



Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service

The Prevention Partnerships Annual Report 2022



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Partnership Management

The Fire and Rescue National Framework (2018) outlines the national requirement for fire and rescue services to work in partnership with a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver services and manage community risk via prevention and protection activity.

For many years, working with key partners has proven to be a vital component in delivering prevention objectives and managing community risk. The partnership arrangements in place support the provision of risk reduction services offered including home fire safety, arson reduction, road safety, working with children and young people and improving health and wellbeing.

There are many benefits to working collaboratively with trusted agencies, including maximising the use of limited resources, building capacity, enhancing delivery, sharing critical information and promoting good practice. Working with carefully selected partners, challenges Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS, the Service) to work more innovatively and draw upon the expertise of industry professionals. It also creates opportunities to explore different ways of engaging with communities, develop skills and create fresh concepts. Partnerships that consider and promote equality and diversity are also central to eliminating barriers that prevent access to services, information and employment. All new CFRS partnerships are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to ensure accessibility and promote equality and diversity.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service defines partnerships in four ways:

Collaboration: A voluntary arrangement providing a forum for cross-agency discussion and information sharing. The Service will have no direct powers or specific responsibilities to achieve outcomes.

Statutory Collaborations: Requirement for co-operation between local partners to agree and deliver national or local priorities set down by statute. The partners are defined and national and local funding is directed towards achieving shared priorities and outcomes.

Joint Delivery: Services are delivered jointly with other organisations. Additional capacity or efficiencies are achieved through partnership working. Responsibilities are documented in service level agreements.

Strategic: Set up to deliver specific, jointly agreed, possibly time-limited outcomes. Aims to better align and streamline ways of working to ensure resources are better allocated. There are usually formal governance arrangements in place. Co-operation is sometimes dependent on member organisations working together voluntarily (non-statutory).

Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Service employs a dedicated Partnerships Coordinator who oversees the Partnership Policy and management arrangements with Prevention teams. Live partnerships are managed through our internal database system, the Cheshire Planning System (CPS). Each partnership record contains; legal agreements, progress updates, associated risk management information, outstanding actions, review and monitoring documentation and is held on record in an accessible format. The system provides a platform that allows partnership managers to easily record and review outputs and outcomes, which is critical to measuring the success of the partnership and providing ongoing resilience to workstreams.

Each partnership is subject to a cyclical review process, which is carried out by the Partnership lead to maintain optimum performance, manage issues and resolve problems as they arise.

Included within this report is an overview of performance of some partnerships during the 2021-2022 financial year, led by the prevention teams including those involving seconded staff, and additional funding.

Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation Updates

The Prevention and Protection Department introduced the Prevention Partnership Board in July 2022 to provide more formal support to partner leads in the monitoring and ongoing governance of prevention partnership and collaboration activity. Membership of the Board includes representatives from across Prevention teams and governance departments such as Information Governance and Legal.

Following heavy involvement with COVID-19 activity within Prevention workstreams, the Board has provided a formal structure to support the re-introduction of collaborative activity. The Board provides the opportunity to discuss the status of the Prevention Partnership toolkit, review and evaluate current activity, consider local and national contexts, new partnership activity and driving forward improvements.

Progress to improve the partnership toolkit utilised by the Department is ongoing and supported by ISO 9001 recommendations. Upcoming improvements will include the introduction of specific tabs within the toolkit to record contact details and lessons learnt, alongside the ability to record different types of collaborative working (data sharing agreements, contracts, light touch collaborations) in different departmental workstreams. A partner feedback form template will be used to invite independent feedback from partner agencies regularly going forward and guidance on a document to support evaluating partnership activity has been created. The Protection team are considering utilising the Partnership toolkit to support their collaborative working activity in the future.

The Partnership Policy will be updated later this year and will reflect the above updates, once implemented.

