



**DEVON &
SOMERSET**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV)

Process Improvement. Briefing Paper

Project Number: PR000161

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Project Executive: AM Neil Blackburn

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This paper details the roll out of the improved Home Fire Safety offer providing a platform on which a more holistic Safe and Well approach can be delivered. It will result in the employment of a team of dedicated technicians with purpose designed vans to deliver our home safety services in a consistent way across the Service.
- 1.2 The improvements to BE made will signal a move to a dedicated, higher trained workforce delivering a more efficient and improved offer providing the potential to increase capacity to deliver a larger number of visits to our most vulnerable clients and address risks inherent in the current delivery mechanism.
- 1.3 The approach draws on the results of the recent HFSV trial delivered in Central Command from October 2014 to date. The roll out of the recommended approach is predicated upon completion of the ICT interface. This provides a fully automated system allowing the customer to be offered a visit time and date, across the service area, on receipt of the call.
- 1.4 A key priority for Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) is to improve public safety, an essential component of this is to keep people safer in their own homes. This approach also recognises the potential for future collaboration with partners in promoting public safety and health with a more holistic “Safe and Well” offer.
- 1.5 Recognising the need for the Service to improve efficiency, delivering the most cost effective solution will support, evidence based, informed decision making. The recommended approach will provide accurate financial reports and more accurate costings associated with the generation and delivery of HSV to the service.
- 1.6 It has the potential to deliver;
 - Increased capacity within Group Support Teams to improve partnership working and generate high quality targeted referrals. It is recognised that a large percentage of fire facilities are known to other agencies.
 - A platform on which to develop future opportunities in collaboration with partner agencies (such as Health & the Police) in the delivery of risk reduction activities, ie Safe & Well visits, and crime reduction.
 - An opportunity for re-engagement of w/t staff in the delivery of HFSC activities
 - A targeted approach with the capacity to deliver 20,250 level 2 visits per year. (Level 2 visits are delivered by technicians in fully equipped vans)¹
 - An increased number of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) and Level 1 visits. (Level 1 visits are completed where no equipment requirements are identified)
 - Improved data from which we are able to record the number of HFSC/V against high risk properties identified annually by the services Business Intelligence Team.

¹ Based upon 6 visits per day = 30 visits per week per technician. 15 technicians = 450 visits per week. 45 weeks per year = 22,250 visits.

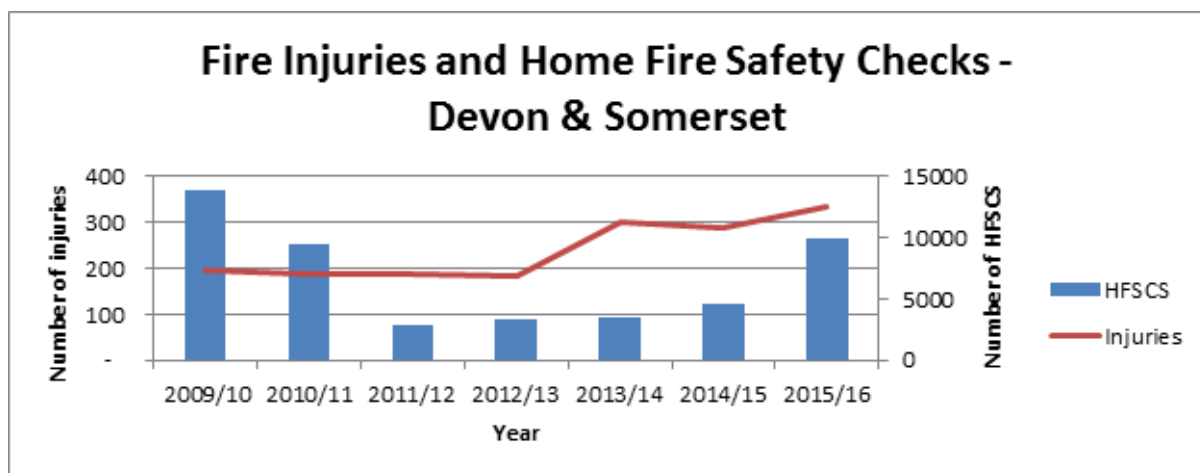
- 1.7 Various options were considered during and after the pilot phase drawing on reviews, audits and experience from other Services. A Pilot was run for 18 months in Central Command to explore this approach.
- 1.8 The pilot approach will be rolled out across the whole service in order to realise all the benefits and significantly improve our Home Safety offering.

