

# Community Safety STRATEGY



**Defying Convention**



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## Introduction

The Government recently set out its vision for a preventative approach to fighting fire, taking pro-active steps to reach out to those members of the community most at risk. This document explains how Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service is fulfilling that vision, both now and in the future.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service is able to build on a tremendous foundation of community safety work. A number of years ago, our work shifted to helping the community prevent fire. It is to the credit of all involved in Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service that this initiative was made a reality. The significant outcome is that communities are safer today in Merseyside than would otherwise be the case. This is against the trend in any other comparable fire authority.

The opportunity is there to build on the success. The Fire Service needs to do more to reach the most vulnerable in the community. Arson is a growing menace with all its devastating consequences. Partnerships need to develop to become more effective and the fire service needs to extend its risk reduction strategies beyond just fire.

This strategy will be kept under constant review to monitor performance.

**Tony McGuirk**

Chief Fire Officer

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

## Background

In setting out a Community Safety Strategy it is important to be clear what that means.

A Community Safety Strategy is really about:

- being best at doing the things that matter most to the community;
- finding new and better ways of doing things to achieve the above.

Strategy is not the same as Strategic Planning. The planning process detailed near the end of this strategy document is designed to help deliver the strategy through a consistent, resourced and measured approach.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, no doubt along with every other Fire Service regarded itself as successful. Yet, for most organisations, the moment of greatest vulnerability comes when they experience, or think they experience, their greatest success – the danger of complacency. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service recognised back in 1999 that the aura of success was clouding the fact that far too many people were suffering the tragic impact of fire and this could be avoided.

At this point, Merseyside Fire Authority decided to re-invest and renew to meet the challenge of fire. *By staying with conventional approaches it is entirely predictable that there would be the conventional results of unnecessary fire deaths and injuries.*

The Authority decided to be **innovative** and **creative** with its Community Safety Strategy and encourage and foster that within its workforce. By definition, this created projects both in nature and scale that were uncommon, if not unique, in the UK Fire Service. For this reason, the strategy document describes these innovative schemes before showing the impact on the safety of the community.

We are determined not to become complacent, so this strategy document shows the new ways to make the Merseyside community safer and meet the ambitious targets that will be set.

‘The purpose of this document is to set out a strategy for Community Safety in Merseyside.’



## Supporting Government's Vision

**"Fire kills. Preventing fires saves lives and reduces injuries. Preventing fires also saves money. So it makes sense to protect people and to prevent fires from happening in the first place".**

Our Fire and Rescue Service, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, June 2003



This is taken from the introduction to the Government's White Paper on the future of the fire service. Part of the Government's vision is for a Fire and Rescue Service that:

**"is proactive in preventing fires and other risks, rather than simply reacting to fires;**

**"and acts in support of the Government's wider agenda of social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and crime reduction";**

This vision comes as no surprise to Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority nor the many people within Merseyside who have benefited from its services. Indeed the Government's vision for a modern Fire and Rescue Service is consistent with that adopted in Merseyside for some time.

The Authority's vision for the last four years has been to make Merseyside a fire safe community

and its Mission is:

*We will work in partnership with the community to provide a value for money service which will:*

- Reduce death, injury and loss of property due to fire and protect the people and environment including visitors to the region.
- Provide a high quality fire and rescue service within the resources available in accordance with the Best Value principles.



The following diagram illustrates the relationship between Government's vision and Merseyside Fire Authority's strategy:

### Activities

- Home Fire Risk Assessments to all domestic properties as a free service
- Promote residential sprinklers
- Work with the community to reach vulnerable people.
- Work in partnership with others
- Promote sprinklers in schools
- With the Police, deliver an arson strategy
- Run personal development programmes for disaffected young people
- Enforce fire safety law

### Fire Outcomes

- Reduce number of fire deaths and injuries
- Reduce fires & economic loss
- Reduce risk in the home
- Reduce deliberate fires
- Reduce the damage by fire in the community

### Government Vision

Prevent Fires  
Social Inclusion,  
Neighbourhood Renewal  
Crime Reduction

### Fire Authority Vision & Mission

Make Merseyside a Safer Community.

Work In partnership to reduce the impact of fire and provide a high quality fire and rescue service.

## The Challenge

**Speed of attendance alone is not going to reduce the tragic impact of fire.**

**£1.9 billion economic cost of domestic fires in England and Wales in 2000**

**40% increase of arson, 1996-2001**

The largest single cause of deaths and injuries from fire occur accidentally in the home. When domestic fires break out, they can spread so quickly that by the time the fire service arrives, it can be too late. In addition, the very nature of fire, with massive amounts of toxic smoke and heat, a person can quickly die even whilst sleeping. We achieve very high standards in terms of its speed of attendance at fires. However, in the six years between 1997 and 2002, on 88.89% of occasions we took less than 6 minutes to attend fires where, tragically, there was a fatality. This is powerful evidence that speed of attendance alone is not going to reduce the tragic impact of fire.

