



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

2018 FATAL FIRES REVIEW REPORT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 22 March 2019

Purpose of Report:

To update members on the fatal fires that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) attended in 2018 and the Services response.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The number of fire fatalities in the county has been increasing since 2016.
- 1.2 NFRS attended seven fires in 2018 that sadly resulted in ten fatalities. Ten fire fatalities represent a significant number for Nottinghamshire as in the preceding four years the county averaged less than six (six in 2014, three in 2015, six in 2016 and seven in 2017).
- 1.3 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 All seven of the fatal fires occurred in the second half of 2018. There were five fatalities in Nottingham, one in Broxtowe, one in Gedling and three in Newark & Sherwood. Of the ten people who died, five were adult males, three were adult females and two were children (one girl and one boy).
- 2.3 Whilst being over the age of 65-years old is one of the key characteristics of the services fatal fire (CHARLIE) profile, in 2018 all those who died were under the age of 58 years old. However, other elements of the CHARLIE profile (care and support needs; mental health issues, alcohol misuse, reduced mobility, lives alone and inappropriate smoking) were evident in most cases.
- 2.4 Only one of the ten who died was previously known to NFRS. A Home Safety Check (HSC) had been conducted by members of the service's Persons at Risk Team (PART) at the male adult's previous address in October 2012. Whilst he was found to be at high-risk of death or injury through fire, the risk was mitigated by the advice given, a referral that was made for a monitored telecare system and the provision of a fire-retardant settee throw and set of bedding. The carer who had originally requested the HSC, was asked to re-contact NFRS should her client's situation change. No further contact with the service was received.

Activity in 2018

- 2.5 As a result of fatal fires that occurred in 2017, NFRS launched a Fatal Fire Review Group in 2018. This tasking group is convened as soon as is reasonably practicable after a fatal fire has occurred to manage the services response. The group's responsibilities include planning for immediate prevention activities to take place, deciding on the most appropriate messages that the service will put out to the media, interrogating systems to ascertain what knowledge we 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 communities heightened awareness of fire safety. The CRaE that followed the fatal fire in Newark and Sherwood saw over 30 members of staff, from Prevention, Control, Human Resources, Finance and Admin, join 22 appliance crews in contacting every household in Collingham. Over a four-day period, 171 Safe & Well Visits (SWVs) were conducted, 234 smoke detectors were fitted and over 500 leaflets were delivered.

Activity planned for 2019

- 2.7 Efforts will continue to educate partner organisations of the CHARLIE profile and when appropriate referrals should be made to the service.
- 2.8 In April NFRS will introduce a system by which vulnerable people within Nottinghamshire can be internally identified through various datasets (Mosaic, Exeter, Council, Western Power etc.) and directly targeted for a SWV. This will contribute to the Service increasing the amount of SWVs by 50% to 6000 in 2019/20.
- 2.9 The CRaE activity that took place in Collingham highlighted that smoke detector ownership in the village was as low as 57% prior to the intervention. In 2019 NFRS will interrogate its Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) and Incident Recording System (IRS) to identify other areas where smoke detector ownership is likely to be lower than the Service aims to see in communities. The identified areas will be targeted with Safer Houses campaigns.
- 2.10 Due to the probable cause of one of the 2018 fatal fires in Nottingham, and in conjunction with a national focus, NFRS will promote white goods safety in 2019. A meeting between representatives of the Prevention department and Trading Standards will take place in March to uncover how both organisations can work closely together on a joint campaign.
- 2.11 Three of the ten persons who died in 2018 did not have English as their first language. To ensure that our prevention messages are reaching all areas of our diverse communities, there will be a prevention focus on non-English speaking communities in 2019.
- 2.12 Introducing the next Strategic Plan from April 2019 will see the ambition of the Authority to 'Create Safer Communities' continue to be the key focus of officers, with particular focus on reaching the most vulnerable in communities and direct the Services reducing resources to have the greatest sustainable impact.

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

- 9.1 The Safer Houses activity provides an opportunity to collaborate with other organisations and Officers will proactively pursue this area of work.
- 9.2 The white goods safety campaign provides an opportunity for the Service to collaborate with Trading Standards.

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