



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

2020 FATAL FIRES REVIEW

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 08 October 2021

Purpose of Report:

To update members on the fatal fire incidents that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) attended in 2020 the Service response.

Recommendations:

That Members note the content of the report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The fire fatalities discussed within this report are per calendar year, in which 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020 is the focus.
- 1.2. Not all incidents discussed within this report have been heard by Her Majesty's Coroner's Inquest and as such it must be noted that the information contained within this report is based on what is available at the time of writing.
- 1.3. Within the 2020 calendar year, there has been a decrease in fire fatalities within the county from the preceding four years; four incidents resulted in four fatalities within 2020, with a fifth death recorded in January 2020 after an incident in December 2019.
- 1.4. The average number of fire fatalities attended by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) from 2016 – 2019 (inclusive) is eight deaths per year.
- 1.5. The previous figures for the county can be summarised in the table below:

Calendar Year	Number of Fire Fatalities	Number of Incidents
2019	6	7
2018	10	7
2017	8	8
2016	6	6

Table 1: previous fire fatality figures 2016 – 2019, inclusive.

- 1.6. Whilst any fire fatality is a tragedy, it is an opportunity for NFRS to learn lessons and where necessary, adapt its approach to prevention and response activities.

2. REPORT

- 2.1. Three of the fatal fires occurred between October and December 2020, with one in February 2020 and a death in January 2020, resulting from an incident in December 2019.
- 2.2. Of the five deaths within 2020, one incident took place in Nottingham City, one in Newark and Sherwood, one in Rushcliffe and two within the Mansfield District. Two fatalities were adult females, with the remainder being adult males. Three of the fire fatalities were over the age of 65; the youngest fatality was 33-years old, with the oldest being 86-years.
- 2.3. NFRS's fatal fire profile (CHARLIE-P – please see Appendix A) was examined against the five deaths within 2020 and an outline of this profile can be found within Section 11 of this report. Three out of the five fatalities

lived alone, and all but one had underlying medical conditions, mobility impairments or mental health issues. One fatality displayed six CHARLIE-P profile factors, as they had previous tendencies for hoarding requiring interaction from outside agencies, reduced mobility, lived alone, elderly, was until recently a smoker, along with alcohol use on the day of the fire and cause of fire attributed to an electrical determination.

- 2.4. Of the five fatalities, only one address was known to NFRS regarding previous interaction; on the 16 January 2014 a home safety check (HSC), now known as a safe and well visit, was conducted by NFRS staff. At the time, this concluded as a 'high risk' due to concerns over clutter throughout the property, evidence on smoking and alcohol use. To mitigate these risks, NFRS fitted three battery operated smoke detectors and issued a fire-retardant throw and metal bin to assist with smoking habits and disposal. In-line with current NFRS policy at the time, this was followed up with an email and details passed to the relevant council. No further contact with the Service was received.

ACTIVITY IN 2020

- 2.5. NFRS continues to utilise the Fatal Fire Review Group, which was launched in 2018. This tasking group is convened as soon as is reasonably practicable after a fatal fire has occurred to manage the Service's response. The group's responsibilities include planning for immediate prevention activities to take place, deciding on the most appropriate messages the Service will put out to the media, interrogating systems to ascertain what knowledge the Service had of the person involved and ensuring that the welfare needs of attending crews have been met.
- 2.6. Community Reassurance and Engagement (CRaE) activities take place immediately following a fatal fire to take advantage of the local community's heightened awareness of fire safety.
- 2.7. Of the fatal incidents which took place in 2020, each received a CRaE and + resulted in total 615 properties being contacted regarding fire prevention advice. Of these properties, 94 safe and well visits were conducted, with 78 smoke alarms fitted. A further 42 safe and well visits were scheduled for after the CRaE activity. 408 properties were left with safety leaflets due to no answer on knocking and 119 addresses accepted advice and testing of their current smoke alarm provision, with literature left regarding future safe and well visits.
- 2.8. The incident from December 2019, which sadly resulted in a death from fire in January 2020, had received CRaE activity in the month of the original incident and will not be discussed within this report, as it still subject to HM Coroner determination.
- 2.9. Where a serious but non-fatal incident takes place, CRaE activity will still be considered and is often completed in high-profile cases, such as those entering the criminal justice system. Additionally, collaboration with the Safer

Houses scheme also enables living standards and home fire safety within the private rental sector to be assessed and support offered from NFRS.