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speed of attendance is less than 6 minutes on 88.9% of occasions



Along with the personal suffering when lives are lost and the painful recovery period, the wider impact of fire is profound. Figures for the year 2000 estimate the cost of domestic fires to the economy of England and

Wales to be £1.9 billion. Contributing to this loss is the growing trend in deliberate fires. In the space of 5 years between 1996 and 2001, the number of deliberate fires rose by over 40% at an economic cost of £2.2

billion. A separate 'arson reduction strategy' document has been adopted by the Fire Authority to detail how this challenge will be tackled across Merseyside.

## fire does not discriminate?

**Wrong!** - It is a sad fact that fire discriminates. Research has shown that those most likely to be at risk from fire, whether accidental or deliberate, are in the lower socio-economic groups. The risk of death from fire is 16 times higher among children in the lower socio-economic group compared to children in the highest. Arson rates are 30 times higher in poorer areas with a 15 times increased chance of death compared to affluent areas.



It is also a sad fact that those most likely to die in a fire are reasonably predictable. Older people are particularly vulnerable to fire with the vast majority of fire deaths occurring in the over 60s age group. Often this is accompanied by other factors that add to the vulnerability such as mobility and sensory difficulties, and a lack of ability to respond to danger. Very often these people are known to other agencies working in the community. Other lifestyle issues affect the vulnerability to fire, including the use of alcohol and drugs and the general living conditions. We have recently published 'Fatal Fires Analysis', a document that gives more details of the characteristics of fatal fires.

The picture painted here clearly shows that fire does have a social dimension. It impacts disproportionately on the vulnerable in the community in the most vulnerable areas. These areas and people will share many other characteristics of vulnerable communities such as higher crime, higher unemployment, poorer access to services and other factors. The fact that relatively large areas of Merseyside fall within the highest ratings of social deprivation means that the challenge faced by us is probably greater than anywhere else in the country. But it is a challenge we can meet.





## Community Cohesion



Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has taken active steps to be a significant player in reducing the risk in the community and improve community well-being. After all, it is not just the immediate impact of fire in a community – tragic though that is – but there is a wider impact that threatens the cohesion of a community. For instance, a burned out car or derelict building leaves a scar as well as a hazard in the heart of areas where people live. Such a symbol can encourage other

unwelcome and sometimes criminal behaviour that creates a downward spiral of events. The loss of a school to a deliberate fire goes well beyond the building itself. Years of preparation work by teachers is destroyed along with irreplaceable work from students – heartbreaking to witness. Large numbers of pupils are displaced to other schools who may not have the capacity to cope with the influx so, potentially, the fire can damage a generation of children.

The term 'Community Cohesion' \* emanated from the work of Ted Cattle who led the inquiry into the Oldham, Burnley and Bradford riots in the summer of 2001. It is a difficult term to define but a **cohesive community** is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, and
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between different people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

\*Community Cohesion, The Report of the Independent Review Team, Home Office December 2001.

Whilst the riots in Oldham, Bradford and Burnley were dramatic, less obvious effects can be observed in communities lacking cohesion. These include high crime rates, prevalence of deliberate fires, youth disorder and vandalism. This atmosphere can contribute to a lack of trust for bodies representing 'authority' in society providing another barrier to repairing the damage to the community.



We, in common with the fire service nationally, generally enjoy a powerful 'brand image' that appears resilient even to a national industrial dispute. Whilst it must never become complacent, the fire service is associated as a helping hand and has access to all parts of the community. This creates tremendous opportunities for the fire service to be an excellent partner with other agencies working in the community. True partnerships recognise that no one agency or body, working in isolation, can solve the problems within a community. To work in partnership has required structural, organisational and cultural change in Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service. Firefighters and our other employees can be seen as positive role models whilst, at the same time, non-threatening.

However, the role of the Fire & Rescue Service should not be over estimated when consideration is given to the many other larger organisations working in the community. But it is a pragmatic organisation with a 'can do - will do' philosophy that makes it an attractive partner. Later sections will highlight how partnerships have developed to improve the safety in the community and how we can *build on that success*.





## Merseyside Fire Authority Response

In 1999 Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority made the ground-breaking decision to divert considerable resources into pro-active measures of reducing fatalities/injuries from fires and reducing the number of dwelling house fires.

The key elements and initiatives that formed the basis of these pro-active measures are detailed in the following sections:

## Home Fire Risk Assessments

The flagship of the Community Safety Strategy is the Home Fire Risk Assessment (HFRA). This is a free risk assessment of domestic properties within Merseyside, carried out by operational firefighters and is offered to every household in the area. The results of these HFRA's are usually that smoke detector(s) are fitted, free of charge and a 'fire plan' is discussed and agreed with the householder.



