

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	29 JUNE 2017	REPORT NUMBER	CFO/047/17
PRESENTING OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	JOHN FIELDING
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TITLE OF REPORT:	FATAL FIRE 2016/17		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	2016/17 FATAL FIRES REPORT	
	APPENDIX B:	TEN YEAR FATAL FIRES REPORT	

Purpose of Report

1. To inform/request that the Authority consider the one and ten year fatalities reports appended to this report.

Recommendation

2. That Members note the attached reports

Introduction and Background

3. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) has produced reports analysing fatal fire incidents for several years. Each year, two reports are produced; a one year review and a ten year review. The full reports are attached as appendices to this covering report and set out below is a summary of the ten year review:

Victim Summary

- Between 2007/08 and 2016/17 there were a total of 83¹ fire deaths as a result of an accidental dwelling fires; these deaths are attributed to 78 actual fire incidents.
- Between 2007/08 and 2010/11, the general trend for fatalities was gradually falling, with a low of 5 deaths during 2010/11 and 2011/12. However from 2012/13 the count of fatalities increased year on year leading to a high of 16 during 2015/16. During 2016/17, the total number of accidental dwelling fire deaths fell to 7, therefore reversing the upward trend.
- When analysed by district, Wirral had the greatest overall number of fire deaths with 30, closely followed by Liverpool with 24. When compared proportionally to incidents per 100,000 population, Wirral has the greatest

¹ Please note: due diligence should be applied when drawing conclusions from such a small data set. It is entirely possible that increases in fatalities over the past five years could be coincidental, but conversely could also be part of a larger issue.

number of deaths with 0.94 deaths per 100,000 population, while Liverpool's ratio is much lower, with 0.52 per 100,000 population.

- The risk of death in accidental dwelling fires increases with age, with the 45-49 and 75 and above age groups being at greatest risk.
- Concerning the demographic of fire fatalities, there is a slight bias towards male victims with 45 fatalities. Female victims accounted for 38 accidental dwelling fire fatalities.
- Concerning racial profile, the vast majority of victims were White British – accounting for 78 victims or 93.9%. This is slightly higher than the Census 2011 population ratio of 91.8%.
- The majority of accidental dwelling fires victims were the sole occupants (51 out of 83 fire fatalities). In combination, 59 victims were alone at the time of the fire that claimed their lives.

Incident Summary

- Concerning deprivation and the use of Communities and Local Government's (CLG) Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015, the general trend is that fatalities tend to occur more often in deprived areas, with fewer fire deaths affecting areas with lower levels of deprivation. When the average age of victims is added to the equation it has been found that victims die younger in deprived areas with victims being older in less deprived areas.
- Concerning smoke alarm actuation; in 45 incidents a smoke alarm was fitted and actuated. There were 6 incidents where smoke alarms were fitted and did not actuate. On 14 occasions a smoke alarm was not fitted and a further 4 incidents where the fitted smoke alarm was inoperable (i.e. no batteries). There were 7 occurrences where it was unknown whether the smoke alarm actuated and 2 incidents where the level of damage to the property was so great it was unknown whether a smoke alarm had ever been fitted.
- 48 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) were completed with victims prior to the incidents which claimed their lives. 30 did not have a HFSC.
- When analysing Ignition Sources it has been found that of the 78 fatal incidents, 39 were as a result of Smokers Materials. Since 2009/10, where 7 deaths were the result of Smokers Materials, there has been a gradual reduction with only 1 death attributable to this ignition source during 2011/12 and 2012/13. However since 2013/14, fatalities resulting from fires caused by Smokers Materials increased to a high of 8 during 2015/16. During 2016/17 fatal fire incidents as a result of Smokers Materials fell back to 3.
- When analysing the room of origin of the fire and the ignition source it has been found that Smokers' Materials were responsible for the majority of fire fatalities in the Living Room and the Bedroom. When Smokers Materials are combined with Alcohol, 19 of the 39 Smokers Materials related incidents were the result of this combination.
- When analysing incidents by month the greatest number of deaths occurred during the autumn / winter months; particularly between November and March. The month of April also tends to have high counts of fire deaths.
- Concerning fire deaths and day of week, deaths are most likely to occur on Fridays and Mondays.
- Peaks in incidents occur between 07:00 to 08:59 and 02:00 to 03:59, with a secondary peak between 15:00 – 15:59.

Equality and Diversity Implications

4. The Authority's approach to reducing fires and fatalities in the home draws heavily on the analysis of historical incidents and the study of local demographics. It has been apparent for some years that older people are more at risk of dying in a fire and prevention activity is focused on this group of people.

Staff Implications

5. There are no staff implications resulting from this report.

Legal Implications

6. The Authority has a duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, section 6 to provide safety advice to the public and these reports are used to assist Officers in determining strategies for future prevention work.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

7. There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

8. The Home Safety Strategy and other associated Prevention strategies and partnership activities are designed to mitigate risk in relation to the occurrence of fires in the home and resulting injuries and fatalities.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

9. These reports provide evidence that enables officers to develop and enhance strategies designed to keep our communities safer.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
