



Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service

The Prevention Partnerships Annual Report 2022 - 2023



Contents

Partnership Management	3
Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation	4
Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation Updates	4
Partnership Overview and Performance	5
Early Help and Prevention Partnership	5
Health and Wellbeing Partnerships through Safe and Well activity	6
Safety Central Collaborations:.....	9
Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	9
Scottish Power Energy Networks	9
Current Work streams	9

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, ensures Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS), (the Service) works more innovatively and draws 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, diversity and inclusion 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).

CFRS 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.

These records are also able to be scrutinised by external agencies such as HMICFRS and to affirm our commitment to the NQA (ISO9001 accreditation) standards.

Included within this report is an overview of partnership performance during the 2022-2023 financial year.

Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation Updates

The Prevention 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.

This also ensured that all partnerships were meeting the corporate objective set by the service and partners. Membership of the board includes Prevention managers and internal partnership leads as well as other governance departments such as Information Governance and Legal.

Following significant involvement with COVID-19 community activity within the Prevention workstreams between 2020 - 2022, the board has introduced a formal structure that supported the re-introduction of collaborative activity within our normal day to day business.

The Partnership Board provides the opportunity to discuss the status of each partnership and the completion of the Prevention Partnership toolkit, a review and evaluation of current activity, consideration of local and national contexts and identifying any new partnership activity and driving forward improvements.

It was identified that improvements were still required to the partnership toolkit utilised by the department and this will be picked up in 2023 - 2024. This will take account of the staff feedback and the outcomes raised and supported by the ISO 9001 recommendations.

These improvements were needed to ensure that the continual success of our partnerships in the event of changes to personal, priorities or budgetary issues.

It will also include a partner feedback form template that will be used to invite regular independent feedback from partner agencies going forward.

This work will support our effective evaluation of Prevention Partnerships. The new toolkit was also presented to the Protection department with the plan to implement this across Protection Partnerships, the impact of this will be reported in following reports.

The Partnership Policy was reviewed and updated accordingly.

Partnership Overview and Performance

Early Help and Prevention Partnership

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) for several years. 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.

2022-2023 Performance

The Family Fire Engagement Officer supported the family intervention team by completing Safe and Well visits and risk assessments. In total **301** Safe and Well referrals were requested during the year (01/04/22 – 31/03/23).

Of the **301** referrals made **157** referrals were completed and **144** families refused a visit or would not engage with CFRS. The top four highest risk referrals were:

- Arson
- Under the age of 5 years old in property
- Disability mobility
- Substance misuse.

Over the course of the year **146** smoke alarms were fitted by the postholder. Fireproof letter boxes were also installed at **32** properties to help reduce the risk of a fire developing within a property (e.g., due to a threat of arson, Chart 1).

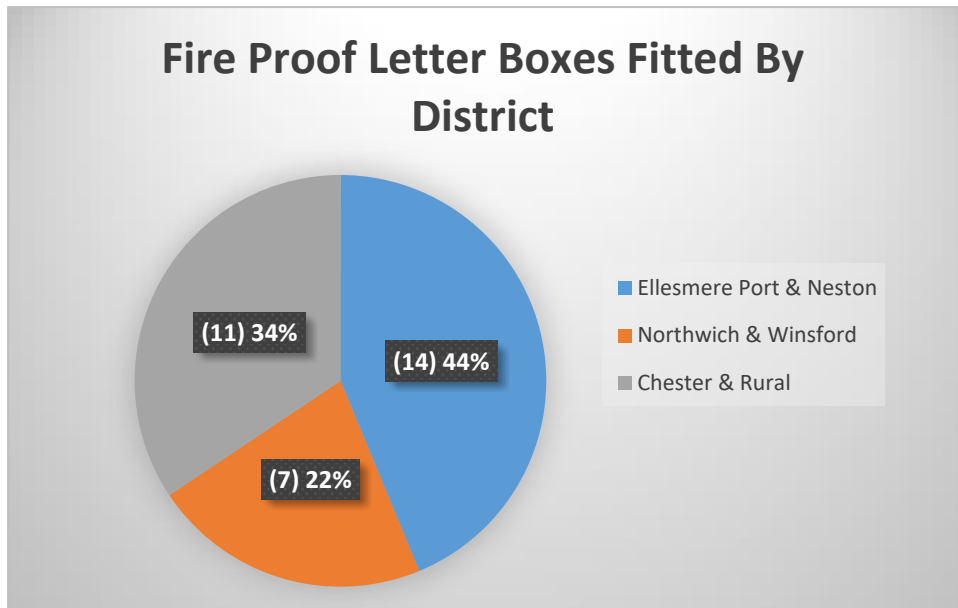


Chart 1: Fireproof Letterbox Data: April 01, 2022 – 31 March 2023

Completed Safe and Well visits included 16 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. Partnership leads within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service are supporting the ongoing monthly evaluation of the role prior to its potential renewal in March 2023, this was renewed April 2023 with the long-term proposal for this role being considered during the prevention department review.

This was due to the identified risk of this role not being replicated in the other three unitary areas of Cheshire at the time of this report and the funding risks of the partnership in the current format.

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 were also be 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 & smoking cessation
- Affordable warmth
- Loneliness & social isolation
- Atrial fibrillation (this offer was removed at the request of health partners in November 2022)

- High blood pressure (this offer was removed at the request of health partners in November 2022)

A referral from the service involves (with consent) the sharing of personal information to a partner agency to support an occupant. A signpost involves a member of CFRS highlighting the services and support provided by a partner agency but where we do not provide any personnel information.