It must be emphasised that *we were probably the first, and certainly remain one of the few* Fire Services who offered this service to every householder in an ambitious plan in 1999 of offering an HFRA to each of the 560,000 households in Merseyside as part of a five year plan. The sheer scale of this endeavour is unique.

Over the last 3 years, nearly 200,000+ Home Fire Risk Assessments have been carried out across the Merseyside community. This has resulted in the fitting of over 250,000 smoke detectors and there is real evidence emerging that smoke alarms fitted by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service have alerted families to a fire in their home from which they have been able to escape.

For instance, around *10% of households alerted to a fire by a smoke alarm had it fitted by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service*. Nationally, 28% of homes that suffer fires have a working smoke alarm. In Merseyside it is double this figure.

This community safety activity is regarded by the Fire Authority and Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate, as a key element in a successful drive to reduce the tragedy of fire deaths and injuries within our communities. Our firefighters have embraced the concept of preventing fires and enabling members of the public to escape from fires. Local representative bodies have publicly recognised the value of HFRA's as an example of embracing change locally and numerous external visitors/auditors have reached the same conclusion.



## HFRA RISK CATEGORISATION

If the original assessment indicates a high-risk property, the case is forwarded to the Community Safety Section, who have a greater level of expertise in risk reduction principles.

(See Appendix) These may include the provision of a deep fat fryer to replace chip pans; safe sleeping blankets; flame-resistant bedding; specialised alarm systems and ultimately the fitting of residential sprinklers.

It is often the case that individuals in these high-risk properties are known to other agencies and in these cases "case audits" are arranged. The purpose of all these measures is to drive down the risks.

## Fire Service Direct

In September 2000, the Fire Authority approved another unique project - the development of telephone based services of trained call centre operators, who would target areas of Merseyside to book HFRA for firefighters to carry out. This freed-up fire station personnel to carry out HFRA as opposed to spending time on administration.

