



# Arson Control Forum

<b>Topic</b>	Fireball
<b>Organisation</b>	Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service
<b>Date</b>	16.04.09

## Issue

To tackle the highest level of deliberate outdoor fires in the Service's area. These fires typically involve refuse, refuse containers, trees, bushes, motorbikes and cars. Research indicated that the majority of the smaller fires are set by young males between the ages of 9-13.

Given the high level of deprivation in the area, the majority of firesetting arises from peer pressure and bravado. The intention here is to cause damage and distress and is another form of anti social behaviour. Firesetters act with the knowledge that they are unlikely to be apprehended but without full knowledge of the consequences of their actions.

## Actions Taken

Fireball is a project combining five-a-side football and educational activities with the aim of reducing deliberate fire setting. The project involved 10 fire fighter mentors, 10 qualified football coaches and 76 local primary school children between the ages of 9 – 11. The participants were divided into 10 teams, with a fire fighter mentor and qualified football coach allocated to each team.

The mentors and coaches then took their teams through 5 weeks of training prior to an end tournament involving all of the teams. Training sessions occurred on a weekly basis and lasted for 2 hours, during which, time was set-aside to address the problem and consequences of deliberate fire setting. This was achieved primarily through discussion and video but was reinforced with a fire station visit.

The project was devised after local research indicated that most young people in this age category have a recreational interest in football. Football is used as a vehicle to engage young people who are involved in, or at risk of setting deliberate fires. The project takes advantage of the positive image of fire fighters to create empathy between those likely to start them and those who are involved in extinguishing them. This results in a greater awareness of the consequences on others of deliberate fire setting.

The project seeks to reduce deliberate fires by educating disaffected young people, who are a major factor in its incidence.

## Summary of Benefits Realised

Fire Analysis: in comparison to the previous year, there was a 58% reduction in secondary (small fires) for the year in which the project occurred. This compared to only a 26.5% reduction for the wider City area.

Knowledge Gain: in comparison to the start of the project, there was an increase in the knowledge of young people when asked about the dangers and consequences of deliberate fire setting. Of note, was an increase in understanding of the fact that everyone has a role to play in preventing deliberate fires.

## Contact

If you require any further details about the points raised in this case study, please contact:

**Name** Hiren Patel

**Title** Mr

**Organisation** Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service

**Email:** Hiren.Patel@LFRS.org

**Telephone:** 0116 2292119