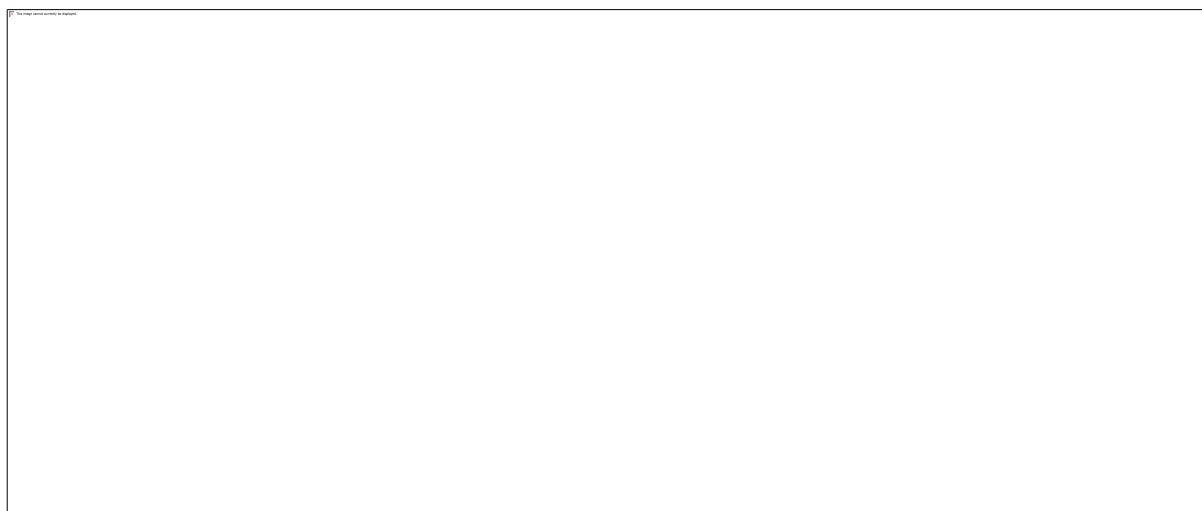
2 Background

2.1 Community Safety sits at the heart of DSFRS and is integral to improving public safety and reducing operational costs. An essential component of this is to keep people safer in their own homes where the vast majority of our fire injuries and fatalities occur.

However, the current trend for fire deaths and injuries recognises that DSFRS needs to make improvements which support a sustainable reduction in these occurrences.

2.2 The graphs below suggest that after periods where the least amount of visits have been undertaken, there is an increase in deaths and injuries. It is anticipated that a consistent increase in the number of **targeted** visits delivered via a **consistent** approach across DSFRS will allow us to more accurately evidence the impact the chosen approach has. Currently, due to the different approaches adopted, it is not possible to ascertain accurately any direct correlation between visits, fire deaths and injuries.





Note: The “Injuries” figure is all injuries (including Precautionary Checks and First aid given at scene). This is not our corporate performance measures 2 & 5 which are just cases where the victim is taken to hospital.

