



Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

Home Safety Strategy 2018-2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Vision of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) is “Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters”.

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a framework to direct the delivery of MFRS resources for the purpose of preventing accidental dwelling fires and associated fatalities or injuries in line with the Services Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

This strategy is underpinned by the following key principles we will:

1. Ensure our Operational Crews and Prevention staff deliver effective interventions by engaging with our communities to inform and educate people on how to reduce the risk of fire.
2. Ensure our prevention staff receive the relevant skills, training and equipment to deliver high quality, value for money interventions to the communities of Merseyside.
3. Work with our partners and our communities to protect those most at risk from fire through targeted local risk reduction interventions, ensuring MFRS adheres to the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) principles in the interests of promoting health and well-being.
4. Understand and know our communities to help us to prioritise delivery to those most vulnerable to fire and in doing so meet the needs of the diverse communities across Merseyside.
5. Ensure our staff operate in accordance with the law and within the MFRS ground rules, our values and our best practice principles.

Through our Prevention activities, we will contribute towards:

- Reducing the number of fatalities, serious injuries and Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF).
- Identifying, targeting and visiting the most at risk community members through information sharing agreements and direct partner referrals.
- Ensuring through robust quality assurance, we will deliver professional, high quality and effective preventative interventions to the communities in Merseyside.
- Raising awareness of the importance of having working smoke alarms installed and fire safety education through targeted and meaningful HFSC visits.
- Providing improved quality of life and health and well-being for community members in Merseyside through Safe and Well interventions.
- Developing and sustaining a highly trained, high quality, effective and competent workforce.

2. SCOPE

To achieve our aims and deliver against these key principles, this strategy focuses on:

- An intelligence led and targeted approach to individuals who are vulnerable from the risk of fire in the home
- Quality assuring the service delivery of our staff to ensure high quality, effective interventions.
- Engaging relevant stakeholders to influence direct referral pathways
- Delivering our Home Safety Strategy to align with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and HM Government campaigns
- Influencing the use of Assistive Technology to support vulnerable individuals

- Collaborative working to ensure residents safety in specialised housing, registered providers and the private rented sector
- Effective Safeguarding of Adults and Children at risk (in line with the MFRS Safeguarding Strategy).

