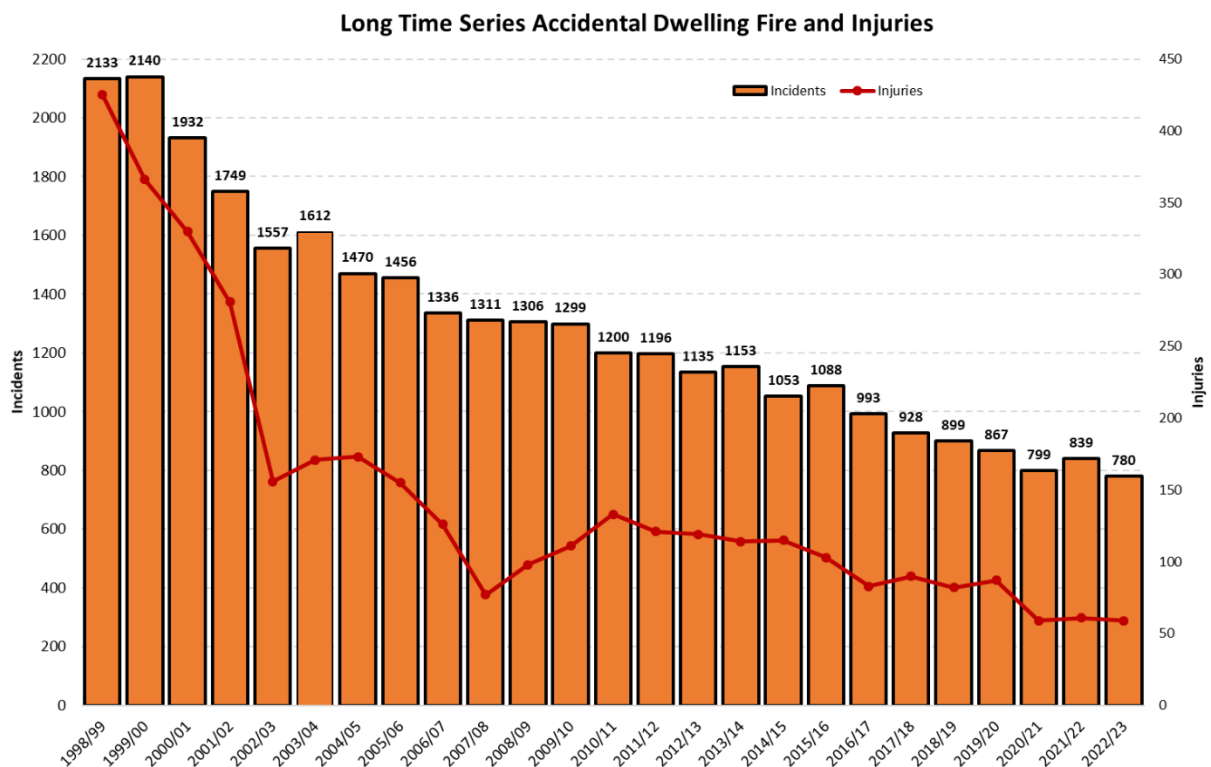
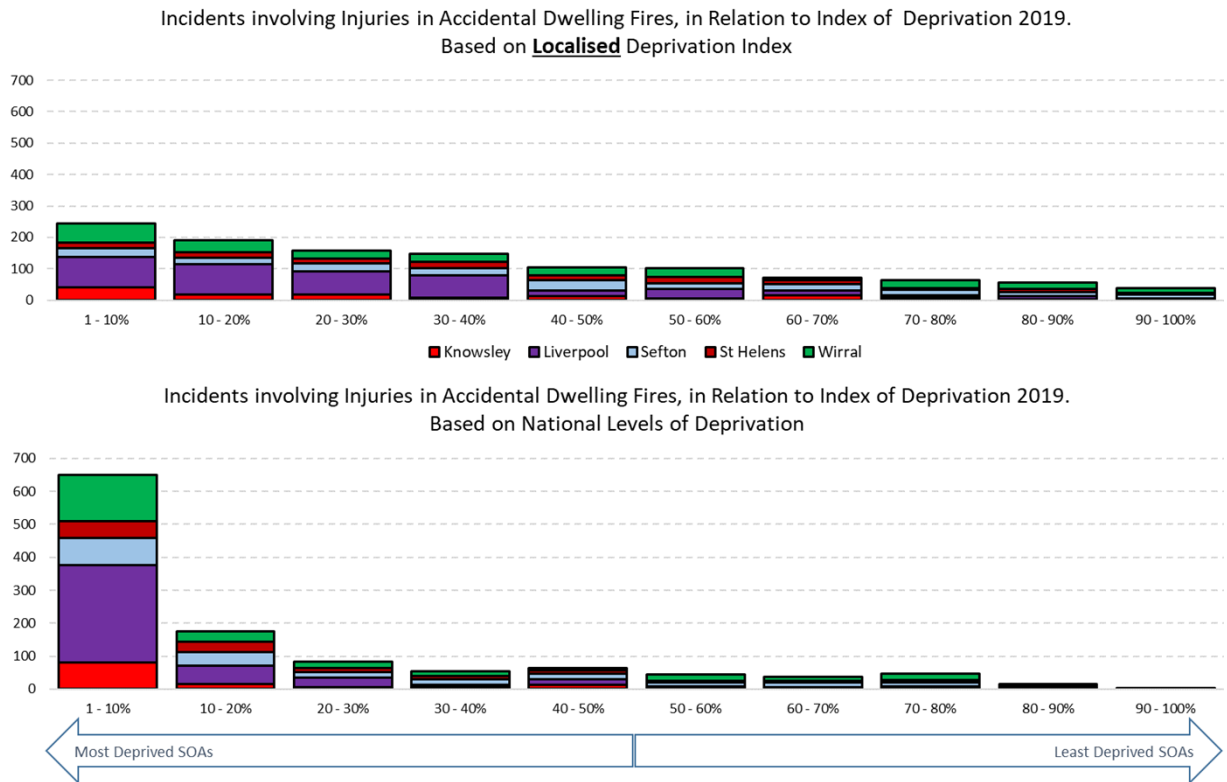