- 2.3 The Community Safety team has been the focus of a number of improvement initiatives, indicating that as an organisation we needed to bring risk information together in a more consistent way.
- 2.4 A “Systems Thinking” review was carried out between November 2015 and February 2016 and had the following strategic recommendations. These recommendations are reflected in the table below:

Strategic recommendations	Solution offered by the new process
Adopting a Common Approach across DSFRS. Currently there is inconsistency in how the activity is delivered between Groups.	Delivers a common approach across the service area.
Having a Clear Strategy (closely related to the above)	Clarity on how the approach is adopted.
Better Quality Visits. It is recognised that better visits will make people safer.	The quality is improved by providing more specific information about who is at risk. The customer data collected in the pilot area indicates a 98% satisfaction rate from surveys returned.
Better Trained Staff. Currently there is no formal training for prevention staff across DSFRS.	Offers enhanced training at an appropriate level. The training will be subject to the level of activity the individual is expected to perform, therefore much more relevant to role. For example all technicians will receive training in Safeguarding, Sensory Loss, Alcohol Awareness and Mental Health.
Reduce Travel Time. During the initial review it was discovered that 30% of all time allocated to Home Safety visits was used in travelling to and from the visits.	This will be managed through the ICT interface which offers appointment availability in postcode areas. This will reduce to travel times as best as possible without compromising customer service. It will also reduce the requirement to hire vehicles for ad hoc activities.
Clear success measures. DSFRS does not effectively measure the success (or otherwise) of Home Safety Activity.	The approach will offer improved data through the use of tablet devices. It will provide evidence of the work undertaken against specific addresses deemed at high risk. It will also provide an opportunity for GST's to engage with partners who have access to high risk individuals. The reference numbers allow the performance of the partnership (number of visits generated) to be provided and reviewed.

3 Service Alignment

3.1 Corporate Strategy

Home Fire Safety Checks and Visits are central to the delivery of our vision to making Devon and Somerset a safer place to live.

The future of our Service needs to reflect both the type of risk we are presented with and the significant and continuing reduction in fire incidents. There is also a need to increase and improve our engagement with communities and to understand how we can provide the best advice, support and response to ensure you live a safer life. (DSFRS Corporate Plan 2015-2020).

In the last 3 years, all fatal accidental fires, other than vehicle fires, have occurred where people live. Annually the vast majority of fire fatalities and injuries occur where people live and it is anticipated the delivery of this project will contribute towards a sustained reduction in these types of incidents.

3.2 Core Values

The project demonstrates commitment to the following core values:

Honesty, clarity and accountability

The HFSC pilot has demonstrated that a consistent approach can be achieved with all employees delivering the service within agreed parameters.

Managing a smaller number of advocates delivering HFSV allows specific information to be shared, applied consistently and with the facility for regular updates. The smaller team reduces associated costs in training and hours spent on CPD at our regular development days.

Respect for each other

Our development days provide a forum within which our HFSV technicians openly discuss the issues and challenges they face. The forums enhance our shared safeguarding understanding for risk identification, issue resolution and consistency in approach, supporting organisational effectiveness and reputation.

During the development of our marketing material we have worked with our partners and customers to improve our material together.

Working together to improve

The new approach is a customer focused initiative where the 'check' provides an opportunity to tailor our services to the customers' needs.

The end to end process provides a flexible model which can respond quickly when required to do so. It achieves this by directly managing the technicians centrally and providing technological solutions for GST's.

In establishing single points of contact and a consistent approach it is easier to identify best practice, discuss its impact and implement improvements quickly where agreed.

A 'can do' attitude

Feedback from our technicians indicates that the training, equipment and consistency in management makes them feel valued and more positive about their role within the service.

We are able to provide accurate data on performance and acknowledge the high standards that can be achieved.

Staff feel more motivated if the team performs well.

4 The Case for Change

4.1 Why is the change required?

The project is required to address the issues identified within:

- Home Safety Audit.
- Peer review

4.2 A summary of the some of the issues highlighted at present are:

Complex matrix of people, tasks and actions to deliver visits

- Between April '12 and March '14 visits were delivered by over 100 individual advocate staff. The new approach provides an efficient, effective and lean process without compromising quality. It has demonstrated that an individual with a fully equipped van with visits pre booked at the point of contact can deliver 30 visits per week. Potentially only 3 people are involved in this end to end process, the call handler, the technician and of course the customer. W/T crews target specific addresses as do advocates in more rural areas. In these cases each individual is able to record their 'checks' via a fully automated system.

Information assurance and data management risks

- Using new technologies and automated systems. The ICT interface offers appointments so there is no need to call back the customer. The tablets used by the technicians remove paperwork providing a fully automated solution.