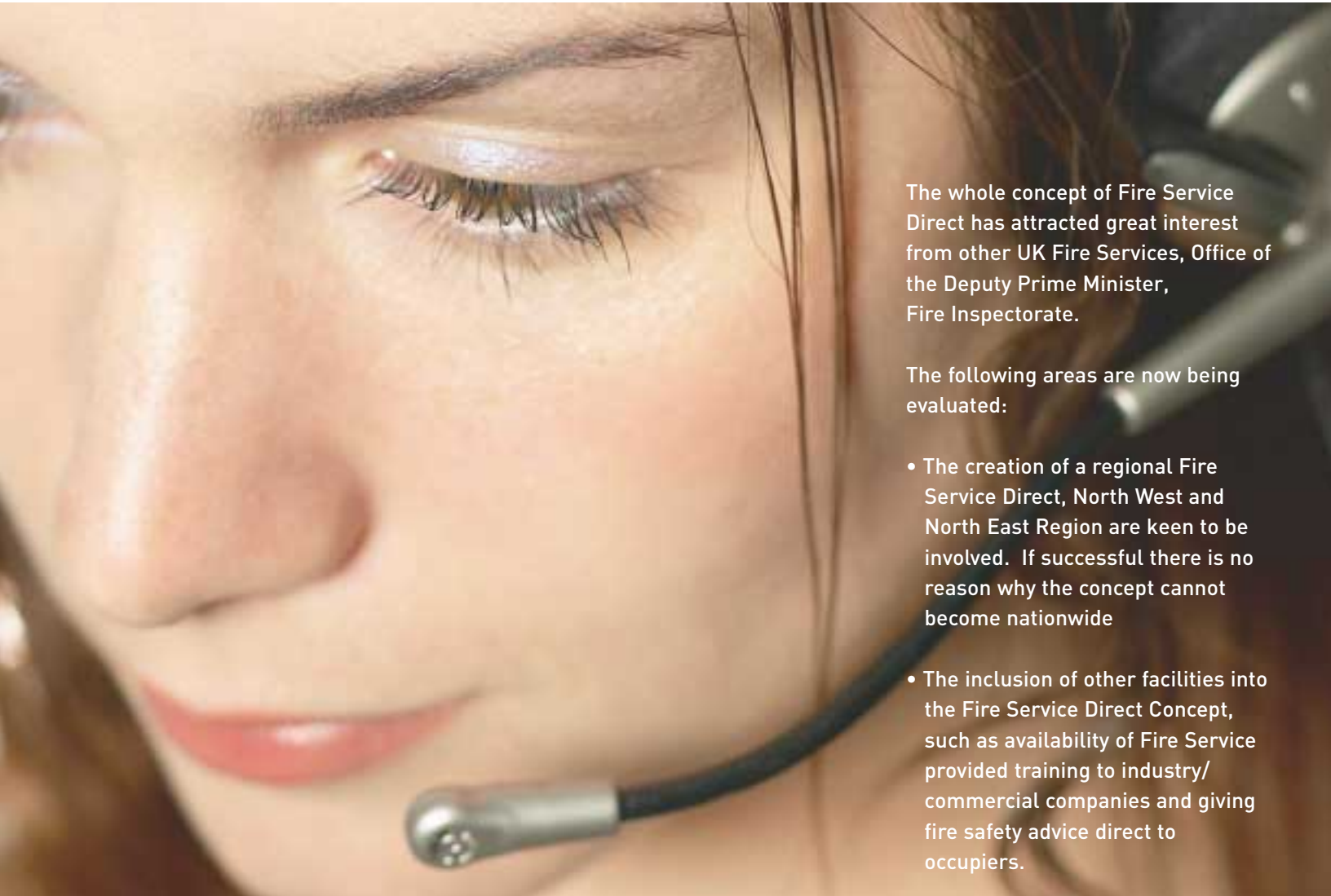


Service, a fresh direction

In a pioneering move, we contracted a call-management company, LOOP, to generate 60,000 HFRA appointments per year. LOOP has also created a database that will include all relevant information from the origin of call to completion of HFRA. It allows practitioners to target resources at the hard to reach vulnerable groups and communities. The historical information from the paper-based 160,000 HFRA already carried out is added to the database, thus allowing community safety personnel to interrogate the system. This will determine which of our community safety initiatives are successful, verify the timescales for HFRA being carried out, record the numbers and reasons for cancellations and areas of slow take up. It will allow practitioners to target resources at vulnerable groups and communities.

The freephone number is already used and widely advertised to enable members of the public to not only book HFRA appointments, but also receive other information about us, for example, recruitment advice.

0800  
731 5958



The whole concept of Fire Service Direct has attracted great interest from other UK Fire Services, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Fire Inspectorate.

The following areas are now being evaluated:

- The creation of a regional Fire Service Direct, North West and North East Region are keen to be involved. If successful there is no reason why the concept cannot become nationwide
- The inclusion of other facilities into the Fire Service Direct Concept, such as availability of Fire Service provided training to industry/ commercial companies and giving fire safety advice direct to occupiers.

## Working with partners

We are already working with partners to reduce the impact from fire upon communities across our region. Since 1999/2000, in excess of £1.4 million has been received in grants towards this effort. Partnership arrangements will continue to be sought with any organisation that assists us in achieving our vision and corporate objectives.

Successful partnerships and funding arrangements have been entered into with the following:

- Arson Control Forum
- Learning and Skills Council
- New Deal for Employment
- Local Education Authorities
- Safer Merseyside Partnerships
- Government Office Northwest
- New Deals for Communities
- Liverpool Housing Action Trust
- Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council
- Health Action Zones
- Community Funds

Other successful arrangements have been with:

- Merseyside Society for Deaf People
- Sefton Housing Development
- Pilkington's Pension Trust
- HSBC Bank
- Primary Care Trust

We are represented at the following:

- North West Accident Task Force
- Merseyside Health Action Zone
- Safer Merseyside Partnership
- Multi-Agency Governance Group
- Crime and Disorder Partnership
- Trauma and Injury Group
- Merseyside Racial Harassment Forum

Notable Successes include:

- Bilingual Fire Safety Advocates
- Fire Reduction through Engagement and Education (FREE)
- Over 60's Initiative
- Prince's Trust Volunteers
- Church Watch
- Friends of the Fire Service

The Fire & Rescue Service cannot work in isolation to achieve the aim of preventing fires. We continue to develop and expand on all partnerships already detailed above and explore new opportunities as they arise.



## Bilingual Advocates

Merseyside has a rich heritage of racial and cultural diversity, with Liverpool the home to some of the oldest and long standing black and minority communities in Britain, as well as to more recent patterns of immigration.

Being a region of marked contrasts, there is disparity between areas of wealth and areas of poverty, unemployment, urban deprivation with the associated conditions of widespread chronic ill-health. An analysis of statistics has identified that these areas are also those with the highest likelihood of dwelling fires.

For some of our communities whose first language is not English, the Fire Authority has employed bilingual advocates to improve our aim of encouraging all communities to access our home fire risk assessments. In this initiative the advocates give advice and complete HFRA's.

In March 2002, the Fire Authority approved the proposed appointment of Fire Safety Advocates from the Chinese, Somali and Yemeni communities. The fixed term contract appointments were in place by September 2002 thanks to funding from the Arson Control Forum, which is underwritten by The Fire Authority.

The Chinese community is the largest minority group on Merseyside and contains a significant number of non-English speakers. The Somali community was selected as the second biggest minority community, predominantly non-English speaking. The Yemeni population is slightly smaller, but employing Yemeni and Somali speakers enables HFRA work to be carried out in other Arabic speaking communities.