Partnership Overview and Performance

Early Help and Prevention Partnership

For several years, a seconded member of staff from the Prevention Community Safety team (Family Fire Engagement Officer) has worked in the Early Help and Prevention department at Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority (CWAC). The department offers a wide range of services for families including supporting young people and children with specific risks. Support for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, family intervention, youth work and home safety are some of the services utilised. The primary objective of the role is to work with families and individuals in relation to fire prevention, feeding into a wider agenda of improving preventative health and wellbeing and reducing the likelihood of complex issues occurring.

2021-2022 Performance

The Family Fire Engagement Officer supported the family intervention team by completing Safe and Well visits and risk assessments. In total 243 Safe and Well referrals were made during the year.

Referral numbers were similar for Ellesmere Port (90) and Winsford and Northwich (99) but lower in Chester (50). At the time of running the report, of the 243 referrals, 113 referrals were completed, 92 had closed due to the family declining and/or non-engagement and 37 referrals were open whilst the Advocate attempted contact with the family, 3 were out of area. Over the course of the year 134 smoke alarms were fitted by the postholder. Fireproof letter boxes were also installed at 30 properties to help reduce the risk of a fire developing within a property (e.g., due to a threat of arson, Chart 1).

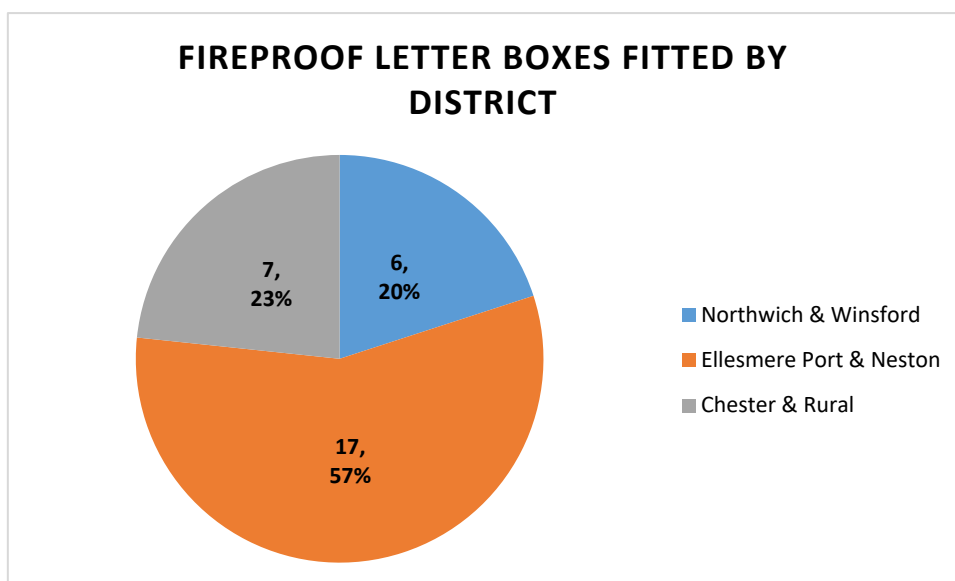


Chart 1: Fireproof Letterbox Data: April 01 2021 – 31 March 2022

Completed Safe and Well visits included 8 properties, which were deemed high risk, and additional risk assessments were completed. These were highlighted due to issues such as significant hoarding or fire setting behaviour.

Outlook

The Family Fire Engagement officer role was established in CWAC in 2015 and is reviewed annually. Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority evolved their reporting in March 2022, introducing a new referral form for Safe and Well visits within their electronic systems. The new form supports the gathering of data related to the risks and hazards posed within properties so overall fire risk can be determined (low, medium, high) and evaluated within the new reporting year. Partnership leads within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service are supporting the ongoing evaluation of the role prior to its potential renewal in March 2023.

Health and Wellbeing Partnerships through Safe and Well activity

Safe and Well (SAW) visits screen individuals who may be at heightened risk of fire due to several contributory factors. Working with statutory and third sector partners and with householder consent, individuals are also invited to discuss topics related to their health and wellbeing. The service then signposts or refers eligible residents for further support or information in relation to the following:

- falls,
- alcohol and smoking cessation,
- loneliness and social isolation,
- affordable warmth,
- atrial fibrillation
- high blood pressure.