Limited evidence of partnership working

- The agreed approach requires chosen partnerships to have an agreement and unique reference number. This allows the productivity of that partnership to be measured and reported on.

Reduced opportunities to engage with communities

- Targeted marketing is more easily achieved through a consistent approach. Introducing a recognised brand allows us to more easily utilise different media to target our customers, for example Internet, billboards, social media and face to face engagement. **A framework capable of managing the performance of staff.**

- Through the new approach we can easily identify any spare capacity or alternatively when we are operating at full capacity. Customer surveys also provide good evidence of how our colleagues are meeting their needs.

Improvements are slow to implement

- The single approach and ownership of it allows us to implement improvements in a timely manner.

Training and competence of staff

- The new approach will identify the appropriate training required at each level and design the appropriate training packages. More specific job descriptions and personal specifications will provide more robust performance management criteria as opposed to broader contracts

Financial costs of HFSV

- All salary/equipment costs are set against a separate budget code for the technicians. It is anticipated this will see a reduction

An environment where people are not motivated to exercise their talents

- Feedback from technicians and staff indicate that the training, specialist equipment and an empowerment to act have greatly improved their working environment.

- 4.3 The ultimate goal of this project is to roll-out a consistent process across the Service which enables the most vulnerable members of our community to contact us easily and arrange a visit that is best suited to them, at a mutually convenient time.

5 Key advantages of the selected approach

- provides an opportunity to engage technicians in the wider Community Safety agenda inclusive of HFSV, Firesetter Intervention and Schools Education
- maximise the efficiencies through automated booking the ICT user interface will deliver
- delivers an efficient, effective and lean process without compromising quality in addition to matching the organisations capability with the expectation
- improves information assurance by using new technologies and automated systems
- promotes partnership working by providing capacity to GST's and introducing partnership numbers against which productivity can be reported
- provides a flexible and responsive framework to implement improvements in a timely manner
- provides a more consistently trained competent and motivated workforce through the provision of a smaller team and a structured training programme

- An improved budgetary management process;
- technicians will work service wide but primarily where the need of our customer(s) is identified. This reduces administration, management, administration and coordination costs for events.

6 **Disadvantages/risks**

- the brand (graphics and marketing material) not being widely accepted
- a reliance upon ICT support and back up. This option is dependant upon the booking interface and support for tablet devices being met. Potentially this will increase demand for ICT support and development moving forward.
- this option may displace engaged staff who do not secure a Fixed Term Contract.

7 **Cost monitoring**

This option will deliver more accuracy in the costs of HFSV to the service. Although the anticipated greater number of checks/visits will increase the overall cost to the service the unit cost of a check/visit will be significantly cheaper to the Service.

8 **Resources**

The new process requires:

- a Home Safety Manager (fixed term contract);
- An admin support position (fixed term contract);
- 15 HFSV technicians across the service area (fixed term contract).

9 **What will the improvement deliver?**

For the customer:

It delivers a simple, consistent process that is customer focused. It promotes the concept that EVERY person needs a check and at this point the customer needs are identified and addressed. Customers are either referred to us by partners, can contact us directly through a single contact number or just have a simple conversation anywhere across our service area. That the visit will be delivered, as booked, and any action required will be completed there and then to a high standard.

For partners:

A clear and coherent referral process whereby shared details are kept securely and only accessible within a defined group. The ability to provide feedback on referrals on completion of visits they have referred via auto generated e-mails. Through the agreements each party can clearly see the mutual benefits to each organisation the partnership offers.

For the organisation:

The new approach will demonstrate that the organisation is able to identify improvements and invest to improve this area of Community Safety Prevention.

