

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	CSC/22/10
MEETING	COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	9 SEPTEMBER 2022
SUBJECT OF REPORT	HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS PERFORMANCE
LEAD OFFICER	ACFO PETE BOND, DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This paper will look at the Service's Home Fire Safety Visit Program performance. How well do we deliver the Home Safety element of our Prevention activities? What has Her Majesties Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services said about this activity in Devon and Somerset. What are we currently delivering and what needs to improve if we are to maintain a good standard. What the Community Safety Committee can do to hold the Service to account.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Business as usual. No resource request
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	Complete
APPENDICES	None
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The previous paper on Home Fire Safety delivered to the Community Safety Committee in February 2022 (Minute CSC/21/14 refers) explained why the Service undertakes Prevention activity and how it delivers its home fire safety visit programme, targeting those most vulnerable to fire, in our communities to carry out a fire safety check and provide safety equipment if appropriate.
- 1.2. The Fatal Fires paper for the Community Safety Committee, September 2022 (elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting) explains the risk factors for fatal fires and how the Service can learn from previous fatal fires in order to improve our prevention activity. This paper will focus on the Service performance and delivery of the Home Fire Safety Visit programme.

2. HOME SAFETY VISIT PERFORMANCE

- 2.1. The number of home fire safety visits delivered each year is only one of the factors that needs to be considered when judging performance. Clearly, the Service needs to reach a large number of people within its communities if it is to reduce fires, injuries and fatalities across Devon and Somerset. It is known there are over 60,000 over 85-year-olds within Devon and Somerset with age being one of the risk factors that increase the likelihood of having a fire.
- 2.2. The Service also considers how it targets visits to ensure the most vulnerable people are visited with the limited resources available. It would not be possible to visit every home within Devon and Somerset in a timely manner and therefore it is essential we target our visits to those that we know from our research are more likely to have fires and more likely to be injured or killed.
- 2.3. It is crucial that the visits that are undertaken are of a suitable quality that will make a difference and reduce risk. The National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) have worked collaboratively with Fire and Rescue Services to set the benchmark through the Person Centred Framework. This, along with the Fire Standard for Prevention is what Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will use as a benchmark for future grading of fire and rescue services.
- 2.4. In the latest Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS – hereinafter known as the Inspectorate) report the Service was graded as "good" for Prevention. However, if the Service is to remain as "good", or achieve "outstanding" there will need to be improvement in the way services are delivered, ensuring alignment to the NFCC Person Centred Framework and the Fire Standard for Prevention.
- 2.5. To achieve this, a gap analysis will be undertaken against the Fire Standard for Prevention and the NFCC Person Centred Framework to ensure that, as a Service, its services are in line with sector best practice.

- 2.6. In the latest report on Prevention, the Inspectorate identified two Areas for Improvement (AFI's).
- The Service should evaluate its prevention activity, so it understands what works; and
 - Safeguarding training should be provided to all staff.
- 2.7. The Inspection report recognised that the Community Safety Plan is linked to the risks identified in the IRMP (now the Community Risk Management Plan) stating *“The Service has recognised that accidental dwelling fires and an increasingly ageing population are some of the risks the service is facing”*.
- 2.8. The report also quoted *“The Service consistently targets its highest risk people for Home Safety Visits. Prevention activity is clearly prioritised using a risk-based approach towards people most at risk from fire and other emergencies”*.
- 2.9. The inspectorate also sampled Home Safety Visit records and stated *“They were completed to a good standard”*. It recognised the Service works with partner organisations and the communities, including those from ethnic backgrounds”. Which is a component of the fire standard to ensure equality of access to Services.
- 2.10. The report identified that Home Safety specialists receive the appropriate training with staff saying they have the right skills and confidence to undertake Home Safety Visits. However, the Service needs to do better at targeting our operational staff to deliver home safety visits, and improve safeguarding training.
- 2.11. The inspectorate said,
- “Most staff told us they have the right skills and confidence to make Home Safety Visits”. These checks cover an appropriate range of hazards that can put vulnerable people at greater risk from fire and other emergencies. Some Operational staff felt they should receive more Prevention training”*.
- 2.12. But recognised our specialist staff receive enhanced training and continuous professional development. As part of our gap analysis the service will address the training required for our operational staff to ensure they are confident in undertaking Home Safety Visits.
- 2.13. In the previous Inspectorate report, an area for improvement was identified that the Service should assure itself that home safety visits undertaken by staff were consistent. In the latest report it recognised that although the process has been put in place, it has been slow to quality assure its staff due to the Covid Pandemic.