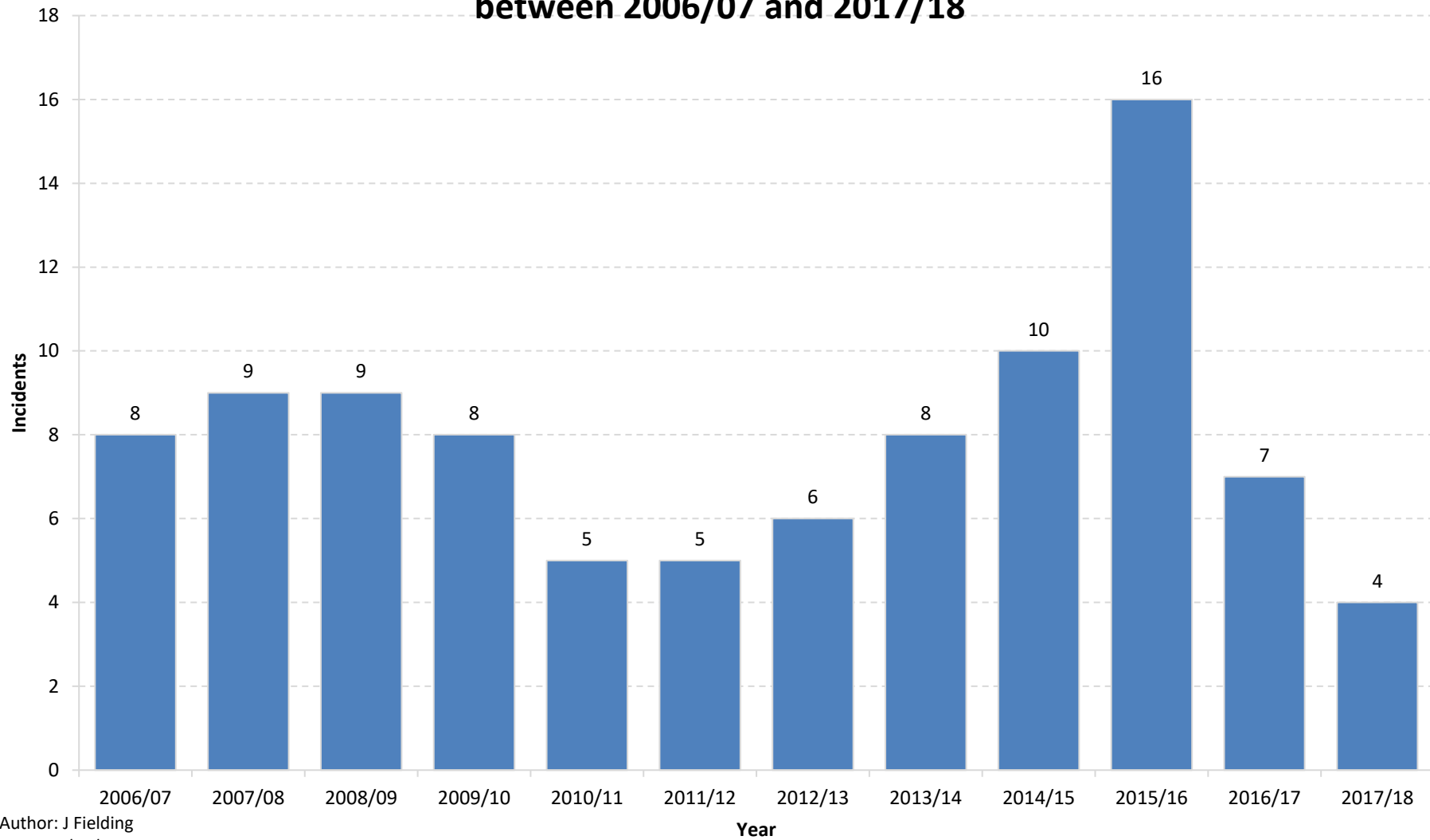
3. BACKGROUND

In the last 10 years there have been 78 fire fatalities in Merseyside and the *'Historical Analysis of Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 2008/09 – 2017/18'* produced by our Strategy and Performance Team informs us that:

- The 78 fire deaths in Merseyside were attributed to 73 fire incidents.
- From 2012-13, the count of fatalities increased year on year leading to a 10 year high of 16 during 2015-16. With implementation of the Home Safety Strategy 2015-18, combined with new policy, practice and procedures which led to more effective and targeted working, fire deaths were reduced to 7 during 2016-17 to a new low of 4 during 2017-18.
- The risk of accidental dwelling fires increases with age, with 45-49 and particularly the 75 and above age groups being at the greatest risk.
- In 46 of the 73 properties (63%), a HFSC had been previously conducted and of those, 41 had had a smoke alarm that was fitted and operational.
- In 49 of the 78 fire fatalities, the deceased was the sole occupier and taking into account all other circumstances 55 (70.5%) were alone at the time the fire claimed their lives.
- Smoking remains the highest cause of fatalities with 36 of the incidents (49.3%) due to careless use of smoking materials, whilst 27 (37%) were also linked to alcohol consumption (average age 64 years old).
- The elderly are more likely to be involved in a fire where the careless use of a heating appliance has taken place (average age 78 years old).

