



Arson Control Forum

Topic	Deliberate Small Fires & Anti Social Behaviour
Title	Anti Social Fire Intervention Team
Service	Warwickshire FRS
Region	West Midlands
Date	2008

Issue

Historically, the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough have a disproportionate volume of Deliberate Small Fires (DSF) and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) activity, when compared to statistical evidence from the rest of Warwickshire.

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) and Warwickshire Police (WP) adopted a partnership approach to implement the Anti-Social Fire Intervention Team (ASFIT); a pilot with a specific remit to address the Anti-Social Behaviour and Deliberate Small Fires within the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough.

Data from both partners and the experience of serving officers was effectively used to target peak periods and geographical areas of activity within the remit of DSF and ASB activity. An analytical report using this data was produced by Warwickshire Observatory and data from this report was used to provide statistical evidence to identify and target 'hot spots' - additional statistical data was gathered using the following:

- IRS – The Fire Services 'national' Incident Recording System
- STORM – The Police Incident Log (comparison of Police data with data provided by the WFRS Performance and Intelligence Department (PID))
- WF&RS PID (provision of daily incident data to inform and target 'hotspot' areas).
- Performance Plus – A Fire Service data analysis tool (this was used to monitor performance and provide evaluation).

From this information it was decided that a targeted campaign in the Nuneaton and Bedworth district would be best suited to the dates 5th September to 12th November 2008 - over the Halloween and Bonfire period.

Actions Taken

The remit of ASFIT was to provide joint agency patrols (Fire Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) within 'hot-spot' areas. The ASFIT would attend incidents of DSF and ASB in lieu of a Fire Appliance or Police Unit to assess the incident and take appropriate action i.e. extinguish the fire or call for assistance. This was supported by robust call challenging protocols that were agreed with Fire Control and ensured that the correct attendance was made in the first instance. Whilst not attending incidents of fire or ASB the

ASFIT would actively engage with groups of children and youths to provide guidance in a positive manner.

Further links were forged between the boroughs' schools and WFRS. During the project schools invited Fire Service personnel into the school to engage and intervene with known fire-setters; this gave an opportunity for Fire Service personnel to speak to known individuals in an environment away from their peers and the associated pressure. This was a significant aspect of the ASBIT initiative and ASFIT pilot.

During the pilot ASFIT attended 316 incidents of ASB and DSF activity. This figure represents a reduction in fully crewed appliance movements and a reduction in the associated risk and cost that would be incurred by the community and the Service.

ASFIT attended and were involved in incidents of:

- Nuisance Small Fires - DSF
- Extinguishment of small fires
- Alcohol seizures
- Issuing of Police and Criminal Evidence forms (PACE forms)
- Groups of nuisance youths dispersed
- Groups of youths were engaged
- Regular patrols of "hot-spot" areas were carried out as a visual indicator of presence and as a deterrent to possible ASB activity

Summary of Benefits Realised

To correspond with the dates of the project, the statistics were calculated to reflect all DSF's recorded between 5th September and the 12 November 2008 and 2007

- In Warwickshire an overall reduction in DSF's of 49% was achieved.
- During the ASFIT pilot, the number of DSFs was **reduced by 63%** in the Nuneaton and Bedworth district and 82% in the Camphill area of Nuneaton, historically a known major hotspot
- A greater peace-of-mind for the local community, by having a visible deterrent in high output areas.
- No acts of violence, abuse or aggression towards operational fire crews or ASFIT members.
- Engagement of children and youths, not only those involved in ASB, breaking down barriers to communication and any negative perceptions of the Emergency Services changed.
- Further development of partnership working with local PCSO's and Police officers.

Contact

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