2.14. However, the process is now fully operating, and quality assurance of our specialist staff is underway. This process will also be rolled out with our operational crews to identify any areas where further learning is required. This will enable the Service to identify areas for further training and continuous professional development. Reassuringly as previously mentioned it has been recognised that the standard of home safety visits in the service is good.

2.15. Reassuringly, the inspectorate also recognised that the service is good at collaborating in Prevention. *“The service works with a wide range of other organisations such as care providers, social services and other emergency services to prevent fires and other emergencies. It has over 500 partner agencies which are regularly reviewed. From the Home Safety Visit files we sampled, we found referrals were consistently made from these organisations”*.

“We were pleased to see the service introduced a specialist safeguarding officer role, which is jointly funded by Devon and Cornwall Police. This is a positive move. It is intended to improve how the service handles complex safeguarding cases and makes it easier for both services to share information about vulnerable people. This in turn allows the service to identify the most at risk people in the community and provide the relevant support where necessary”.

2.16. The Inspectorate stated that, following a tragic fire, the service provided good support to its communities. The Service provided bespoke interventions to Schools, including providing 26 home safety visits to families as well as providing home safety visits to the wider community.

3. **NUMBERS OF HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS DELIVERED**

3.1. The table below compares the number of accidental dwelling fires and the number of Home Fire Safety Visits delivered for each year over the past ten years.

Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Fires	1051	1058	980	968	1006	1060	926	933	866	864
HFSV	3278	3477	4651	9968	8774	10864	9827	16697	8525	14781

3.2. The target for 2022/23 is to deliver 18,000 Home Fire Safety Visits using a combination of operational crews and specialist staff.

3.3. Since 2018, the Service has fitted over 20,000 Smoke alarms and delivered other equipment that has helped prevent fires and save lives.

3.4. The Service currently expects to carry out a home fire safety visit within 28 days of a referral. However, for various reasons this is not always possible. Examples of where we don't meet the target include the client cancels the visit, the client is taken into care or into hospital. Re-prioritising visits can also lead to a cancellation such as an arson referral. However, over the past twelve months 55% of visits are carried out within the 28 days and 77% within 56 days. (Less than 2 months).

- 3.5. From April 2022 until the end of July 2022, the Service delivered 6049 Home Fire Safety Visits. The majority of these visits have been carried out using two delivery models. Our Home Safety Technicians delivered 3803 visits, these are more complex visits generally referred by partners, and rural area visits.
- 3.6. Wholetime operational crews delivered 2225 visits, targeting areas most likely to have fires using MOSAIC data from our analysts. The crews will door knock in these areas to generate a visit. The following table shows the number of visits per Watch.

Station	Watch	DHSV Completed - Home Office Criteria April - July 2022 (4 month period) TOTAL
01 Barnstaple	Blue	41
	Green	71
	Red	23
	White	37
01 Barnstaple Total		172
02 Ilfracombe	On Call	1
16 Woolacombe	On Call	1
17 Torquay	Blue	77
	Green	91
	Red	71
	White	53
17 Torquay Total		292
18 Paignton	Blue	80
	Green	40
	Red	106
	White	40
18 Paignton Total		291
22 Buckfastleigh	On Call	8
31 Totnes	On Call	1
28 Newton Abbot	Community Responders	28
32 Danes Castle	Blue	12
	Green	32
	Red	64
	White	46
32 Danes castle Total		153
33 Exmouth	Blue	50
	Green	49
	Red	38
	White	27

Station	Watch	DHSV Completed - Home Office Criteria April - July 2022 (4 month period) TOTAL
33 Exmouth Total		164
39 Cullompton	Community Responders	2
47 Plympton	On Call/ Comm Responders	9
48 Camels Head	Blue	27
	Green	29
	Red	34
	White	44
48 Camels Head Total		134
49 Crownhill	Blue	47
	Green	24
	Red	44
	White	71
49 Crownhill Total		214
50 Greenbank	Blue	47
	Green	43
	Red	18
	White	19
50 Greenbank Total		127
59 Middlemoor	Blue	55
	Green	22
	Red	1
	White	1
59 Middlemoor Total		78
61 Taunton	Blue	80
	Green	77
	Red	86
	White	74
61 Taunton Total		317
62 Bridgewater	Blue	41
	Green	58
	Red	41
	White	17
62 Bridgewater Total		157
73 Yeovil	Blue	39
	Green	31
	Red	24
	White	30