Chart 7 provides a long time series of accidental dwelling fire incidents and injuries between 1998/99 and 2022/23.

- The chart shows that over the 26 year period both incidents and injuries have fallen significantly, with a high of 2140 incidents during 1999/00 and low of 780 during 2022/23 – a reduction of 1360 incidents or -63.6%.
- Injuries have fallen from a high of 449 during 1998/99 to 59 during 2022/23 – a reduction of 390 incidents or -86.9%.
- Over the period, incidents have fallen gradually, though injuries have been inconsistent. This inconsistency is likely due to the nature of each dwelling fire including the potential for multiple injuries occurring at the same incident as well as the severity of the incident differing from case to case.

Chart 8: Accidental Dwelling Fires Injury incidents between 2008/09 and 2022/23 in relation to Indices of Deprivation (IOD) 2019



Like Chart 3 earlier in this report, the above chart identifies that when using national IOD data there is a clear link between fire injuries and deprivation, with the majority of injuries occurring within the most deprived decile.

When a localised deprivation index is applied the chart is flatter in shape, though there is still a clear link between there being more fire injuries in more deprived areas than not.

Chart 9: Injury in Accidental Dwelling fire population pyramid

Comparison of Male and Female Injuries by Age Group per 10,000 population. 2008/09 to 2022/23

