



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

2021 FATAL FIRES REVIEW

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 1 April 2022

Purpose of Report:

To update members on the fatal fire incidents that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) attended in 2021 the Service response.

Recommendations:

That members note the content of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The fire fatalities discussed within this report are per calendar year, in which 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021 are the focus.
- 1.2 Not all incidents discussed within this report have yet to be heard via HM Coroner's Inquest and as such it must be noted the information contained within this report is based on what is available at the time of writing.
- 1.3 Within the 2021 calendar year, there has been an increase in fire fatalities within the county from the preceding four years; seven incidents resulted in seven fatalities within 2021.
- 1.4 The average number of fire fatalities attended by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) from 2017 – 2020 (inclusive) is seven 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 |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2020 | 4* | 3 |
| 2019 | 6 | 7 |
| 2018 | 10 | 7 |
| 2017 | 8 | 8 |

Table 1: previous fire fatality figures 2017 – 2020, inclusive. *note: an incident in 2019 resulted in a death in 2020, due to length of time spent in hospital receiving treatment.

- 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 Two of the fatal fires occurred in January 2021, with one death in February 2021, one in June 2021, one in July 2021 and one in December 2021. One fatality took place in a moving vehicle, whilst all others were within domestic premises.
- 2.2 Of the seven deaths within 2021, once incident took place in Nottingham City, one in Newark and Sherwood, one in Rushcliffe, two in Broxtowe and two within the Ashfield District. Three fatalities were adult females, with the remainder being adult males. Four of the fire fatalities were over the age of 65; the youngest fatality was 53-years old, with the oldest being 85-years.

- 2.3 NFRS's fatal fire (CHARLIE-P) profile was examined against the seven deaths within 2021 and an outline of this profile can be found at Appendix A. All of the seven fatalities lived alone, and all but one had underlying medical conditions, mobility impairments or mental health issues. One fatality displayed five CHARLIE-P profile factors, as they had reduced mobility, lived alone, were elderly, a smoker and had care needs.
- 2.4 Of the seven fatalities, three addresses were known to NFRS regarding previous interaction:
- Address 1 – a Safe and Well visit was offered to the occupier but declined, with details held on file to reflect this.
 - Address 2 – a safe and Well visit was conducted at the address on 16 June 2021, which raised several concerns and partner agencies were contacted (Environmental Health and Fire Protection).
 - Address 3 – NFRS had been in contact with the occupier since 2018 and after 12 attempts the Persons At Risk Team (PART) were able to get an agreed visit in place for 9 June 2020. As a result of this visit, concerns were raised over smoking, alcohol use and their mental health, in which a subsequent referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was made. Over the next 12 months, NFRS visited the occupier 12 times and offers to fit extra smoke alarms in the bedroom and living rooms were declined by the occupier. Correspondence was made between NFRS with EMAS and Social Care over concerns for the occupier.

ACTIVITY IN 2021

- 2.5 NFRS continues to utilise the Serious Event Review Group (formerly 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 we had of the person involved and ensuring 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 communities heightened awareness of fire safety.
- 2.7 Of the fatal incidents which took place in 2021, One was in a moving vehicle and no community activity was carried out, one was notified by the Coroner sometime after the incident, so again no community activity was carried out. At the remaining five, a CRaE was carried out which resulted in a total 788 properties being contacted regarding fire prevention advice. Of these properties, 62 safe and well visits were conducted, with 132 smoke alarms fitted. A further 62 safe and well visits were scheduled for after the CRaE activity. 399 properties were left with safety leaflets due to no answer on knocking and 177 addresses accepted advice and testing of their current

smoke alarm provision, with literature left regarding future safe and well visits.

- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 An Occupational Therapist was 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.
- 2.10 The CHARLIE-P fatal fire profile has been reviewed in 2021 to ensure this still fits the demographic of fatal fire or serious fire injury incidents NFRS attend. This was completed in conjunction with the NFRS 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.

ACTIVITY PLANNED FOR 2022

- 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, 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 NFRS website and Prevention pages are to be made more accessible to users with disabilities, thereby helping a wider audience access the NFRS safety messages and referral scheme.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implication 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 this report.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX A

CHARLIE-P Profile

| Prem ID (if known) | | 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: | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---|--|---|---|--|---|---------|
| Or Address: | | | | | | | 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 | | |
| | 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 | | |
| A | 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 | |
| R | 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+ | |
| E | 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: | | |