In addition to carrying out HFRA's the bilingual advocates advise their local communities on issues surrounding the reduction of arson in the area by giving talks and meeting key local leaders.

Further funding has been received to continue the initiative that is underwritten by the Fire Authority. We are looking to build on the success of advocates working in minority communities/groups of individuals and will employ more in the future to assist us in engaging hard-to-reach vulnerable groups.

## Fire Reduction through Engagement and Education (FREE team)

**In March 2002 the Fire Authority approved the creation of a team of six ("FREE" Team) from within the existing establishment, with the following remit:**

To set up a series of training programmes to tackle the root causes of fire in the community. Young arson-offenders often come from marginalised sections of those communities, and do not fully understand the impact that their actions have on local communities. They are often at risk of exclusion from school or have already been excluded. The courses are designed to help young people who pose a potential fire risk become the fire safe citizens of the future by:

- Educating socially-excluded young people in the importance of fire safety
- Helping arson-offenders understand the true consequences of their actions and prevent re-offending
- Providing positive role models and activities to help course participants develop confidence and self-esteem, and raise those aspirations

These programmes are aimed at saving lives and property – as well as saving millions of pounds each year.

Referrals to these courses come from a number of partner agencies such as Local Education Authorities, Youth Offending Teams, Youth Inclusion Programmes, Juvenile and Magistrates Courts.

The Fire Authority has agreed to underwrite the scheme, however, to date sufficient funding has been attracted to make the FREE Team cost neutral. We will look to expand the initiative and continue the courses.





## The Prince's Trust Volunteers Scheme (PTV)

In March 2002 the Fire Authority also approved the establishment of a partnership between the service and The Prince's Trust. The mission of the PTV scheme is to help young people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to succeed. They include young people marginalised through lack of qualifications, a criminal conviction or unemployment. The aim is to give these groups self-confidence, motivation and resilience to overcome difficult circumstances. By helping them to acquire these skills, assists towards these people achieving economic independence and employment.

We are now a Delivery Partner, with The Prince's Trust and have delivered 4 courses, each lasting 12 weeks, from our community central base in Kirkdale. The young people who have attended and completed the course have, in the main, been socially excluded 16-25 year old age group from the Kirkdale, Everton, Anfield, Kensington and Vauxhall areas of Liverpool.



The PTV have access to various funding schemes to cover the costs of the initiative. However, to demonstrate commitment to the scheme the Fire Authority has agreed to underwrite the partnership.

As a result of the success of the programme currently being delivered in Liverpool, The Prince's Trust, North West Region has approached Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service with a view to expanding the scheme to venues in the Speke/Garston area and in Knowsley that create the potential for running six more programmes a year.



## 'Church Watch' Initiative

In June 2002, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, in partnership with Merseyside Police, Church-Watch, Merseyside Fire Liaison Panel, hosted a seminar at the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. The aim was to raise awareness in the faith community of fires/crimes that occur in places of worship and put in place measures to counter the risks. The outcome was to launch a "Burning Faith" roadshow which is now being delivered to audiences at various meeting rooms in the region.

The opportunity is always taken to promote the HFRA campaign during the presentations that has the advantages of using attendees as advocates to assist in gathering referrals for HFRA's to assist Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service achieve the aim of reaching all communities.

## The 60's+ Youth Initiative



This is a high profile initiative that was launched in 2002, commencing April, with a completion date of October. The project is designed to encourage young people to assist to carry out HFRA's at the homes of older people. These are often the younger people's grandparents or relatives and tends to have the spin-off for the extended family of young people who become more fire safety conscious. In 2002 we carried out over 2000 HFRA's as a result of the scheme.



The Fire Authority gave approval to re-launch the initiative in 2003 and the project team have engaged Fire Station personnel to target schools in their areas, in addition to youth groups. The youth group or school who gain the most HFRA's will be guests at the Fire Service Safety Training Centre for a week, undertaking various Fire Service experiences.

## Community Safety Advocates

Whilst Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service personnel have made tremendous progress in accessing over 160,000 domestic properties in Merseyside, it is clear in any risk-based approach that HFRA's have to be targeted at the more vulnerable members of the community. Fire Investigation results reveal that often other agencies are already accessing these properties, eg social workers, health visitors. We are currently training such partners to be fire safety advocates who encourage their clients to ask us to carry out an HFRA on their property. This is already resulting in more referrals and it is anticipated that there will be thousands more for the most 'at risk' premises.