2021-2022 Performance

Safe and well visits recommenced in March 2022 following a period of amended delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2021-2022 financial year, 74 referrals were made to partner organisations (see table one below) for further support for residents, with 448 residents screened for loneliness and social isolation (268) or atrial fibrillation (180).

	Cheshire East	Cheshire West and Chester	Halton	Warrington	Total Referrals
Falls Referral	6	4	10	12	32
Smoking Referral	1	1	1	2	5
Alcohol Referral	0	0	0	1	1
Affordable Warmth Referral	2	2	8	3	15
Atrial Fibrillation Referral	1	0	0	12	13
BP Signposts	0	0	0	0	0
Loneliness Referral	2	0	5	1	8
Total Referrals	12	7	24	31	74
Visits Completed	3642	3834	1760	2247	11484

Table 1: Safe and Well Referrals: 2021-2022

Outlook

In April 2022, Safe and Well delivery resumed in accordance with Business-as-Usual activity following the COVID-19 pandemic. All workstreams of the visit were re-introduced, from 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022, 214 referrals have occurred to partner organisations to offer onward support to residents.

The Service commissioned an evaluation report led by Dr Julian Clarke of Edge Hill University to review the impact and effectiveness of the Blood Pressure testing partnership with health.

The research used public value methodology to evaluate the outputs and outcomes of the partnership and considered four main areas:

- Strategic adaptability
- Capacity for innovation
- Understanding views of stakeholders and staff
- Outputs and Outcomes (including cost benefits).

The report concluded that the blood pressure testing has been an important addition to the Safe and Well programme and was a worthwhile use of Service resources. The research showed real and tangible savings and cost benefits for householders and health partners and contributed to broader health agenda pan-Cheshire. The research also suggested some areas for improvement to further strengthen the work. This included training for new staff and performance management recommendations.

Blood pressure and atrial fibrillation work will be temporarily paused whilst new equipment and further training is rolled out to staff in line with recent structural and policy changes within health.

Discussions with an integral Safe and Well partner, Energy Projects Plus (EPP) confirmed they have capacity to support an increase in affordable warmth referrals from the Service over the Winter Period. This is following a successful bid EPP sourced earlier this year from the Energy Saving Trust for additional resource. The successful application was supported by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and provides two years funding for a “Warm and Well” programme, raising awareness and providing new dedicated support to help residents with the “Cost of Living” Crisis.

The programme aims to support residents in reducing their energy demand, access financial support, understand and manage fuel bills and participate in the energy market when competitive tariffs recommence. Energy Projects plus is committed to supporting households across Cheshire with telephone and face -to-face advice and casework support, also training frontline and community staff, delivering home visits, and creating regional forums to increase collaborative approaches to tackling the fuel crisis.

Supporting the Community through the Covid-19 pandemic

In March 2020, the Service made a commitment to support third sector and statutory partners throughout the pandemic by helping them to provide essential items, health care provision, welfare support and education supplies to support community continuity and prevent crisis.

In February 2021, The Service further enhanced its offer to health partners, via the provision of firefighters and fire staff to support co-ordination and vaccination at COVID-19 vaccination clinics.

The Community Safety team also supported the continuation of elective surgery at hospitals within the region from September 2020 by delivering COVID-19 swab tests to patients' homes for completion, prior to returning them to hospital laboratories for testing before the patient attended hospital for surgery. Prevention Department volunteers also supported this workstream by driving NHS staff to patients' homes to complete the swab and returning the staff member to the hospital.

2021-2022 Performance

The central COVID-19 Community Support Management Team (CSMT) continued to manage requests from partners relating to support the Service could offer. Within the team, Single Points of Contacts (SPOCS) were appointed aligned to specific workstreams and managed requests based on this.

