

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