Station	Watch	DHSV Completed - Home Office Criteria April - July 2022 (4 month period) TOTAL
73 Yeovil Total		124
73 Yeovil HSV App		12
Service Total		2246

4. **NUMBER OF RISK FACTORS**

- 4.1. The Service has identified that risk factors are significant in identifying if a person is more or less likely to have a fire or be injured or killed in a fire.
- 4.2. The Table at paragraph 4.4 below shows the risk factors identified for home fire safety visits undertaken since September 2018. Note, due to our current processes and ICT systems we are not always able to identify or record all potential risk factors. For example, a client may not disclose a risk factor, but a partner may have identified one. This is an area for improvement. However, we have seen an increase in the percentage of visits with two or more risk factors since we started recording.
- 4.3. In 2019/20, 47.21% of visits had two risk factors or more, rising to 58.3% to date this year. The Service aims to have 60% of visits with two or more risk factors and continue to refine our processes and data recording.
- 4.4. The higher the percentage of visits with two or more risk factors provides re-assurance that the Service is targeting the right people and using our resources efficiently.

	Sep 18 - Mar 19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	April - Jun 22	Total
Smoking	680	1399	942	1605	305	4931
Alcohol	64	170	143	233	55	665
Drugs	34	80	56	100	29	299
Mental Health	625	1466	976	1569	334	4970
Poor Housekeeping (Hoarding)	591	1127	688	1446	313	4165
Disability	1204	2397	1388	2130	378	7497
Sensory Loss, such as hearing or visual	1201	2966	1542	2837	613	9160
Limited Mobility	2017	4909	3290	5299	955	16470
Living Alone	2441	6199	3713	5641	1118	19113
Over 65s	3613	8395	5526	7912	1491	26939
Overs 85s	1280	2691	1683	2642	544	8840

5. CURRENT ISSUES

- 5.1 The home safety team has been using dated technology in the form of a Home Safety App which is a tool built by our ICT team internally. The app is slow, has limited functionality and sits on a server that has crashed multiple times causing delays in delivery. This app is due to be replaced by MORI (Management of Risk Information). There is a balance to be struck on how much resource is used to keep the current app operating, verses resourcing MORI to get a new system delivered. Some of the issues with the current technology prohibit our ability to extract accurate data or book visits in the most efficient manner. We are currently using a business analyst working with our data teams to overcome some of these issues in the short term. However, the tools available to the Prevention team are currently the biggest risk in being able to deliver an efficient Prevention strategy.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The delivery of home fire safety visits has been recognised as good by the inspectorate and the Service prevention team continue to refine processes and escalate risk to improve efficiency and effectiveness. We expect to deliver more than 18,000 quality home fire safety visits this year, and fit smoke alarms and other equipment where necessary to reduce risk in our communities.
- 6.2. The Service works consistently well with partners to identify the people who are most likely to have a fire, be injured or become a fatality.
- 6.3. The Service continues to analyse data to target our visits to those most at need and monitor performance to ensure we are delivering our services effectively. Staff are currently working on processes to further check eligibility criteria to refine how visits are targeted. This is assisted by a new online home fire safety tool where people can carry out their own home fire safety check. If the individual is identified as requiring further help it will refer them into the Service.
- 6.4. Although the team is working hard to deliver quality services, the current ICT tools are hindering delivery. The Service is investing in an internal ICT solution, MORI to overcome this problem, although for various reasons the project has seen delays. These legacy issues regarding our ICT system and data along with legacy processes are causing some issues.
- 6.5. The ability to improve ICT systems functionality, data quality and use data for analysis, including geo-spatial will be essential if we are to provide an efficient service to our communities. It has been identified by the inspectorate that we need to evaluate our work better to improve our services. This will require collaboration with ICT and our data analysts to provide the statistical data and evaluation required to improve.

- 6.6. Service Performance is good currently, but the prevention department along with our colleagues in ICT and the data teams will need to find solutions to the current challenges if it is to maintain this rating in line with the Fire Standard for Prevention. The Community Safety Committee can play an active role by holding the Service to account, ensuring we make progress in having the right tools to deliver our services efficiently, that we plan to align to the Fire Standard for Prevention and deliver against the Service Delivery Strategy aligned to the CRMP as well as delivering against our Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

ACFO PETE BOND
Director of Service Delivery