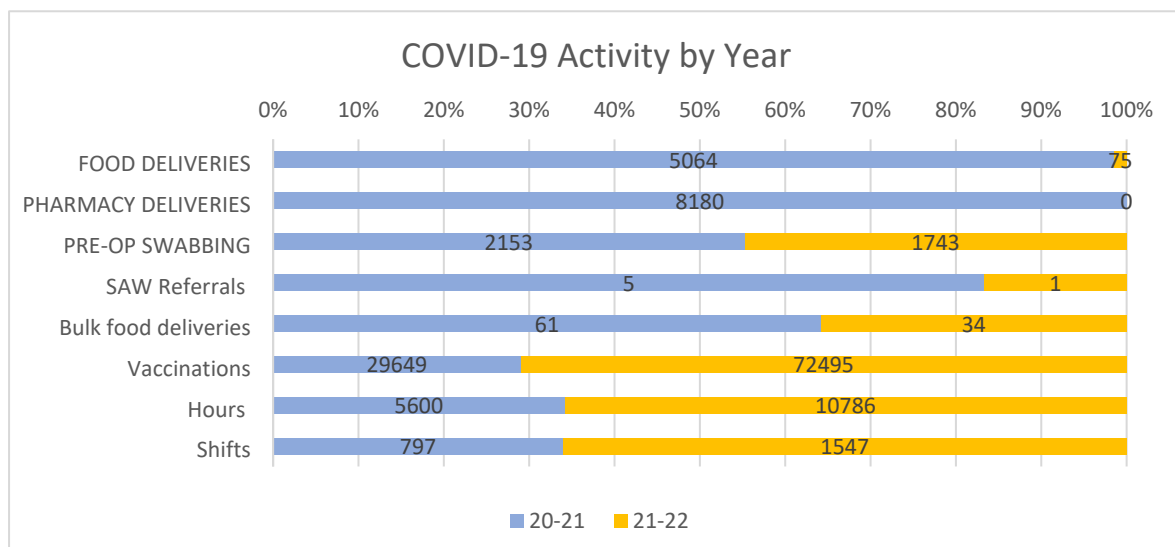


Chart two: COVID-19 activity by year

Chart two above shows the trend change in community support requests as the Service moved through the pandemic, 2020-2021 saw heavy involvement in initiatives to help keep people safe and at home, whereas 2021-2022 saw the Service support more preventative health activities to help control the spread of COVID-19, and maintain community and business resilience.

Requests mirrored the pandemics course nationally with requests from health partners becoming more frequent than requests from local authorities and third sector organisations.

During the year, The Service contributed the following resilience to partner organisations (table 2):

Workstream Support	Activity totals:
Food Deliveries	109
Pre-Operative COVID-19 testing	1,743
Welfare packs to Veterans	18
Vaccination Support	
	Activity totals:
Number of Hours	10,786
Number of Shifts	1,547
Number of Vaccinations	72,384

Table two: Overview of 2021-22 COVID-19 support

Outlook

All Covid community support, aided by the Service ceased as of 31st March 2022. The Service commissioned an evaluation report led by Dr Julian Clarke of Edge Hill University to review the response provided by CFRS during the pandemic.

The research comprised qualitative research and interviews with Cheshire FRS staff delivering the work, partner agencies and analysis of CFRS data. It also comprised quantitative research looking at CFRS data.

In particular, the research and evaluation work examined:

- Strategic adaptability
- Capacity for innovation
- Understanding views of local authority and health managers and Cheshire FRS staff
- Outputs and Outcomes (including social value)

Recommendations related to prevention partnership activity were given within the report and include the following:

1. If support work is to be offered in future emergencies using the pandemic model, critical reflection should take in a review of the working of the structure developed to underpin community support work.
2. A review should occur to look at the recording of outputs, how they are done and by whom. The Service should examine how collaborative responsibility and action on the recording of information can be made more effective.
3. Introduction of a planning function to support not just short-lived emergencies but long terms ones which may impact all Cheshire communities should be considered.

4. It would be useful to review different partnership arrangements in the four local authority areas and determine what accounted for the variation in work requested and undertaken.
5. There would be value in a Prevention Department day/half day conference with all prevention staff invited to discuss the issues and discuss how to take forward collaborations and learning from partner and community engagement

Analysis of how to take these recommendations will be taken forward is currently being considered by the Prevention and Protection Department management team.