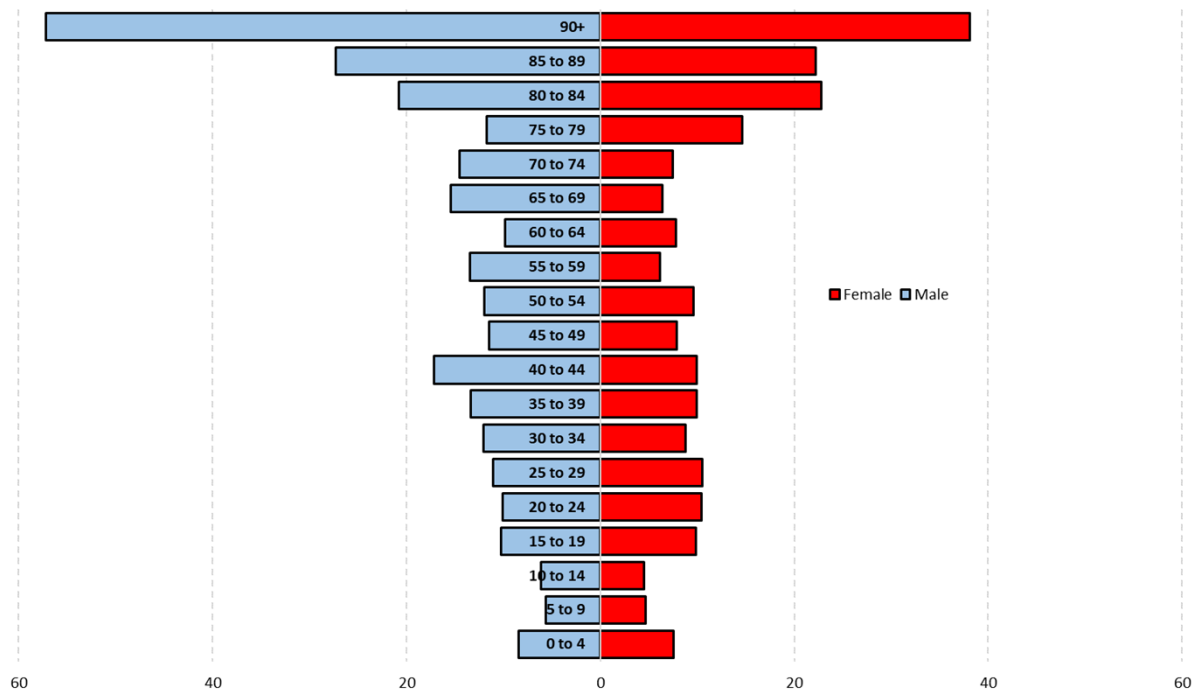


Chart 9 provides a comparison of the different age groups of those injured due to an accidental dwelling fire. The chart mirrors the findings from table 2 (earlier within this report) where there is a disproportionate number of victims above the age of 65 (equal to 27.3% of total injuries from 18.9% of the population).

Taking sex into account, proportionally 45.4% of people injured were female and 54.6% were male. This is more balanced when compared to deaths in accidental dwelling fires, where 39.8% of deaths were female and 60.2% were male.

Concerning the ethnicity profile of people injured due to an accidental dwelling fire, 86.5% were recorded as White British, with 4.2% being from a BAME background, 2.3% being White Irish / White Other and 7% not stating their ethnicity. Taking the victims who did not provide their ethnicity from the total data set, this adjusts the proportions of White British victims to 93%, BAME is 4.5% and White Irish / White Other is 2.5%.

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	12 OCTOBER 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/051/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN	REPORT AUTHOR:	HEAD OF TECHNOLOGY, ED FRANKLIN
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM , BERNIE KENNY, TONY STRETCH, MARK RICE, SIMON PURCELL, HYWYN PRITCHARD, MIKE REA, IAN CUMMINS		
TITLE OF REPORT:	REALIGNED ICT CAPITAL BUDGET		

APPENDICES:	NONE
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Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members approve the recommendations of this report pertaining to the completion of three large and complex ICT infrastructure projects in the fiscal year 2023/2024 and the drawdown of £247.5k from the capital reserve.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members approve:
 - a) the increase in the current ICT capital budget of £312.6k in order for the completion of a project to deliver an enhanced Local Area Network (LAN) project, at a cost of £925k;
 - b) the increase in the current capital budget of £6.8k in order for the completion of a project to deliver enhanced audio-visual services in the Service Headquarters (SHQ) conference facilities, at a cost of £100k;
 - c) the completion of a project to deliver further ICT server virtualisation with an upgrade to SQL 2019, at a cost of £450k, a reduction in planned capital spend of £71.9k;
 - d) the required re-phasing of £0.573m of planned spend in future years into 2023/24, as outlined in the financial section of this report; and
 - e) the drawdown of £247.5k from the Capital Reserve to fund the required increase in the ICT capital budget .

Introduction and Background

3. In February 2023, Members approved the 2023/2028 ICT Five Year Capital Plan.

4. The plan contained the 2023/2024 ICT capital budget estimates for the following three large and complex projects:
 - a) Enhanced LAN
 - b) Enhanced audio-visuals (AV)
 - c) ICT server virtualisation and upgrade to SQL 2019

These budgets were set in good faith, based on the factors known at the time.

5. Since setting the budget, the scope of the three projects have been widened to include activities planned in future years of the ICT five-year capital plan. Further details of the widened scope are included in this report from paragraph 11 onwards.
6. Since setting the budget and widening the scope, quotes for the cost of each of the three projects have been obtained and subjected to due diligence and value engineering.
7. The obtained costs, however, have risen against budgeted figures due to the recent increases in inflation and the exchange rate against the pound.
8. For these reasons if the projects are still to be delivered, the five-year ICT capital budget for 2023/2024 will need to be increased by £248k.
9. Furthermore, on some budget lines, in agreement with Finance, ICT future capital spend will be moved into 2023/2024.
10. What follows is a brief description of each project.

Enhanced LAN

11. Following the successful upgrade of all elements of the Virgin Media Network, otherwise known as the Wide Area Network (WAN). The next step is to upgrade the LAN, the project involves and is not limited to:
 - a) core network switches replacement
 - b) user stack switches replacement
 - c) replacement of Wireless Access Points (WAPs)
12. Initial design meetings have taken place with regards to the specification of the core network switches, and the new LAN design has been subjected to value engineering to ensure value for money.