This advocate principle has been expanded to numerous groups of outreach workers such as:

- Faith Community Visitors
- Pilkington Outreach Visitors
- British Legion Members
- Vauxhall Community Advocates
- Age Concern Visitors
- One Stop Shop Staff

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has a recruitment strategy to attract the best candidates from all sections of the community. Emphasis is placed on selecting the right people to carry out all aspects of a modern professional firefighter,

Community safety training has been given to our trainee firefighters in recent times. In 2003, it became fully integrated into the training course and is given the same importance as the training given in firefighting and emergency incident response. A firefighter completing a trainee course in Merseyside is fully prepared for a modern fire and rescue service.



## Friends of the Fire Service (FOFS)



### [www.friendsofmerseysidefireservice.org.uk](http://www.friendsofmerseysidefireservice.org.uk)

FOFS was piloted in 2000 and then officially established in 2001. It is a registered charity and has been grant aided by the Home Office Active Community Unit.

The Friends of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service are a voluntary organisation predominantly based on individual community fire stations. Their main aim is to promote fire safety awareness within all sections of the community to help create a safer community. The objectives set for FOFS are:

- Recruit and train volunteer Friends
- Provide a friendly and accessible focal point of contact between the local community and the Fire Service
- Promote and raise fire safety awareness within all sections of the community
- Support the service's progress towards a fire-safe community
- Introduce diversity to the Fire Service
- Promote social inclusion

Currently there are 100+ active volunteers who are, in the main, working from nine of our Community Fire Stations - Southport, Bootle, St Helens, Kirkby, Old Swan, Toxteth, Speke/Garston, Birkenhead and Heswall.

In 2003/04 FOFS are planning to expand on issues such as HFRA leafleting, installation of alarms for deaf people, co-ordinate visits to fire stations, lead on fire safety projects with community groups, after fire care/service, local administration of HRFA forms.

## Community Safety Outcomes

In 1999 Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service adopted targets which had originally been highlighted in the Audit Commission document "In the Line of Fire" 1995. This had laid emphasis on Fire Services being proactive in preventing fires and other risks, rather than simply reacting to fires. It should be noted that the targets adopted by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service were more ambitious than those chosen by the Government at the time.

## CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

### Number of fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires

In 1999 the five year average over 20+ fire deaths per year in Merseyside. The ambitious target set was a 40% reduction by 2004 this equates to 12 accidental fire deaths.

Good News – Although each statistic is still a tragedy, the figure for 2002/03 was 12 accidental fire deaths in Merseyside. The ambitious target has therefore been achieved ahead of schedule and that success will now be built on to endeavour to further "drive down" these figures.

### Number of Serious Injuries in Accidental Dwelling Fires

In 1999 the five year average was 664 per year in Merseyside. The national target set was 5% year on year reduction

Good News - In 2002/03 the figure in Merseyside was 210, this is far in excess of the reduction targets set and further demanding targets have been.

### Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires

In 1999 the five year average was 1938 dwelling house fires in Merseyside. The national target was set to reduce these fires by 33% within five years, this equates to 1292 by 2004/05.

Good News – In 2002/03 the figure in Merseyside was 1590, which is a significant reduction so the target figure of 1292 is still achievable.



## Economic Cost of Fire

Taken from a Government document "The Economic Cost of Fire", we have developed an indicator that identifies how much can be saved, for the local economy, by reducing the number of house fires.

TOTAL COST OF ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES FOR <b>1999/00</b>		TOTAL COST OF ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES FOR <b>2000/01</b>		TOTAL COST OF ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES FOR <b>2001/02</b>		TOTAL COST OF ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES FOR <b>2002/03</b>	
April 1999	£3,735,000	April 2000	£3,442,500	April 2001	£3,195,000	April 2002	£3,217,500
May 1999	£4,410,000	May 2000	£3,870,000	May 2001	£3,892,500	May 2002	£3,037,500
June 1999	£4,567,500	June 2000	£3,600,000	June 2001	£3,375,000	June 2002	£3,037,500
July 1999	£4,252,500	July 2000	£3,240,000	July 2001	£1,980,000	July 2002	£2,767,500
August 1999	£3,712,500	August 2000	£3,510,000	August 2001	£2,902,500	August 2002	£2,947,500
September 1999	£4,027,500	September 2000	£3,420,000	September 2001	£3,060,000	September 2002	£3,000,000
October 1999	£4,162,500	October 2000	£4,050,000	October 2001	£3,577,500	October 2002	£3,127,500
November 1999	£3,915,000	November 2000	£3,735,000	November 2001	£3,217,500	November 2002	£2,835,000
December 1999	£3,780,000	December 2000	£4,072,000	December 2001	£4,230,000	December 2002	£3,285,000
January 2000	£4,252,500	January 2001	£3,825,500	January 2002	£3,825,000	January 2003	£3,127,500
February 2000	£4,387,500	February 2001	£3,375,000	February 2002	£2,812,500	February 2003	£3,082,500
March 2000	£4,027,500	March 2001	£3,420,000	March 2002	£3,307,500	March 2003	£2,925,000
<b>TOTAL COST FOR YEAR</b>	<b>£49,230,000</b>	<b>TOTAL COST FOR YEAR</b>	<b>£43,560,000</b>	<b>TOTAL COST FOR YEAR</b>	<b>£39,375,000</b>	<b>TOTAL COST FOR YEAR</b>	<b>£36,157,500</b>
<b>COST ON PREVIOUS YEAR</b>	<b>£247,500</b>	<b>SAVING ON PREVIOUS YEAR</b>	<b>£5,670,000</b>	<b>SAVING ON PREVIOUS YEAR</b>	<b>£4,185,000</b>	<b>SAVING ON PREVIOUS YEAR</b>	<b>£3,217,500</b>

