



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

REVIEW OF FATAL FIRES 2023

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 15 March 2024

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the fatal fire incidents that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service attended in 2023.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Damien West
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Tel: 0115 8388100

Email: damien.west@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact: Corporate Communications Team
0115 8388100 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The fire fatalities discussed within this report are per calendar year, in which 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2023 is the focus.
- 1.2 Not all incidents discussed within this report have yet been heard via His Majesty's Coroners' 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 2023 calendar year, there has been a decrease in fire fatalities from the preceding five years; four incidents resulted in four fatalities within 2023.
- 1.4 The average number of fire fatalities attended by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) from 2018 – 2022 (inclusive) is seven deaths per year.
- 1.5 The previous annual figures can be summarised in the table below:

Calendar Year	Number of Fire Fatalities	Number of Incidents
2023	4	4
2022	7	4
2021	7	7
2020	4*	3
2019	6	7
2018	10	7

Table 1: previous fire fatality figures 2018 – 2022, 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 every loss of life is a tragedy, it is also an opportunity for NFRS to learn lessons and, where necessary, adapt its approach to prevention and response activities, and engagement with partner organisations.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 One fatal fire incident occurred in January 2023, with two fatal incidents in June 2023 and one in December 2023. Of the four fatal incidents, three of these incidents took place in a domestic premises whilst one took place in a vehicle.
- 2.2 Of the four fatal incidents within 2023, two incidents took place in the Mansfield District, one took place in Nottingham City, and one took place in the Bassetlaw District. The four fatalities were adults over the age of 45; the youngest fatality was age 47-years old and the oldest being 61-years old.

- 2.3 Two of the four incidents were determined as accidental causation, with one being deliberate ignition and one where the cause remains as undetermined and under Police investigation.
- 2.4 NFRS's fatal fire (CHARLIE) profile was examined against the four incidents within 2023. A definition of this profile can be found in the appendix of this report.
- Two of the four fatalities lived alone.
 - All had underlying medical conditions, mobility impairments or mental health issues.
 - Three of the fatalities were known smokers.
 - Two had care and support packages in place from local health providers.
 - All four incidents had working smoke alarms, three of which were monitored systems.
- 2.5 Of the four fatal incidents, one address was previously known to NFRS regarding previous interaction. Work continues to raise awareness with partner agencies to ensure that referrals are made to NFRS for all vulnerable people, and especially those who are subject to in-home care provisions.

ACTIVITY IN 2023

- 2.6 NFRS commissions a Serious Event Review Group (SERG) following any incident resulting in death or serious injury from fire. The group is convened as soon as is reasonably practicable after a fatal fire or serious event has occurred to manage the Service's response. The group's responsibilities include reviewing the Service's response to the incident, planning for immediate prevention activities to take place, deciding on appropriate messages that the Service will put out to the media, interrogating systems to ascertain what knowledge was held on the person(s) involved and what information had been shared with partners, and ensuring that the welfare needs of attending crews have been met.
- 2.7 Community Reassurance and Engagement (CRaE) activities take place as soon as possible following a fatal fire to offer engagement at a time of heightened awareness of the local communities. This involves a high-visibility presence of response and prevention personnel in an affected area to carry out door-to-door visits.
- 2.8 Of the fatal incidents which took place in domestic premises in 2023, each area received a CRaE. This resulted in a total of 620 properties being given safety advice. Of these properties, 165 safe and well visits were conducted, with 39 smoke alarms fitted.
- 2.9 Where a serious but non-fatal incident takes place, CRaE activity will still be considered to reassure communities. NFRS also work with the 'Safer Houses' scheme to ensure that living standards and home fire safety within the private rental sector is supported.

- 2.10 The Service continues to fund a seconded Occupational Therapist from the public health sector. This role continues to work closely with prevention and fire investigation teams to identify trends and areas for collaborative working between NFRS and the NHS. This work aims to prevent future fires, injuries and ultimately fatal incidents, as well as improving a person's standard of living where required and reducing duplication and inefficiencies between partner agencies.
- 2.11 The CHARLIE fatal fire profile is continually reviewed to ensure this still reflects the demographic of fatal fire or serious fire injury incidents that NFRS attend. The CHARLIE profile questionnaire, used by NFRS staff and partners, is also analysed to ensure standardisation of the approach and identification of risks.

ACTIVITY PLANNED FOR 2024

- 2.12 The Service is undertaking a review of the CHARLIE profile in 2024 to ensure that the Service's identification of, and targeting of, those most at risk from fire continues to be accurate. Efforts will continue to educate partner organisations of the CHARLIE profile and when appropriate referrals should be made to the Service. Support from Members to continue promoting the CHARLIE profile and referrals from partner organisations is also seen as key.
- 2.13 Prevention staff will continue to focus on safety messages and proactive engagement with communities, linked to the outcomes from fire investigations, where criminal and Coronal limitations allow.
- 2.14 The Prevention Team has embedded links with Nottinghamshire County, and Nottingham City, Trading Standards teams. The work focuses on electrical appliances which may cause fires and highlighting trends which are fed back to manufacturers to allow for recall notices to be issued.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implication arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 The Service is committed to learning lessons wherever possible from serious incidents; both in terms of how the Service responds to the incident and work that has been undertaken prior to any incident occurring. The Service continues to undertake a robust approach to learning through the Serious Event Review Group and these improvements are tracked through internal governance.

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Prevention Department continues to closely work with the Service's Inclusion Manager and Equalities Officer to ensure that prevention messages are accessible for all diverse communities. Along with this, a full equality impact assessment will be undertaken alongside the review of the CHARLIE profile to ensure that the approach to directing resources to risk meets the needs of communities.
- 5.2 The contents of this report uphold the Fire and Rescue Service Core Code of Ethics by ensuring that the Service:
- Acts with Integrity by being open, honest and consistent in its approaches to dealing with serious or fatal incidents.
 - Acts with Dignity and Respect by ensuring that where lives are lost, those incidents are thoughtfully reviewed and lessons are learnt wherever possible to influence future actions.
 - Demonstrates Leadership by ensuring that the Service's focus remains on creating safer communities and that clear leadership is provided during these critical incidents.
 - Continues to Put Our Communities First by ensuring that the delivery of services reflects the changing needs of communities and that resources are effectively used to reduce the risk of injury and death from fire.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Service has an identified corporate risk of 'preventable deaths' which is mitigated by the learning highlighted in this report. The process and structures which are implemented, as outlined in this report, assist the Service in ensuring that all possible steps have been taken, in conjunction with partners, to prevent death or serious injury from fire and, where a fatal incident occurs, to ensure that learning is taken from the event to guide future delivery.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Collaboration activities between Safer Houses, Trading Standards and Nottinghamshire Police will continue to create safer communities. The Service proactively reviews fatal incidents with partners to ensure that all possible steps

have been taken to preventing such incidents and that learning is identified and acted upon where necessary.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX A

CHARLIE-P Profile:

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. stuck 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 bum 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:	