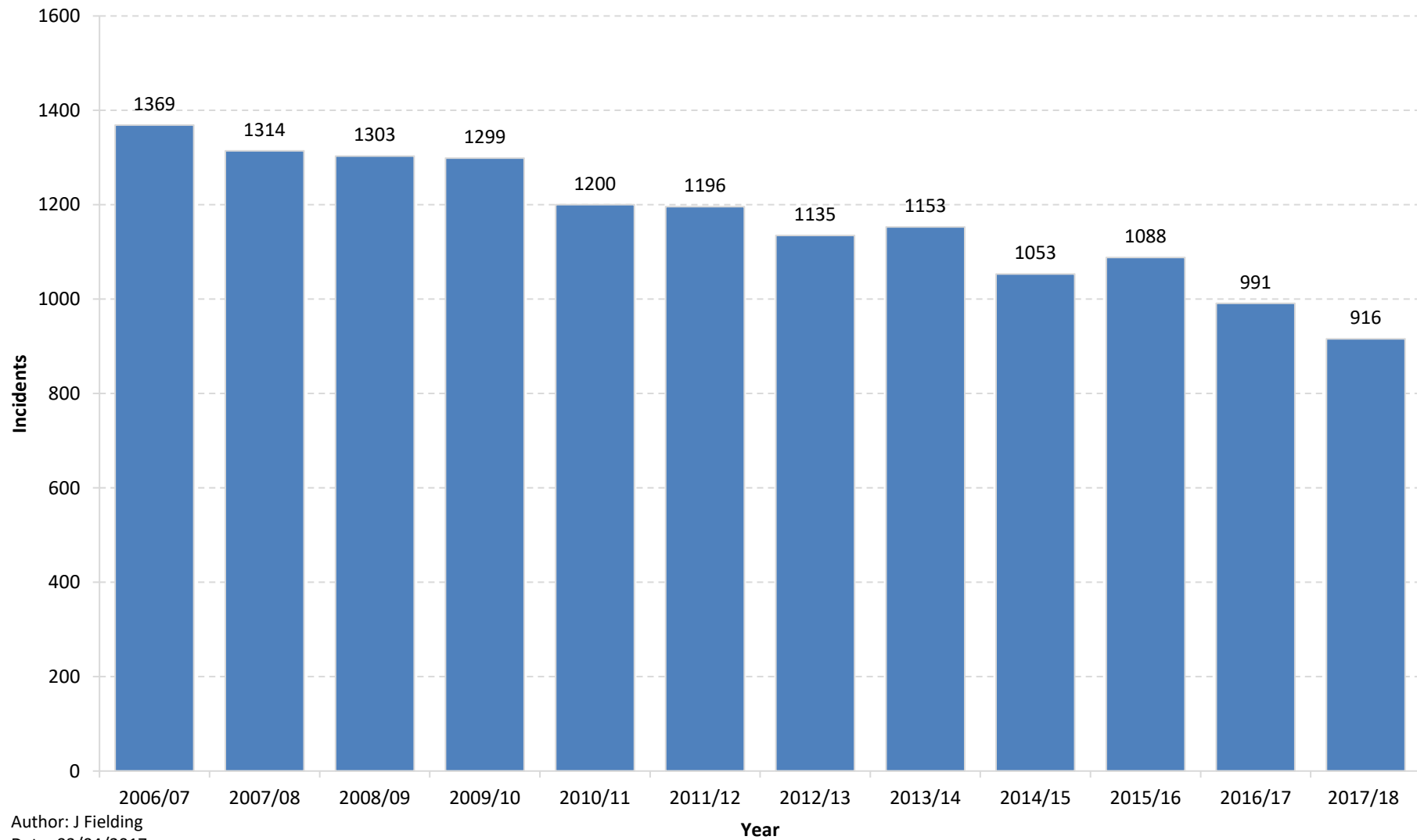
The data collected from these incidents allows us to identify common factors and use this information to influence the direction of our strategy and the manner in which we deliver our frontline preventative services.

Accidental Dwelling Fire Fatalities Attended between 2006/07 and 2017/18



Author: J Fielding
Date: 03/04/2017
Strategy & Performance

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4. CURRENT APPROACH

The Home Safety Strategy 2015-2018 was introduced in response to the rise in fire fatalities, serious injuries and Accidental Dwelling Fires across Merseyside.

We understand that every fatality and serious fire has its own tragic circumstances and that many of these incidents could have been prevented through closer working with our partner agencies and other key stakeholders to identify those most at risk. Through sharing of this information, appropriate interventions can be offered to vulnerable people at the earliest opportunity.

Currently, Operational Crews use status reports that are populated by the use of NHS Exeter Data which targets individuals who are over 65 years of age and have either never been visited by MFRS, or not received a visit in the last two years to visit approximately 42,000 properties. Our target was to engage with over 70% of over 65's during our Home Fire Safety Check visits. Due the High Rise Campaigns delivered following the Grenfell Towers tragedy we completed 56% of over 65s, this is set against a national return of 53%.

In respect of high risk individuals, MFRS centralised the referral system which is managed by our Contact Centre Fire Service Direct (FSD). This has introduced a consistent and effective process that has seen service delivery increase by 50% with over 10,000 high risk visits delivered by Vulnerable Persons Advocates in 2017-18.

Whilst a targeted and intelligence led approach has proved successful, the power of a direct referral from a partner agency – detailing the exact issues and vulnerabilities - cannot be under estimated. This will form a main priority of this strategy.

5. OUR PLANS

The Home Safety Strategy will focus on a 'Person Centred Approach', ensuring that we 'Make Every Contact Count' when engaging with our community members. To achieve this we will:

- Ensure that prevention is at the very heart of our service delivery and that where possible, through appropriate and targeted intervention, we will engage with the most vulnerable people in Merseyside.
- Continue to work with partners to identify and target the most vulnerable people living in Merseyside and deliver proportionate interventions to raise awareness and keep them safe.
- Ensure that by collaborative working with our Equality and Diversity Team the Home Safety Strategy for 2018-2021 reflects and delivers against our diverse population in Merseyside, through meaningful engagement and by 'Knowing our Communities'.
- Work with the relevant partners to understand where our most vulnerable people are living in Registered and Private Rented accommodation. Through targeted campaigns we will ensure that these people live in accommodation that is fit for purpose and that their health and wellbeing is supported through our Safe and Well visit.
- Consider the use of Assistive Technology to support people to live safely and independently in their own property.
- Ensure our staff understand the Home Safety Strategy and have the relevant knowledge, skills and equipment to be able to deliver it efficiently and effectively.

6. OUR STRATEGY

Our strategy for 2018-2021 will build on the success we have achieved over the last three years and by using the analysis set out in the '*Historical Analysis of Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 2008/09 – 2017/18*', we will focus on the priority areas below:

PRIORITY ONE – AN INTELLIGENCE LED AND TARGETED APPROACH TO INDIVIDUALS AT RISK OF FIRE IN THE HOME

We will build on the collaborative work we are currently involved in with our partners to enhance our Vulnerable Persons Index (Status Reports) and through Information Sharing Agreements we will target properties that meet one or more of the criteria below:

- An individual aged over 65 who has never been visited or has not been visited in the last 24 months.
- An individual who is known to Adult Social Care.
- An individual who is known to Revenue and Benefits filtered by Disability.
- An individual who is known to Revenue and Benefits filtered by Lone Occupant.
- An individual known to have extreme mobility issues (i.e. registered with the Assisted Bin Scheme).

This will allow our Operational Crews to target those most at risk from fire in our communities and generate high risk visits for our Vulnerable Person Advocates to follow up by completing a more holistic Safe and Well visit. Additionally we will continue to consider other data sources that can enhance the intelligence led targeted approach.

Our desired outcomes for Priority One will be:

- A reduction in fatalities and serious injuries from Accidental Fires in the Home.
- A reduction in Accidental Dwelling Fires in Merseyside through appropriate fire safety education.

- Ensuring that properties visited by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have working smoke alarms installed.

PRIORITY TWO – ENGAGING RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO INFLUENCE DIRECT REFERRAL PATHWAYS

We will ensure that Information Sharing Agreements provide us with an overarching view of high risk people living in Merseyside. We know the most effective way for us to identify high risk people and in turn be able to provide an appropriate preventative intervention at the earliest opportunity is through our partner agencies and other professionals working in the heart of our communities using a direct referral pathway to our Fire Service Direct contact centre to allocate to one of our Vulnerable Persons Advocates. In order to achieve this we will:

- Use our membership at strategic meetings to raise the awareness of our work and the benefits of early identification and intervention.
- Continue to engage with domiciliary care workers, housing provider frontline staff and other relevant partners who deliver services directly with vulnerable people to ensure they can identify fire safety issues and refer appropriately.
- Promote collaborative working to encourage where possible joint visits ensuring that all relevant key agencies are able to engage with vulnerable individuals.
- Through Safe and Well visits encourage a two way referral process with health professionals that identifies individuals who require partner assistance with their health and wellbeing.

Our desired outcomes for Priority Two will be:

- Ensuring the most high risk and vulnerable in our communities are identified and receive effective interventions at the earliest opportunity.
- To recognise and react appropriately the continued impact of an ageing population and people living independently in our communities.
- To work collaboratively to identify relevant interventions to reduce risk for vulnerable people.

PRIORITY THREE – DELIVERING OUR HOME SAFETY STRATEGY TO ALIGN WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES

We will ensure that the lessons learned and evidence gathered from our fatal fires, serious injuries and accidental dwelling fires will continue to influence our service delivery and we will contribute to the national, regional and local agendas with our internal and external partners.

