



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 16 December 2022

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an overview of the Serious Violence Duty and the Fire Authority's responsibilities as defined by the 'Duty'.

Recommendations:

That Members note the Fire Authority's responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty, and the progress being made by the Service in its preparation to meet the duty.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2019, the Government consulted on a new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing, and tackling, serious violence. There was a consensus for a new legislative approach to a duty.
- 1.2 The Serious Violence Duty (the 'Duty') was legislated as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.
- 1.3 The Duty covers the requirements set out in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022; where it requires specified authorities, the police, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities and youth offending teams, to work together to formulate an evidence-based analysis of serious violence in a local area and then formulate and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those issues.
- 1.4 The legislation will grant fire and rescue services and other authorities the power to share data and information with each other for the purpose of preventing and reducing serious violence. Emphasis on early intervention with young people is central to complying with the duty.
- 1.5 The Government's Serious Violence Strategy sets out specific types of crime of particular concern, including homicide, violence against the person (which may include both knife crime and gun crime) and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing.
- 1.6 These crimes are at the core of any definition of serious violence for the purpose of its reduction and prevention. However, there is flexibility for specified authorities in local areas to take account of their evidence-based strategic needs assessment and include in their strategy actions which focus on other related types of serious violence, this could include (but is not limited to) domestic violence, youth nuisance, alcohol related violence, sexual abuse, modern slavery or gender-based violence.
- 1.7 The Government aims to finalise the statutory guidance and lay secondary legislation in the late Autumn and to commence the Duty provisions in early 2023.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 A fire and rescue authority is a specified authority, under the Duty, therefore it must ensure it takes actions to meet the requirements of the Duty. This report is to inform Members of progress being made in preparation for the Duty, and how Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) aims to for fill its responsibilities.
- 2.2 Whilst Police and Crime Commissioners are not a name specified authority in the Duty, the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner and office have taken on a co-ordinating function with regards to the Duty's

implementation. However, the Authority, as the Duty holder, will remain responsible for compliance with the requirements of the Duty. NFRS has representation on both the Serious Violence Reduction Board and the Serious Violence Duty Implementation Group, which is overseeing a co-ordinated approach to the Duty's implementation.

- 2.3 Emergency services are already subject to a statutory duty to collaborate with one another, with fire and rescue services (FRS) having a key role in these partnerships, often occupying a very trusted position in their communities. Collaboration with partners can aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence.
- 2.4 The Duty will ensure that serious violence is made a focus within existing multi-agency arrangements, this is the case across both the City's Crime and Drugs Partnership (CDP) and the County's Safer Nottinghamshire Board (SNB).
- 2.5 CDP and SNB partnerships will allow for collaboration between a much wider set of partners. This Duty will also introduce a requirement for local partnerships to establish their local problem profile and produce a local strategy specifically aimed at preventing and reducing serious violence.
- 2.6 The primary role for the FRS in the Duty centres on well-established work that the Service has undertaken with Children and Young People (CYP), supporting early intervention to keep young people safe and away from violence.
- 2.7 NFRS already undertakes work with CYP and is actively engaged in early intervention activities with both partners and as a sole deliverer. NFRS activities include:
 - Attending schools and vulnerable people's homes to educate on a range of subject areas;
 - Fire safety and road safety awareness programmes;
 - Visiting buildings where vulnerable people are supported, such as care homes;
 - Attending incidents as medical first responders and co-responders, and safeguarding others, by ensuring the wellbeing of those they encounter.
- 2.8 NFRS has a dedicated Education Team that works with schools, colleges and other providers to engage with CYP. The Service leads on 'fire setters' education and intervention, supporting young people, carers and parents.
- 2.9 All frontline service delivery employees are required to undertake / refresh safeguarding training on an annual basis, helping frontline employees to identify concerns and how to refer individuals via the appropriate pathways if required. Safeguarding leads within NFRS are trained to a minimum of Level 4 which enables efficient and effective threshold assessments, enabling referral pathways to either universal, additional, intensive or specialist services.

- 2.10 NFRS data and evidence from CYP work, on communities of interest such as fire setters, can play a central role in supporting the Duty whilst reducing fire risk. Whilst data sharing currently occurs, the Duty will require a greater level of data sharing between specified authorities, which has been identified and is being addressed by the Serious Violence Duty Implementation Group.
- 2.11 NFRS has a tradition of engaging with local communities to promote fire safety as well as wider models of community and individual engagement to support citizenship, community cohesion and direct support to vulnerable individuals and communities. NFRS's work with CYP is well established as a model to work with partners to use intelligence to identify CYP who are at higher risk of serious violence and engage them in interventions, activities and education which will reduce their likelihood of becoming involved with serious violence and associated anti-social behaviour.
- 2.12 As the role of the FRS has evolved and continues to evolve, its staff increasingly interact with the most vulnerable people within its communities, leading to the development of engagement activities and safety education which will develop life skills and inspire CYP to make positive choices about their futures.
- 2.13 FRSs are often able to identify the early stages of anti-social behaviour associated with deliberate fire setting. Data sharing and working across boundaries with partners can help to recognise, assess, and tackle anti-social behaviour and some of the underlying causes.
- 2.14 The Service has conducted a gap analysis regarding its ability to meet the requirements of the Duty. Whilst much of the fundamental requirements of the Duty are well established in NFRS current practices and activities, through working with partners and the implementation group, it provides an opportunity to not only review current practices, but to build on and improve current ways of partnership working.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications, all activities and responsibilities can be met through existing budgets.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are ongoing human resources and learning and development implications which require the Authority to ensure that its employees are suitably informed and trained to meet the requirements of the Duty.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken, however work undertaken by the broader partnerships as part of the Duty's implementation, should identify inequalities and adverse disproportionality which informs future activities of the Service.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are a number of crime and disorder implications that are aimed to be addressed by the Duty and its implementation and detailed within the body of the report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Authority is a specified authority, as detailed in the Duty, thus required to meet their responsibilities as set out in this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As a specified authority in the Duty, the Authority has a legal responsibility to ensure it complies with its responsibilities under the Duty. Failure to fulfil the Authority's legal duties could be viewed as a breach of duty.
- 8.2 The Authority is a valued partner amongst the various community safety partnerships that exist across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, failure to fulfil Duty requirements potentially damages the Authority's standing and reputation amongst partners.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are numerous collaboration opportunities that arise from the Duty, which are currently being given oversight by the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, and the Service involvement in the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire community safety partnerships forums.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the Fire Authority's responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty, and the progress being made by the Service in its preparation to meet the duty.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER