



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

FIRESETTERS PROGRAMME

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 08 October 2010

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the progress of the Firesetters Programme

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : David Horton
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Tel : 0115 967 0880

Email : david.horton@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact : Elisabeth Reeson
(0115) 967 5889 elisabeth.reeson@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The term firesetting is well used by those in the fire service and adopted generally as the accepted term meaning 'people who start fire deliberately'.
- 1.2 Most children show a natural interest and curiosity in fire. Even if they do not display any firesetting behaviour, many children may be fascinated by fire – the glow of a flame, blowing out their birthday candles or even watching an adult light a cigarette. It is not uncommon for children as young as two years of age to show an interest in fire. However, for some children and young people this interest develops into something more dangerous.

Curiosity Firesetter

- 1.3 Children aged between 2-7 years of age are often fascinated with fire and this leads them to play with it. They do not understand the destructive potential of fire or the implications of their actions. They usually start the fire with matches or lighters in bedrooms or where they have been left alone for short length of time.

Problem Firesetter

- 1.4 The problem firesetter can also be very young, but are typically between 5 - 17 years of age. Unlike the curious firesetter, they light fires for many reasons. These can include boredom, malice or peer pressure. An emotional crisis in the child's life can also trigger firesetting behaviour.
- 1.5 Without help and guidance, firesetting behaviour can become increasingly serious and lead to injury, damage to property and tragically, death. NFRS provides a firesetter programme through the fire setter intervention co-ordinator and a number of trained firesetter interventionists. The programme aims to help children and young people understand and control the feelings and circumstances that lead them to set fires.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Firesetter and Firesafe programmes are co-ordinated through the post of the services fire setter co-ordinator, who sits within the Prevention; Community Safety youth team. Referrals are received from a variety of sources (Police, youth offending service, youth justice system, health and social care, parents and carers, schools and fire crews).

Firesetters

- 2.2 The co-ordinator completes a NFRS firesetter referral form (FSET1) which collects a variety of information about the individual and family:
 - Fire setting incident details;
 - Behavioural problems;

- Family composition and background information;
 - Schools;
 - Details of any other agency involvement (eg: social care).
- 2.3 The co-ordinator contacts the parent / carer to gather additional information, reassure them, and give advice on reducing the risks and that a firesetter interventionist will be in contact to arrange a visit.
- 2.4 The case is allocated to two interventionists to make contact and deliver the appropriate age related materials of the programme. All information from the visit is recorded and returned to the co-ordinator for recording onto the secure database within CFRMIS. Usually one visit is sufficient however the assessment of the individual and family may highlight that another is required.
- 2.5 4-6 weeks following the intervention contact is made with the Parent/ Guardian to ascertain if any further fire related behaviour or fire setting has taken place. If an individual is identified as forming a pattern of this type of behaviour or a request is made for further intervention, then this is recorded and another intervention will follow.
- 2.6 A letter together with a questionnaire is sent to every referrer after 3 Months to again check if there is any further fire behaviour. Approximately 35 -50% of the questionnaires are returned completed. Comments received are either described as '*very good*' or '*excellent*' in terms of the fire setter interventions. This questionnaire is being redesigned to capture additional information.

Firesafe

- 2.7 Firesafe is a 10 session, one to one cognitive behavioural programme aimed at medium/high risk offenders in the 12-17 age range. The programme is based on a model of change, suggested in the theory model within the scheme programme. Areas that are addressed are:
- Cognitive behavioural skills
 - Education and Fire Awareness
 - Family involvement (where appropriate).
- 2.8 The programme is delivered by a small specialist trained team from within the Prevention; Community Safety Dept. Referrals are received from Case Managers or appropriate person(s) at the Youth Offending Team or Youth Service Team. The co-ordinator allocates the referral to two specialist firesafe interventionists who liaise with the case worker and young person. The programme is delivered over 10 weeks and progress monitored through both the service and case worker. Information is received from the YOS following the programme on the young person's progress.

Fire Setter Interventions

- 2.9 This year 115 firesetter referrals have been received since 1st January until 10th September. In 2009 there were 151 referrals and in 2008 there were 216 referrals.
- 2.10 Appendix A shows the number of referrals and gender breakdown for 2008 - 2010.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The overall budget for the programme is contained within the community safety budget and is currently 36K for the firesetters programme and 14.5k for the firesafe programme, this covers the materials required to deliver the programme; uniform; Interventionists additional training (non fire service college); interventionists expenses and pay.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The services firesetter interventionists receive training to support the delivery of the programme and their individual development to enhance their skills. The service uses accredited courses associated with firesetting at the Fire Service College. All interventionists are enhanced CRB checked.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are no specific aspects in relation to a disproportionate effect in respect of the key equality strands.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

The delivery of the programme assists the service in its statutory duty towards Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act. It also contributes towards the National Indicator 19; by providing diversionary activities for those at risk of offending.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places specific duties upon the Service around Community Fire Safety. Programme delivery assists in meeting those requirements.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Service has a statutory obligation around community engagement and risk reduction. An inability to demonstrate engagement with this key risk groups could incur adverse scrutiny onto the organisation should incidents occur.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report and the approach of work undertaken by the Service's firesetter intervention programme, and continue to support further work programmed.