13. The £312.6k increase in budget, however, is largely due to the increase in size and complexity of the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MFRS) data network since budgets were set.
14. The security-driven design of this project involves new and upgraded core network switches, management switches and user stack switches.
15. This new heart of the MFRS data network ensures network speeds to match the demands of modern technology and the users that use the technology.

Enhanced Audio Visual

16. The SHQ conference AV is experiencing component failures, as existing solutions are coming to end-of-life and need replacing.
17. This project to replace the AV in the SHQ Conferencing facilities has seen a small marginal increase of £6.8k

ICT Server Virtualisation and Upgrade to SQL 2019

18. Server virtualisation is the process of dividing a physical server into multiple unique and isolated virtual servers by means of a software application. Each virtual server can operate independently.
19. The benefits of server virtualisation are:
 - a) lower total operational cost
 - b) optimal use of the physical servers
 - c) more efficient utilisation of power
20. The hardware currently used for server virtualisation is reaching end-of-life, and backup software no longer supports newer operating systems and applications.
21. Microsoft SQL Server is a relational database management system (RDBMS) that supports a wide variety of transaction processing, business intelligence and analytics applications, and Microsoft SQL 2012 is behind many of the applications used at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS).
22. SQL 2012 was end-of-life on 12/07/2022. The plan is to upgrade to on-premises SQL 2019 which will run on the new virtual servers.
23. For this project, ICT was able to deliver a reduced cost of £71.9k by undertaking extensive value engineering and robust supplier negotiations.

Equality and Diversity Implications

24. The ED&I implications of this proposal are neutral or positive, in terms of supporting the protected characteristics of our employees and the community. The enhanced AV, for example, will improve access for deaf and hard of hearing users

Staff Implications

25. Higher performing ICT infrastructure will assist employees in executing their duties more effectively.
26. Training will be supplied, if necessary, and the training schedule will form part of any project plans.

Legal Implications

27. A compliant procurement procedure will be followed, as goods and services will be purchased under the Change Control Note (CCN) process under the Telent ICT managed service contract, which expires 31/03/2026.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

28. The total budget allocation for these schemes within the current 5-year ICT capital programme is £1,227.5k;

ICT Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28						
	Total Cost £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Enhanced LAN	612,400	127,400	200,000	0	0	285,000
Enhanced AV	93,200	33,200	60,000	0	0	0
ICT Server Virtualisation / Upgrade	521,900	493,900	14,000	14,000	0	0
Total	1,227,500	654,500	274,000	14,000	0	285,000

29. After obtaining quotes and carrying out a due diligence exercise, the cost to deliver the three projects has risen to £1,475k., as outlined in the report, an increase in planned spend of £247.5k. Provision has been made within the capital reserve to cover these additional costs.
30. The timing of the projects needs to fit in with the new TDA and station delivery in order to avoid retrospective work and on the new build. Therefore the delivery of these schemes is planned to be completed in 2023/24. The table below reflects the new phasing and costs associated with these schemes;

Proposed Re-aligned ICT Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28						
	Total Cost £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Enhanced LAN	925,000	925,000	0	0	0	0
Enhanced AV	100,000	100,000	0	0	0	0
ICT Server Virtualisation / Upgrade	450,000	450,000	0	0	0	0
Total	1,475,000	1,475,000	0	0	0	0

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

31. All ICT equipment purchased will satisfy all legal and statutory health and safety requirements. All end-of-life ICT equipment will be disposed of securely and safely to minimise the risk of data leaks.
32. It is believed a proactive approach in improving MFRS ICT Infrastructure further strengthens MFRS position in relation to Cyber Security.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

33. ICT is committed to a successful partnership working within MFRS and with third parties to deliver a value-for-money, secure, and robust quality service whilst enabling continuous business-led ICT Innovation.
34. To respond to all emergency calls for assistance with a level of response appropriate to the risk and deal with all emergencies efficiently and effectively.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AV	Audio-Visual
CCN	Change Control Note
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LAN	Local Area Network
MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
OFS	Operational Fire Station
OSR	Operational Support Room
RDBMS	Relational Database Management System
SHQ	Service Headquarters
WAP	Wireless Access Point

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	12 OCTOBER 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/049/23
PRESENTING OFFICER:	MONITORING OFFICER, RIA GROVES		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	MONITORING OFFICER, RIA GROVES	REPORT AUTHOR:	MONITORING OFFICER, RIA GROVES
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE		
TITLE OF REPORT:	SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PLAN 2023-25		
APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	FORWARD WORK PLAN 2023-25	

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members review the proposed Scrutiny Forward Work Plan for 2023-2025.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members approve the proposed Scrutiny Forward Work plan 2023-2025.

