



Arson Control Forum

Topic	Community Engagement
Title	Firesetter Intervention Scheme (FIS)
Service	Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service
Region	South East
Date	2005 – present

Issue

In 1998 the Home Office commissioned a Scoping Study into the increasing problems associated with deliberate firesetting in England and Wales.

It was determined that the total weekly cost as a direct result of arson was in excess of £55 million. To this end a 'report of findings' was published titled *Safer Communities: Towards Effective Arson Control*. This report made 22 recommendations including the highlighted requirement to create a closer networking and communications link between the Police and Fire Services.

In April 2001 the Arson Control Forum (ACF) was created in order to unite the strategic approach towards arson reduction. However, this newly formed strategic bond failed to realise such results at local levels and therefore in December 2001 a further combined review was instigated by the HM Fire Services Inspectorate and the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.

The resulting review looked closely at how Police and Fire Services work in partnerships with other agencies to help combat firesetting behaviour.

One of the suggested areas of improvement was in the creation of Firesetter Intervention Schemes (FIS).

Actions Taken

HFRS has had a Firesetter Intervention Scheme (FIS) running since 1999 using a team of volunteers.

In December 2005 HFRS commissioned a rejuvenation project on the FIS and a scoping study report was completed.

This report recommended that a dedicated and contracted team of part time practitioners should be formed.

In November 2006 this new team went live and has now been running successfully with 20 part time practitioners covering Hampshire and 2 full time practitioners, one in Portsmouth, one in Southampton.

Summary of Benefits Realised

Main achievements of the scheme are:

- Engage actively with children and young people and their families
- Prevent and reduce fire crime and firesetting by children and young people
- Divert children and young people from fire crime and anti-social behaviour
- Educate children and young people and their families in fire safety skills and responsible citizenship
- Ensure that Fire and Rescue Service Staff working with children and young people are effective and professional suitably trained and who have had an enhanced CRB check to ensure they are suitable to work with children and young people
- Identify and disseminate good practice in working with children and young people

HFRS work closely with many agencies, due to the nature of working within a multi agency environment HFRS FIS is being asked to work more and more with other areas outside of children and young people.

This is due to recent unfortunate and tragic deaths of vulnerable people in our communities (Victoria Climbié February 2000, Baby Peter August 2007) where multi agency working had not been robust and effective at identifying and dealing with vulnerable groups.

In September 2009, 4 Safeguarding Officers (SGO's) were appointed to provide 24 hour cover for all safeguarding issues and concerns regarding vulnerable people.

The SGO's are fully trained in this area of work and give advice and or take responsibility of these concerns where appropriate. The SGO's will be working closely with Hampshire Constabulary's 6 Protection Of Vulnerable Adult Officers (POVA), Child Abuse Investigation Units and the Public Protection Units where appropriate.

The SGO will also be responsible for training up all fire crews and staff engaged with the public in vulnerable adult awareness and child protection training, this training will also cover honour based violence crime which is being delivered at the same time by Hampshire Constabulary.

Contact

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