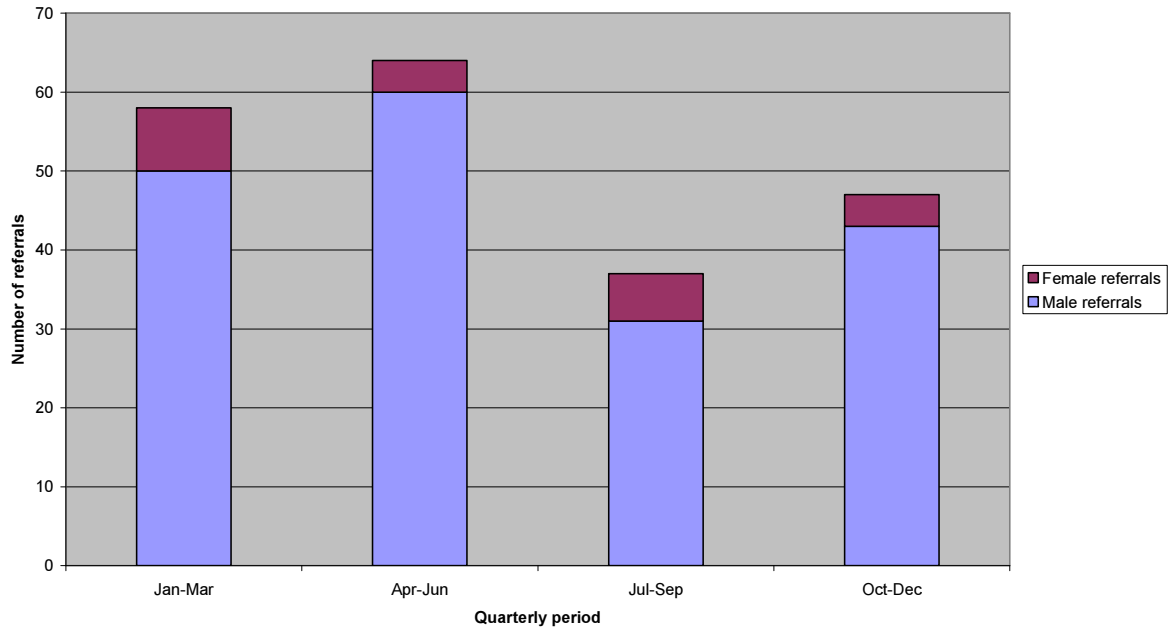
10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

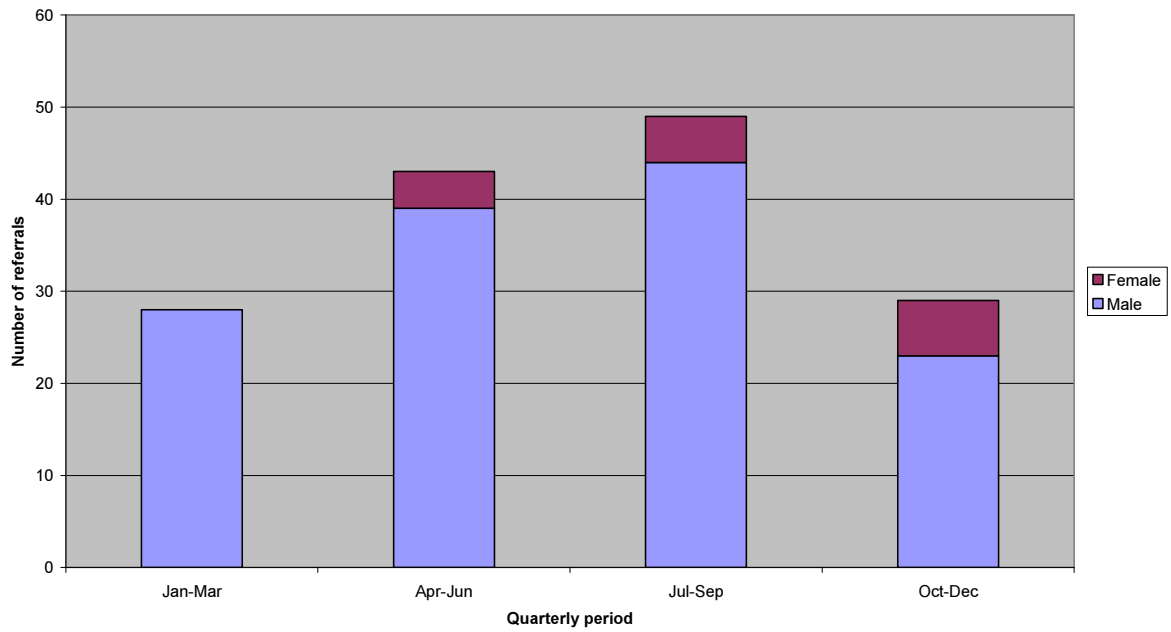
Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX A

Firesetter referrals 2008



Firesetter referrals 2009



Firesetter referrals 2010