Safety Central Collaborations:

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The trust utilised Safety Central's First Aid/Quiet Room to hold antenatal appointments for expectant women living in the Lymm area and work with Safety Central to support accident prevention education to expectant parent's.

2020-2021 Performance:

The trust previously utilised Safety Central's First Aid/Quiet Room as part of a trial to confirm its appropriateness for antenatal appointments. The room was well used by the midwives and expectant parents. The work was paused whilst formal governance arrangements were put in place to support the longevity of the collaboration and the clinic will recommence shortly.

It is hoped that the NHS trust and Safety Central staff can collaborate to support accident prevention education to expectant parent's and relevant documentation is being put together to support this.

Scottish Power Energy Networks

SP Energy Networks provided Safety Central with a mock substation to demonstrate the dangers of entering compounds, and overhead cables in the centre's countryside area. These simulations are used in a number of safety and life skills programmes at the centre.

The company also provides a monetary donation each year to Safety Central, to support the running and development of the volunteer ranger programme.

This supports both safety education locally and supports SPENS OFGEM obligations to actively support community development and the promotion of public safety.

2020-2021 Performance:

SPEN continue to support the promotion of public safety at the Centre. Governance documentation is currently being renewed to support the continuity of the Volunteer Ranger programme.

Current Work streams

Prevention staff are currently working with a range of organisations to support and enhance the safety of the community.

The Service works with many different organisations daily, although these do not always warrant full partnership documentation as detailed in the policy.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Partnership Leads are currently working to review and update the governance arrangements around some of their “business as usual” partnership activity, which paused whilst the Service focused its efforts on community resilience to the COVID-19 virus. The Partnership Co-ordinator and Partnership Leads constantly look to improve partnership activity via enhancements in the quality of recording, feedback from partner agencies and improvements identified via external auditing agencies such as NQA (ISO9001 accreditation) and His Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

In addition to this the Prevention Community Safety team are exploring a preliminary collaboration relating to modernising the way we use data to inform and stratify fire risk.

This work is ongoing with colleagues from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and the “Combined Intelligence for Population Health Action” (CIPHA) programme, an NHS funded regional business intelligence platform within Cheshire and Merseyside with information from all parts of the care system (acute trusts, GP practices, community trusts, mental health trusts, local authorities and emergency services) providing consistent outputs (at least daily where required) to care organisations.

The collaboration will look to provide “real time” health fire risk stratification scores related to unique property reference numbers (UPRN) within East and West Cheshire, Halton and Warrington with data updated at least quarterly. The working group is currently awaiting the finalisation of the Data Sharing Agreement and is taking steps to perform pilot activities within certain areas, whilst also ensuring that the system aligns with other risk stratification processes in use by The Service.

The Prevention Community Safety team have also attended an exploratory Cheshire Hoarding Improvement Consortium event which looks to replicate learning from Merseyside, in Cheshire. The Consortium aims to support and improve outcomes for people with hoarding tendencies by reducing associated stigma, enabling group support sessions that encourage mutual aid and motivational change and encouraging multi-agency service improvements and evaluations. The

Consortium was attended by individuals with hoarding tendencies, local housing associations, local authorities, health agencies and fire service representatives who were challenged to take forward the learning from other areas and implement it within Cheshire.

The Community Safety team are also in regular contact with Local Authorities to explore how The Service can support the “Cost of Living” crisis, talks are currently ongoing relating to the distribution of Winter Warmth packs, the use of Safe and Well visits to promote the flu jab to over 65’s and offer an onward referral to Energy Projects Plus and the use of data to support those most vulnerable to the cold during the winter period.

The Service is also a member of boards such as the CWAC Domestic Abuse Partnership, Cheshire Anti-Slavery Partnership and the Cheshire and Merseyside No More Suicide Board. The Service aims to work closely with other member organisations and collaborate on any specific areas of work from these partnerships, which can enhance the offer to the communities of Cheshire.