The reduction in house fires is, we believe, a direct consequence of the ambitious Home Fire Risk Assessment programme. Therefore, not only are the horrible effects of house fires reduced, so is the cost to the local communities, both in monetary and environmental terms.

## Comparison with other Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Services

**Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service is placed in a family group of other Metropolitan Fire Services for performance figures. These are London, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, Strathclyde.**

We are bucking the trend, always producing outcomes ahead of the average for other Metropolitan Fire Services. This of course is particularly noticeable in the reduction in fatalities from fire.

This probably reflects the investment in community safety by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service with Home Fire Risk Assessments being offered to every household. This appears to have the effect of not only reducing risks in the households visited, but also raising the profile and awareness of fire safety in our community. In turn, this is now impacting on our vision: "To create a fire-safe community".

The latest Fire Statistics Monitor issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister indicates positive results from Merseyside, particularly in the following areas:

Item	Our Results	Other Metropolitan Authorities
All Fires	Increase of 9%	Average Increase of 12%
Primary Fires	Reduction of 1%	Average Increase of 4%
Secondary Fires	Increase of 15%	Average Increase of 19%
Accidental dwelling Fires	Reduction of 7%	Average Reduction of 4%
Fatalities in DFs	Reduction of 40%	No reduction in other areas
Malicious Fires	Increase of 3%	Average increase of 10%
Malicious road vehicle Fires	Increase of 6%	Average increase of 13%

## Strategic Planning

The vision and mission of the Fire Authority will evolve from that described earlier to better reflect the Government's vision for a fire and rescue service that reduces risk in a number of areas:

- **Vision Statement**

*To make Merseyside a safer community*

- **Mission Statement**

*We will work in partnership with the community to provide a value for money service which will:*

- Reduce death, injury and loss of property due to fire and protect the people and the environment including visitors to the region.
- Provide a high quality fire and rescue service in accordance with Best Value principles.

- **Aims**

*To contribute to the corporate aims we will:*

- Reduce the number of fires and other emergencies;
- Reduce the impact of fire and other emergencies on individuals, communities, the environment and the Merseyside economy.

- **Objectives**

*We will:*

- Reduce the risk from fire in domestic properties;
- Target those most vulnerable to fire;
- Reach and provide services to minority communities;
- Be a partner in community safety initiatives;
- Prevent, deter, detect, divert and prosecute potential and actual arsonists;
- Target properties most at risk from deliberate fires;
- Assess how it can best contribute to reducing the risk of emergencies other than fire on local communities;
- Be a positive role model within local communities;
- Enforce fire safety laws to improve public safety.

- **Specific Actions**

- Offer Home Fire Risk Assessments and, where necessary, fit smoke alarms to all households in Merseyside as part of a completely free service;
- Through HFRA's take additional action in high risk properties from a number of options (see Appendix 1);
- Promote residential sprinklers as the ultimate fire safety measure;
- Work with Government, local authorities, the sprinkler industry and other interested bodies to promote low cost, self-contained first attack systems, including partial property protection, to achieve a far wider use of this safety system.
- Through local initiatives and partnership working, gain access to the most vulnerable in the community, in particular, the older residents and those with physical and behavioural challenges;
- Create more fire safety advocates



## Strategic Planning Continued

from within local communities to deliver a more flexible customer focused home safety strategy. They will be representative of a target group by virtue of ethnicity, gender, age or other characteristics;

- Play an active role in the various local district and Merseyside partnerships where they are involved in community safety;
- Develop a pan Merseyside approach to reducing the risk from abandoned vehicles;
- Develop the partnership with Police colleagues to create a Fire/Police Arson and Fire Investigation Protocol, develop partnership working at Headquarters and Area level and devise common recording methods;
- Work closely with Police colleagues on an area and Merseyside basis to predict patterns of arson, investigate them professionally and seek successful prosecutions where appropriate;

