

Report of the Assistant Director - Prevention

Prevention Cause of Concern – Action Plan Update

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update on the action plan created to discharge the Cause of Concern issued by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in relation to Prevention Activity.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the update on the action plan created to discharge the cause of concern in relation to Prevention activity is noted.

Introduction and Background

2. Following their inspection in 2021, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) issued the Service a Cause of Concern via a letter on 29 June 2021 from Wendy Williams (Lead Inspector). This states that:-

'Prevention Activity is not a sufficiently high priority for the Service and it is not adequately identifying those most at risk from fire.'

3. The recommendations from the HMICFRS were that the Service should have plans in place for:-
 - a) An effective system to define the levels of risk in the community.
 - b) The development and delivery of a prevention strategy that prioritises the people most at risk of fire and ensures that work to reduce risk is proportionate.
 - c) The review of systems and processes for dealing with referrals from partner agencies. This is to make sure they are managed effectively and the backlog of safe and well visits is reduced and resourced in accordance with risk.
4. The Service was required to provide the Inspectorate with an action plan by 31 August 2021 setting out how we intend to address the issues identified.

The Inspectorate will be revisiting the Service in February 2022 to review progress. The Assistant Director of Prevention has regular update meetings with the Service's representative from the HMICFRS.

5. The Prevention Improvement Panel (PIP), a cross Service panel created to support and discharge the action plan, continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis to review progress against the action plan and sign off items of evidence.

Action Plan Progress

6. The action plan centres on the main recommendations as outlined in paragraph 3 and is split into three objectives with each action having a measurable timeframe for delivery.
7. The action plan complements the Prevention Strategy which was launched across the Service in July 2021. It is also aligned to the National Prevention Fire Standard, which was also approved in July 2021.
8. The action plan confirms that significant work has already been undertaken to support delivery of the recommendations and a number of actions have been discharged and key milestones have been met. For example, the backlog of Safe and Well Checks was completed earlier than expected and after resource mapping analysis, SMB approved the increase of annual completed Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) to 8,520, setting targets for operational personnel and Prevention Technicians. This equates to 10.9 visits per 100,000 of the population.
9. SMB also approved the recruitment of additional posts within the Prevention Team to effectively resource these changes. Recruitment for these new posts will take place in the New Year with a view to postholders commencing from 1 April 2022 to align with the launch date for the new targets of Home Fire Safety Visits.
10. Work is progressing in line with the action plan to define and articulate levels of risk in the community and systems and processes for referrals are being reviewed. The Service has signed up to an NFCC Home Fire Safety Check online tool, which can be used for partner agencies to make referrals with a view to this commencing from 1 April 2022.
11. Service personnel and SMB have been regularly updated on progress of the action plan. Please see Appendix 1 for a copy of the action plan which is kept under regular review.

Conclusion/Summary

12. This paper presents an update on the action plan to discharge the HMICFRS Cause of Concern in relation to Prevention and identifies the key work streams still to be completed to make the necessary improvements.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Additional resources required to provide sustainable prevention services, as per SMB approval. Various departments to be included in this area of work.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	This directly links to the HMICFRS Improvement Plan, the Prevention Strategy and Response Strategy.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Risk assessments will be undertaken as required should recommendations to alter prevention service delivery be required. The Prevention Cause of Concern has been added to the Prevention Department Risk Register and has also been escalated to sit on the Strategic Risk Register.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Employees and representative bodies will be kept apprised of developments as the action plan is created via JCC.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	An impact assessment will be completed as required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	An impact assessment will be completed as required.

Supporting information

Appendix 1 – Prevention Cause for Concern Action Plan