- 2.10. An Occupational Therapist has been seconded to NFRS in 2020 and continues to work closely with Prevention and Fire Investigation Officers to identify trends and areas for collaborative working between NFRS and the NHS. This is to prevent future fires, injuries and ultimately fatal incidents and improve a person's standard of living where required.

ACTIVITY PLANNED FOR 2021/22

- 2.11. Efforts will continue to educate partner organisations of the CHARLIE profile and when appropriate referrals should be made to the service.
- 2.12. The Arson Reduction Investigation Team (ARIT), which incorporates Fire Investigation Officers has come under the leadership of Prevention, to enable more closer working relationships and the appropriate sharing of knowledge, information, and expertise to highlight vulnerable persons within Nottinghamshire.
- 2.13. ARIT and Prevention staff will continue to focus on safety messages via social media platforms, linked to Fire Investigations, where criminal and coronal limitations allow.
- 2.14. ARIT has embedded links with Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City Trading Standards, concentrating on electrical appliances and white goods which cause fires, which is continued year upon year to highlight trends and feed information back to manufacturers to allow for recall notices to be issued as appropriate.
- 2.15. ARIT will continue to provide fire investigation awareness training to Nottinghamshire Police, which introduces the method of referral to NFRS for vulnerable persons at risk of fire and arson.
- 2.16. In April 2022, NFRS will analyse new data intelligence by which vulnerable people within Nottinghamshire can be internally identified through various datasets and directly targeted for a Safe and Well Visit.
- 2.17. The CHARLIE-P fatal fire profile will be reviewed in 2021 to ensure this still fits the demographic of fatal fire or serious fire injury incidents NFRS attend. This is to be completed in conjunction with the NFRS Persons and Risk Team (PART), the Occupational Therapist seconded to the Service and Nottingham Trent University (NTU). What is more, the CHARLIE-P profile questionnaire used by NFRS staff is being analysed to ensure standardisation and current interpretation of risk factors.
- 2.18. The NFRS website and Prevention pages are to be made more accessible to users with disabilities, which is scheduled to begin in 2021, thereby helping a wider audience access the NFRS safety messages and referral scheme.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The Prevention Department will be liaising closely with the Service's Inclusion Manager and Equalities Officer to ensure that prevention messages are suitable for all areas of our diverse communities.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Collaboration activities between Safer Houses, Trading Standards and Nottinghamshire Police will continue to be upheld.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX A

Prem ID (if known) Or Address:		Circle as appropriate for each CHARLIE P descriptor. Add the score and place total in bottom box. Please scan and send to Admin for addition to CFRMIS if not completed on tablet.				Date: Service No: Stn No: Job No:	
Score	Score	1	2	4	8	10	
	Descriptor	Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost certain	
C	Care and support needs	No care or support needs	In receipt of comprehensive care and support package	Support in place but not deemed adequate	No support in place but concerns for health and welfare	No support in place but significant concerns for health and welfare	
	Cooking	No concerns	Meal/drink preparation completed by others	Prepares own food and drink but concerns identified by others or regularly uses hot oil	Preparing own food and drink but repeated episodes regarding safety	Actual incident requiring support of others prior to safe and well visit	
H	Hoarding	1-2 CIR	3 CIR	4-5 CIR	6-7 CIR	8+ CIR	
A	Alcohol use	Not used	Signs of alcohol use no concerns	Signs of alcohol use some concerns	Signs of alcohol being used Query dependency?	Concerns alcohol use may impact upon fire safety, including escape	
R	Reduced mobility	Independently mobile	Walks with support	Requires mobility aid or history of falls e.g. stick or frame	Unable to walk e.g. wheelchair user	Cared for in bed	
L	Lives alone	Lives with others	Lives alone but fully independent	Lives alone with daily support	Lives alone with occasional visitors or social contact	Lives alone – no visitors or social contact	
I	Inappropriate smoking	Non-smoker	Occasional smoker aware of safety	Regular smoker aware of safety	Occasional smoker unaware of safety	Regular smoker – unsafe smoking practices	
E	Elderly	Under 40	41-50	51-64	65-79	80+	
	Electrical	No concerns	Some risks identified but resolved during visit	Risks identified, client to resolve	Risks identified and client would need assistance to resolve	Poor understanding and dangerous use of electrics	
P	Previous signs of fire	No signs	Evidence of historic burn marks	Evidence of recent near miss fires – would respond to alarm	Evidence of recent near miss fires – would not respond to alarm	Previous fire within the last 12 months	

Score 1-20: LOW RISK	Score 21-34: MEDIUM RISK	Score 35+: HIGH RISK	TOTAL SCORE:
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