10 **Deliverables (Products)**

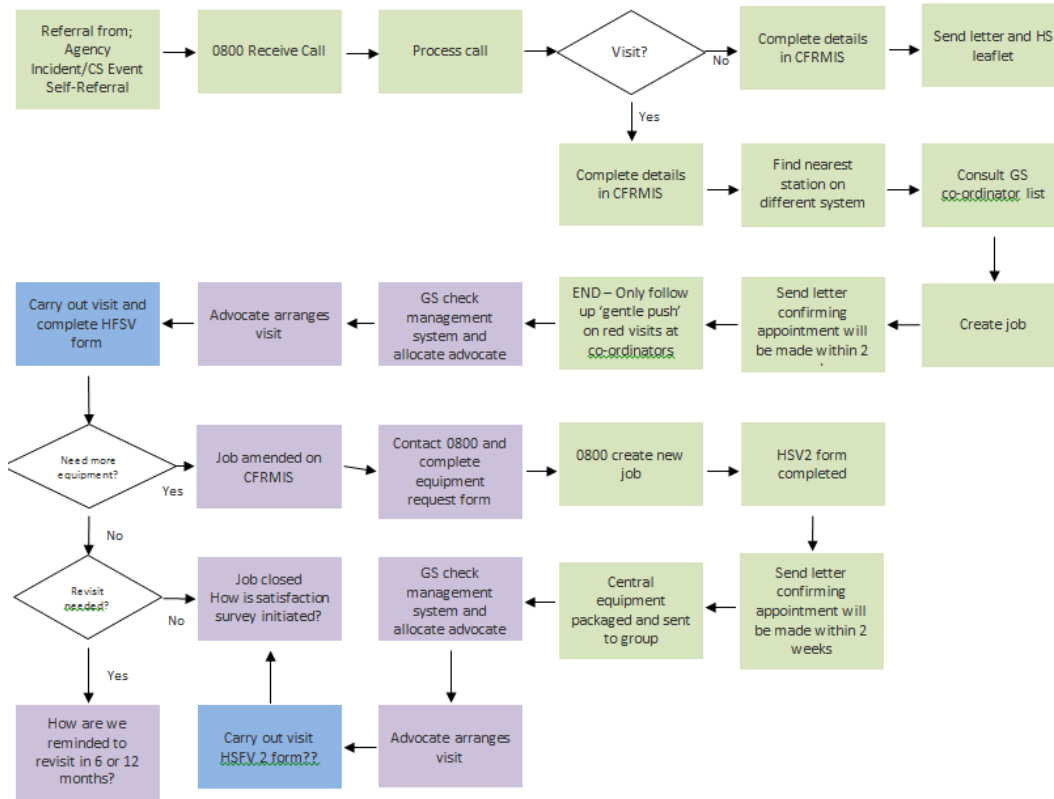
- Single phone number for customer entry with an integrated ICT booking interface
- Consistent use of “ROY” (high risk) Exeter data provided to each group as a focus for activity
- Clear process map (how it is done)
- Each W/T watch trained
- Formal partnership agreements put in place for each partner
- A unique reference number for each partner
- Report by partner indicating number of referrals over a specific period and comparison of whether these referrals are indeed our target audience etc
- Training package for technicians
- Training package for tablet users
- 80 tablets
- 15 fully equipped vehicles
- Agreed criteria for monitoring and recording difference between “check”, “level 1” and “level 2” visits.
- List of screening questions to proceed from check to visit.
- Specified number of technicians on fixed term contracts.
- Brand for HFSV established
- Job description, personal specification for technician role

11 **How this would be achieved:**

- HFSC Technicians will be managed and coordinated centrally to improve the efficiency of the HFSV process and reduce the workloads of commands. This will release capacity within Commands to assist with wider risk reduction activity and more specifically partnership working
- A notable increase in customer survey forms being offered/issued (Qualitative) which provides valuable feedback to the organisation directly from our customers
- Groups will target and generate potential HFSC referrals via;
 - Home Fire Safety Advice Helpline
 - firekills@dsfire.gov.uk
 - Improved partnership arrangements with unique reference numbers
- More detailed risk information
- Clear performance requirements being embedded into Local Community Plans.

Appendix - Pre/Post pilot task overview

Steps for HFSV Pre Pilot (0800)



Steps for HFSV post pilot (0800)