Introduction and Background

3. Further to the Annual General Meeting on 8th June 2023, Members of the Scrutiny Committee attended two Scrutiny Workshops on the 5th July 2023 and 11th July 2023. Each Directorate within Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service presented an update and overview of their departmental plans.
4. Appendix A contains the draft Scrutiny Forward Work Plan based upon the feedback from Members at the Scrutiny Workshops and from Committee meetings in the last year.
5. Due to not only the number of issues Members were interested in scrutinising from the Scrutiny Committee, but also the types of issues which may still be in development, it is proposed to make the Scrutiny Forward Work Plan a two-year proposal.
6. The proposed Scrutiny Forward Work Plan includes the environmental impact pertaining to and by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. The topic is significant as the Authority addresses the impact on the environment from its own actions (and seeks to reduce this) in addition to being an emergency service and handling the impact faced by the Service and the types of incidents its staff are now responding to. It is proposed to break up this topic over the next two years.

An example of this would be the topic of the impact of wildfires on the Service being one area brought before Members to scrutinise while a future topic being that of an update on the Authority's Pathway to Net Zero.

7. The proposed Scrutiny Forward Work Plan can be added to throughout the year and therefore the plan remains a living document.
8. Members of the Scrutiny Committee recommended the attached plan at a meeting on the 14th September 2023 wherein it was agreed that 'behaviour' be incorporated into the item on culture and inclusivity.
9. The topics may be brought to the committee earlier than the indicated dates depending on the information available at the time.
10. At the end of the municipal year Members will be updated on the outcomes from the scrutiny topics put before the Scrutiny Committee throughout the year.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. There are no direct equality and diversity and inclusion implications for the proposed plan and no requirement for an EIA. However, the scrutiny topic itself will have an EIA or one will be drafted if necessary if the scrutiny topic is at inception stage.

Staff Implications

12. The relevant departments have been consulted on the proposed draft Scrutiny Forward Work Plan and staff from the relevant department would produce the report on the scrutiny topic for Members to scrutinise.

Legal Implications

13. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

14. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

15. There are no direct implications arising out of this report. However, as the Scrutiny Forward Work Plan contains topics, which may include actions taken by the Authority that can affect the Authority's risk management, health and safety and response to the environment. Any potential impacts will be addressed within the relevant scrutiny topic as it is scrutinised.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

-
16. The scrutiny of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services actions contained on the Scrutiny Forward Work Plan, provides a transparent and accountable process.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/50/23 Scrutiny Forward Work Plan 2023-2025

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

NONE

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SCRUTINY FORWARD PLAN 2023-2025

Item	DESCRIPTION &TYPE OF ACTION	DEPARTMENT	Proposed Scrutiny Meeting
Management of Contaminates	Scrutiny of the Authority’s management of contaminants and hazardous materials.	Response	25 th April 2024
Staff Sickness	A review of the impact of staff sickness over the last 3 years and how this is managed by MFRA.	POD	25 th January 2024
Employee work/life balance	Scrutiny of the Authority’s working practices which offer staff a greater work life balance (including hybrid and family friendly policies) and the impact they have for the Authority to become an employer of choice when tackling retention, recruitment and development of staff.	POD	25 th April 2024
Enforcement and Prosecution Action	Scrutiny of the Authority’s prosecution and enforcement powers and how they are used.	Protection	16 th January 2025
Culture, Inclusivity and Behaviours	Scrutiny of how the Authority has progressed in development of culture and inclusivity over the past two years and how it plans to progress it in the future.	POD	25 th April 2024
The environment and the impact on MFRS’s operational response (broken down into smaller topics through the two years)	A review of how environmental changes and developments are impacting the Authority in terms of wildfires, alternative fuels, the fleet management, pathway to net zero and flooding.	Response Preparedness Estates SLT	Operational response to Wildfires – 25 th January 2024 Update on Pathway to Net Zero including Fleet Management – 16 th January 2025 Alternative Fuels - TBC Operational response to flooding - TBC

Actions from Staff Survey and Preparation for 2024	Scrutiny of the actions undertaken from the 2022 Staff Survey and preparation for the staff survey in 2024.	S&P	25th April 2024
Protections adaptation to new legislation and the response to and actions from the Grenfell Tower and Manchester Enquiry	Scrutiny of the Authority's response to new legislation resulting from Grenfell Tower and the Manchester Enquiry with a focus on the actions arising and how they are implemented.	Response	25 th September 2024

Standing Items:

Health and Safety Review

Scrutiny Forward Work Plan