- Identify those properties most vulnerable to an arson attack and, with the responsible person, carry out a joint arson risk assessment;
- Work with Local Education Authorities to promote school sprinklers as a cost effective risk reduction measure;
- Seek funding from Government and elsewhere to support the Authority's arson objective;
- Work with other youth agencies/bodies to influence young people on the dangers of arson. These include Youth Offending Teams, Youth Inclusion Programmes, alternative referral from the Courts and The Prince's Trust Volunteers;
- Promote Fire Service Direct beyond Merseyside to encourage the concept of a single point of contact for the Fire Service;
- With other partners, develop this strategy to include non-fire emergencies such as road traffic collisions, and how Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service could contribute in this area to reducing risk;

- Work with the existing and future employees of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service to develop their skills in the whole area of community safety including gaining maximum benefit from being a positive role model;
- In order to influence all parts of the Merseyside community, ensure the recruitment processes increase those from under represented groups.
- Continue with a risk based approach to fire safety legislation in anticipation of changes to fire safety legislation by virtue of a Regulatory Reform Order;
- Review the role of fire safety inspecting officers as a result of the settlement of the national pay dispute that takes account of the integrated personal development system and changes in duty systems.

## Measures and Targets



- The number of deaths from accidental dwelling fires.

*"The Government has set new targets in its White Paper to "reduce the number of fire related deaths in the home by 20% averaged over the 11-year period to 2010 compared with the average recorded in the five year period to 1999 – with no local authority fire brigade having a fatality rate more than 1.25 times the national average by 2010".*

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service will double the Government target to a 40% reduction averaged over the 11 year period.

- The number of injuries from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population.

The reduction will be continued. Specifically, the target for 2003/04 is 12.8 compared to 14.18 in 2002/3.

- The total number of calls to fires attended per 10,000 population

The reduction will be continued. Specifically the target for 2003/4 is 156.8 compared to 184.6 in 2002/3.

- The number of property and vehicle fires per 10,000 population

The reduction will be continued. Specifically the target for 2003/4 is 57.0 compared to 60.1 in 2002/3.

- The number of calls to accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings.

The reduction will be continued. Specifically the target for 2003/4 is 25.54 compared to 27.36 in 2002/3.

- Home Fire Risk Assessment carried out in domestic dwellings.

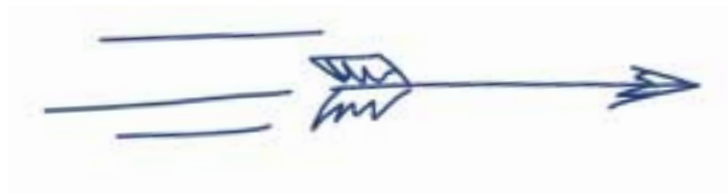
The target will be 60,000 HFRA's per year.

- To reduce the number of deliberate fires.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service will adopt the Government's arson reduction target to reduce by 10% the number of deliberate fires by 31 March 2010 from the 2001/02 deadline.



## Measures and Targets Continued



- The % of smoke alarms which operated in accidental dwelling fires.

The increase will be continued. Specifically the target for 2003/4 is 58% compared to 43% in 2002/3.

- Reduce the cost of accidental dwelling fires.

The reduction will be continued. Specifically the target for 2003/4 is £34,875,000 compared to £36,157,500 in 2002/3.

- Improve the working relationships with Merseyside Police.

Develop a Fire/Police Arson and Fire Investigation Protocol by December 2003.

- Work with those young people at risk of social exclusion.

Continue to deliver the youth programmes designed to develop self-esteem and community awareness.

- Increase the number of schools protected by sprinklers working with LEAs.

Achieve a commitment to sprinklers in the design of 2 new schools.

- Offer those schools most vulnerable to an arson attack a specific arson risk assessment.

10% of schools per district per year.

- Influence the current review of Building Regulations to include residential sprinklers.

Meet with senior ODPM officials.

- Increase the number of 'Fire Safety Advocates' from within local communities.

Increase from 3 to 20 by December 2004.

Appendix 1

"DOMESTIC HOME SAFETY MENU"

# Home Safety Menu

Typical Domestic Properties Home Fire Risk Assessment, Advice on Fire Escape plan and fitting of smoke alarms	£15.00
Chip Pan in use Provide Deep fat fryer	£20.00
D(d)eaf household Specialist Smoke Alarm	£70.00
Smoker in bed - possibly bedridden Safe Smokers Bedpack	£100.00
Mobility/Sensory Difficulties or behavioural challenges Create safe refuge with fire door, smoke hood and mobile phone.	£200.00
Increasing level of care required that wants to stay in own home. Self-contained, partial coverage (room by room) first attack system.	£300.00
High Risk - Vulnerable to fire, history of fires occurring. Residential sprinkler system for full or partial coverage depending on risk assessment.	£1000.00 -£3000.00





freephone helpline  
call Fire Service Direct:  
**0800 731 5958**

Community Fire  
Safety Department  
**FREEPOST**  
NAT 3926  
Bootle  
L30 4BR

[www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk)