2022-2023 Performance

During the 2022-2023 financial year, 661 referrals were made to partner organisations (see table one below).

This is a marked increase in referrals compared to 2021 - 2022 (74). This is partly due to the total number of visits completed almost doubling (20,949) 2022-2023 vs (11,484) 2021 - 2022. Affordable warmth has been particularly relevant with the cost-of-living crisis on the back of the COVID-19 crisis.

	Cheshire East	Cheshire West and Chester	Halton	Warrington	Total Referrals
Falls Referral	91	23	37	31	182
Smoking Referral	10	0	5	2	17
Alcohol Referral	1	0	3	0	4
Affordable Warmth Referral	96	57	111	60	324
Atrial Fibrillation Referral	40	5	7	7	59
BP Signposts	0	21	0	2	23
Loneliness Referral	19	4	22	7	52
Total Referrals	257	110	185	109	661
Visits Completed	5194	7365	3970	4420	20949

Table 1: Safe and Well Referrals: 2022-2023

The rate of referrals/signpost following a safe and well visit is approx. 3.6%

Outlook

In November 2022, our NHS partners requested that we stop testing for atrial fibrillation and blood pressure due to recent structural and governance changes within health. Since April 2023, discussions had re commenced with health partners to re integrate these health offers. This will include ongoing dialogue with the NHS Cardiovascular Disease Prevention group and Cardiac Network across Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, to see whether they could be reintroduced. This work is of a high priority and will be re-introduced once equipment guidance and refresher training.

Safe and Well partner, Energy Projects Plus (EPP) continue to provide funding and awareness and are still within their two-year period of funding for a "Warm and Well" programme, raising awareness and providing 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 identify competitive tariffs recommence.

Energy Projects plus also supported households across Cheshire with telephone calls, face-to-face advice and casework support. April 2022 – March 2023 the project has supported 324 households as stated in the table above. This shows an increase in referrals compared to April 2021 – March 2022 where the project supported 15 households.

Due to the demand post Covid on the third sector industry our provider for loneliness and isolation support withdraw their offer of new referrals at the end of 2022 – 2023 this resulted in loneliness and isolation support only being offered in Cheshire East and Halton by the Red Cross. Further work to identify suitable providers in 2023 – 2024 for Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington was ongoing.

The issues identified with the withdrawal of support identifies the impact on providing a standardised approach on service provision across Cheshire with partnerships of this type, this further highlights the importance of the newly established partnership board.

Since April 2023, the Service have had a representative at the council Health and Wellbeing boards for Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Halton, which provides extra opportunities to gain information regarding health and wellbeing initiatives within the local authority, NHS and third sector, along with the possibility of collaborative working.

Part of the Service's HMICFRS action plan was to evaluate the training of our staff on their delivery of Safe & Well visits. To achieve this, we are trialling Motivational Interviewing training for Prevention and Service Delivery staff. This training is designed to support staff in having routine conversations with members of the public about a broad range of topics related to changes in behaviour, particularly Health and Wellbeing which will promote better understanding and retention of fire risk information.

The training provider has already carried out site visits to get a greater understanding of our Safe & Well visits and will be conducting two trial training sessions in November 2023. If this training is successful, we will roll this out to staff commencing in late 2023.

Safety Central Collaborations

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The governance arrangements were finalised during 2022 - 2023 financial year seeing the Midwifery team returning to the centre in January 2023 to restart the weekly clinical appointments. The clinic was also extended to a Monday evening offering further support to expectant parents.

Safety Central staff have had further discussions with the NHS team to introduce some parent classes of an evening and to collaborate with the Warrington health visitors to develop a new programme targeting parents and carers of 0 – 4yrs. This is in the early stages, but they are hoping to progress this in the near future.

Scottish Power Energy Networks

SP Energy Networks continues to support Safety Central by providing a £10,000 donation each year to support the running and development of the volunteer ranger programme. The funding is used to help recruit new volunteers and provide training and support social activities to retain existing rangers. This supports both safety education locally and supports SPENS OFGEM obligations to actively support community development and the promotion of public safety it also helps to keep safety messages within the centre relevant as they are quality assured annually.

Delivery Partners

Safety Central have worked closely with local organisations who commit staff to deliver sessions that are part of the core programmes. This reporting period they have included Cheshire Polices Safer Schools and Young Peoples Partnership, Magistrates in the Community and Youth Fed – All supporting the Safe Wise programme for Princes Trust and High School visitors.

Lymm Rotary Club – who provide Heart start first aid sessions of an evening for members of the community.

Current Work streams

The Prevention department is currently undergoing a departmental structure review, as part of a wider departmental review. An outcome of this review will be to focus on highest-risk priority groups with a pan Cheshire approach. This is to be inclusive of all four unitary areas working with a range of organisations to support and enhance the safety of their community in standardised way.

Work is currently being done to standardise the approach of referrals coming into the department. Since the launch of the new Service internet page, two forms have been created to cater for self-referrals from the public and a Partner agency form.

We are in the process of reviewing the risk rating submitted on these forms, this will help identify the residents most at risk. Training for Partnership agencies on awareness and the new process will be available and evaluated on in future reports.

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). Partnership Leads are currently working to review and update the governance arrangements around some of their “business as usual” partnership activity.

There is a significant amount of work ongoing with colleagues from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and the “Combined Intelligence for Population Health Action” (CIPHA) programme to provide more detailed information related to health and fire risk to better prioritise our home safety safe and well activity. Further information will be provided in future reports.

The Prevention Community Safety team have also attended a 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.