To achieve this we will:

- Continue to deliver high quality targeted Home Fire Safety and Safe and Well Checks to the community members in Merseyside.
- Continue to engage with partners to identify the most vulnerable individuals living within our communities ensuring there is a clear understanding of the referral pathway.
- Work with our internal partners to utilise the most effective methods of technology
- Plan and prioritise campaigns, including relevant internal and external partners to raise fire safety awareness in line with the NFCC, HM Government (formerly Fire Kills) and MFRS Equality and Diversity.
- Work with our Corporate Communications Team to maximise the effectiveness of our communications strategy, publicity and marketing to promote home fire safety messages to the communities of Merseyside and ensure that they are aware of the work and activities we are undertaking to make people safer from the risks of fire.
- To maximise opportunities to utilise volunteers to support the delivery of Home Fire Safety interventions in line with the Volunteer Strategy 2018-2021.

Our desired outcomes for Priority three will be:

- A reduction in fatalities and serious injuries and accidental dwelling fires.
- Raising awareness and the outcomes of our service delivery through strategic multi-agency meetings.

- Raising fire safety awareness in a dynamic, engaging and available model in line with national campaigns through social media and a collaborative approach with our Corporate Communications Team.

PRIORITY FOUR – INFLUENCING THE USE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

We will continue to explore the use of assistive, adaptive and rehabilitative devices for people who have mobility or cognitive impairments to ensure that vulnerable people in Merseyside are able to live independently and safely in their home through the use of assistive technology.

In order to achieve this we will:

- Engage with our private and public partners to identify emerging issues and explore potential solutions to keep people safe in their homes.
- Work with our application development team to identify effective applications to deliver preventative interventions.
- Engage with and contribute to the research and development National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Assistive Technology Workgroup to inform Fire and Rescue Services nationally of the advances in technology available.
- Seek funding opportunities from our partners for the provision and installation of assistive technology equipment.

Our desired outcomes for Priority Four will be:

- To identify relevant technological interventions and equipment that will enable vulnerable people to live safely and independently in their own homes.
- To increase our performance through technological innovation, for example the introduction of mobile technology and intuitive management information systems to provide administrative support in a way that maximises front line delivery of fire safety interventions.

PRIORITY FIVE – ENGAGING WITH SPECIALISED HOUSING, REGISTERED PROVIDERS AND PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

The NFCC launched 'The Fire Safety in Specialised Housing' guidance to reduce the risk of fire for vulnerable residents in Sheltered Accommodation, Extra Care and Supported Living. Its aim is to clarify and build upon existing working practices to adopt a person centred approach to identifying risks to vulnerable residents in these type of premises. Additionally, 'The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015' places a responsibility on Private Sector Landlords to have at least one working smoke alarm on every floor of their premises.

To achieve this we will:

- Work collaboratively with the MFRS Protection Team to support the responsible person for specialised housing in completing a person centred fire risk assessment for individuals who demonstrate the characteristics, behaviours and capabilities that may lead to a fire in the premises.
- Engage with Registered Providers and Private Rented Sector Landlords to identify tenants who are at risk of having a fire in their property.
- Work with Local Authorities, Registered Providers and Private Sector Landlords to raise fire safety awareness and environmental standards in the Rented Sector, particularly in accommodation above commercial premises.

Our desired outcomes for Priority Five will be:

- To improve environmental and safety standards within private rented properties and ensure vulnerable tenants receive a Home Fire Safety Check and understand the risk of fire in the home.
- To raise fire safety awareness and compliance levels in respect of the 'The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015' in the Private Rented Sector.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of this Strategy rests with the following:

Area Manager Community Risk Management is accountable for the delivery and review of this strategy.

Group Manager Prevention is responsible for the development and delivery of all policies and procedures to support this strategy and for monitoring the achievement of all service delivery aims and objectives.

Community Risk Management staff are responsible for supporting the development and delivery of all policies, procedures and protocols that support this strategy.

All Service managers may have a role to play in terms of planning, organising and implementing an intelligence led approach and they should work closely with the Home Safety Team to ensure effective deployment of resources.

8. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This strategy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Authority, business community and the people of Merseyside. Monitoring will also give confidence that the strategy delivers against its stated goals, is effective and provides best value to the communities of Merseyside.