



# Arson Control Forum

<b>Topic</b>	Arson
<b>Title</b>	Community Callback
<b>Service</b>	Cleveland Fire Brigade
<b>Region</b>	North East
<b>Date</b>	2009 - Current

## **Issue**

To combat deliberate incidents that occur in Cleveland a number of initiatives and toolkits are utilised across the brigade to reduce fire setting and highlight or target the offender. Fire investigation focuses on cause and prosecution. During all the processes that take place the victim is often forgotten, or remains an unheard voice/witness at low level incidents. Often these victims have previously tried to make themselves heard but with little success as has been witnessed in the tragic events relating to the death of Fiona Pilkington.

## **Actions Taken**

### **Community Call Back**

Following all arson incidents a member of the Arson Task Force will contact the incident caller to thank them for informing the brigade of the incident. During this call information is attained in regards to fire investigation, anti social behaviour and to offer further support, including a Home Fire safety visit. All the intelligence gathered is collated on a central database and communicated to the relevant person or department within the brigade for follow up actions to be implemented.

The database allows for the identification of repeat callers or victims of fire, by highlighting the number of times a given name or contact telephone number has been entered on the system. It has also highlighted issues regarding vulnerability in terms of anti social behaviour, deprivation and health. This information is passed onto our partners and a multi agency solution is often the result. Often it is the actual offenders we call who are then aware that we have their details and voice on tape. This obviously acts as a deterrent to future offending.

## **Summary of Benefits Realised**

To date the system has highlighted a number of repeat victims not only of fire but anti social behaviour and racial abuse within the community.

**Example 1:** The property owner was thanked for her call to the brigade and asked for any information that could assist in our investigation.

We were informed that she had contacted the Police with reference to grass on fire near to her property; they subsequently informed her to contact the Fire Brigade. She also informed us that youths had been throwing fire works at her windows and that she was concerned for the safety of the three young children who resided within her property.

We gained intelligence as to the name of a young person who the occupier witnessed setting the fire and later threw fireworks at the property.

The occupier received a Home Fire Safety Visit including the fitting of a safety letterbox due to the risk of firework attack on her property.

The intelligence gained during this call was passed to the Police Service and Community Wardens increased their patrols in the area and a visit was paid to the alleged offender. A follow up call revealed a greatly improved situation.

**Example 2:** During one call a number of issues were highlighted in regards to anti social behaviour in the area. The bushes at the rear of the property were set alight and the occupier felt under threat. They requested to remain anonymous for fear of comeback from her neighbour. The neighbour has two children (who are abusive towards her) and she is frightened to go out of her house at times. The caller stated that the occupants are sitting in the garden from lunchtime until midnight drinking alcohol and playing loud music while the children "run riot, causing mischief". The caller stated that other children are now joining in from neighbouring streets. She stated she felt better for speaking to someone for half an hour and letting off steam. The occupier received a Home Fire Safety Visit; all details were passed to supporting agencies and patrols increased in the area. Local Housing providers issued a warning to the neighbours and the situation has improved tremendously.

The introduction of this system has identified previously unattained intelligence and proven to be a critical support tool for protecting local communities.

## **Contact**

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

**Name** Barry Waller  
**Title** Group Manager - Head of Fire Engineering  
**Organisation** Cleveland Fire Brigade  
**Email:** [bwaller@clevelandfire.gov.uk](mailto:bwaller@clevelandfire.gov.uk)  
**Telephone:** 01429 872311

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