

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 stated 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 provided the Inspectorate with an action plan setting out how the issues would be addressed. The Assistant Director of Prevention has regular update meetings with the Service's representative from the HMICFRS. The most recent meeting was held on 27 April when the Inspectorate confirmed that they would like to conduct a short revisit to triangulate evidence, talk with relevant people and look at the systems and processes now in place. It is proposed that the revisit will take place in Autumn 2022.

Action Plan Progress

5. The Prevention Improvement Panel (PIP), a cross Service panel created in July 2021 to support and discharge the action plan, held its final meeting on 23 May 2022, having completed all 37 items from the initial action plan.
6. The Service will now focus its attention on embedding these actions, reviewing key performance indicators and quality assuring newly created processes to ensure continual growth and refining of actions against risk.
7. The Prevention Improvement Panel has evolved into a monthly Prevention Strategy Meeting focusing on reviewing trends and on embedding the Prevention Strategy across the Service.
8. On 7 June 2022, representatives from West Midland Fire Service (WMFS) undertook a peer review of HWFRS' delivery against the Prevention Cause of Concern Action Plan and related documents.
9. Their role was to act as a 'critical friend' to review the approach taken to address the Cause of Concern and supporting evidence documents. Initial comments were positive from WMFS representatives who felt confident that the evidence presented showed the progress the Service have made since the Cause of Concern was issued. They will now be making formal recommendations and will provide feedback based on discussions.
10. Any recommendations from WMFS will be considered and formulated in to an action plan. These will be continually monitored, reviewed and updated accordingly.
11. The Prevention team have been considering alternative ways to target Prevention activities to increase the number of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) the Service undertakes to achieve the target of 8580 per year. Service volunteers have been attending events across the two counties to generate HFSVs and promote fire safety. This includes attendance at Covid vaccination clinics and supporting Firefighters Charity events at prime locations such as local supermarkets and city centres.
12. The NFCC Home Fire Safety Check Online Tool was adopted in April 2022. HWFRS is one of only eight Services nationally that have adopted the tool so far. This is available on the Service website for members of the public and partner agencies to access information and make referrals for a member of the Fire Service to visit. Prevention staff are promoting this across the partnership network and Corporate Communications have shared this using local media and social media platforms. To date this has had 550 hits and generated 75 Home Fire Safety Visits as well as providing a personal fire plan to 100 individuals.
13. The NFCC Person-Centred Framework (PCF) provides guidance for all Fire and Rescue Services to develop a consistent and evidence-based approach to conducting a person-centred Home Fire Safety Visit and was adopted by the

Service in April 2022. Over the coming year the Prevention team will be focusing on embedding:

- The process for standard data collection (from the Home Fire Safety Visit)
 - The process for obtaining evaluation and feedback following a visit
 - Quality assurance of Home Fire Safety Visits for Prevention Technicians and operational crews
 - A further triangulation of local definitions of risk (in line with best practice) and aligning this to a national definition of risk with PCF guidance.
14. Prevention Champions are now in place at every Wholetime Station and are the main point of contact to communicate prevention aims, plans and information to teams at each operational location to embed and sustain a comprehensive prevention service to the local community.
 15. Service personnel and the public continue to be regularly updated on progress in line with the internal and external communications plans which have been created. Alternative methods of marketing and communications have been developed to share Prevention aims and objectives and to promote the Home Fire Safety Visit. This includes designing new Prevention literature to share with communities and partners and linking across our network of partners to promote the Prevention Services on offer.
 16. Please see Appendix 1 for a copy of the most up to date action plan.

Conclusion/Summary

17. This paper presents an update on the action plan to discharge the HMICFRS Cause of Concern in relation to Prevention and identifies that the key work streams on the Action Plan have now been completed.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<p>Additional resources have been approved to provide sustainable prevention services. Various departments to be included in this area of work.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).</p>	<p>This directly links to the HMICFRS Improvement Plan, the Prevention Strategy and Response Strategy.</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed</p>	<p>Risk assessments will be undertaken as required should recommendations to alter prevention service delivery be required.</p>

control measures and risk evaluation scores).	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.
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 of Concern Action Plan