

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024
REPORT OF: HEAD OF PREVENTION & PROTECTION
AUTHOR: JASON MCTIGUE

SUBJECT: 'ON THE STREETS' YOUTH WORK
ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

Purpose of Report

1. This report presents the work that the 'On the Streets' (OTS) Team has completed between April 2023 and March 2024.

Recommended:

- [1] That the report be noted.

Background

2. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service youth engagement programmes have made a significant contribution to the community risk reduction of the communities of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. The National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service, the Fire Service Act 2004 and the Service's responsibility under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act have all confirmed the continued need and responsibility for the Service to proactively support children and young people.
3. Historically, Members have funded the OTS initiative through the Prevention Department budget and requested that an annual performance report be presented to the Performance and Overview Committee.
4. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) employ four Youth Work Staff who each work nine hours per week (4.5 hours, per evening on a Monday and Tuesday). One of these staff members is employed as the OTS Coordinator and has an additional 2 hours per week, to complete administrative tasks.
5. Due to identified intelligence-based need and staffing levels, one OTS Team work predominantly across Cheshire East and Warrington and one OTS Team work across Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) and Halton. During the 2023/2024 reporting period, due to staffing issues, the OTS Team have been reduced to 1 active Team (2 staff members) delivering intervention across all 4 Unitary areas

6. OTS provision is 'detached' youth work which is delivered in places where there are young people. Detached Youth Work is a method of engaging with young people within their own environment such as, on the streets, areas where they live, waste ground, open spaces, shopping areas, cafes etc., with a view to working with them within an area they are most comfortable. OTS youth work provides CFRS with a mechanism for flexible and innovative youth engagement, enabling work with minority groups in targeted areas. It addresses the needs of young people who are unable or unprepared to use other existing youth provision, with the aim of working with at risk or vulnerable young people. OTS youth work operates on the principles of good youth work practice; these are based on inclusion, participation, equal opportunities, and celebration of diversity. Through informal education processes the work promotes positive fire and road safety advice and active citizenship.
7. The aim of the OTS programme is to mitigate anti-social behaviour and deliberate fire setting through engaging with young people in areas of identified need and areas at highest risk from these behaviours. Through diversionary activities, the OTS Team, work to develop activities and facilitate positive links between young people and others in their community.
8. OTS projects and interventions are delivered in areas with high levels of arson, small deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour have been identified via information provided from the joint Business Intelligence Team, Police Notification Reports, Station Managers, Road Safety and Deliberate Fire Reduction Manager and other local stakeholders.
9. When an area is identified, an OTS Team is deployed to that area for one evening a week for a period of eight to twelve weeks; this is then reviewed and extended if problems persist.

Information

10. The tables below indicate the number of young people the OTS Team engaged with and their age range over the 2023-2024 reporting period. From quarter one, the OTS Team was reduced to one active team due to staffing issues, this is reflected in the number of young people engaged with and areas of provided intervention.
11. The Table below identifies the number and age of young people the OTS Team have engaged with since April 2023 within Warrington.

Area Warrington	Total number of young people engaged with	Age range
Q1	192 (105 male 87 female)	13 to 17
Q2	214 (135 male 79 female)	13 to 17
Q3	No intervention during Q3	NA
Q4	No intervention during Q4	NA

12. The main areas the OTS Team have been operating in within Warrington are Orford Park, Chapel Ford, Bewsey Park, Radley Common, Grasmere Avenue, Birchwood Park, Risley Moss, Linear Park, Dallam, The Hive, Woolston Park, Junction 9 Play Area, Millhouse Fields.

13. The Table below identifies the number and age of young people the OTS Team have engaged with since April 2023 within Halton.

Area Halton	Total number of young people engaged with	Age range
Q1	162 (82 male 80 female)	13 to 17
Q2	252 (166 male 86 female)	13 to 17
Q3	89 (55 male 34 female)	13 to 17
Q4	141 (101 male 40 female)	13 to 17

14. The main areas the OTS Team have been operating in Halton are Upton Rocks, Upton Community Centre, Victoria Park, West Bank, Crowood Park, Montgomery Road, Dundalk Road, Moorfield Road Social Club, Runcorn Hill Park, Town Hall Park, Town Park, Promenade, Halton Lea, St Mary's Park, Arley Park Woods.

15. The Table below identifies the number and age of young people the OTS Team have engaged with since April 2023 within CW&C.

Area CW&C	Total number of young people engaged with	Age range
Q1	40 (26 male 14 female)	13 to 17
Q2	32 (23 male 86 female)	13 to 17
Q3	198 (119 male 79 female)	13 to 17
Q4	107 (66 male 41 female)	13 to 17

16. The main areas the OTS Team have been operating in throughout CW&C are Brio Leisure Centre, Wharton Esk Road, Wharton Muga, Town Park, Winsford Town Centre, Knights Grange, Over BMX Track, Dee Way, St Johns Estate, Mount Pleasant, Marina Flashes, Retail Park, Saltworks Farm, Castle Park, Frodsham Youth Centre, Westminster, Whitby Park.

17. The Table below identifies the number and age of young people the OTS Team have engaged with since April 2023 within Chester East.

Area CE	Total number of young people engaged with	Age range
Q1	64 (32 male 34 female)	13 to 17
Q2	No intervention during Q2	NA
Q3	No intervention during Q3	NA
Q4	No intervention during Q4	NA

18. Due to staffing levels and information received from the Service Improvement Department, intervention has been low throughout Cheshire East. The main areas the OTS Team have been operating throughout Crewe are Electricity Street, Alton Street (including the Park), Eddleston Road, King George V playing fields and the Skate Park.

19. Over the 2023/2024 reporting period contact was recorded with 1,491 young people. This figure will likely include contact with the same person on more than one occasion. It is difficult to say definitively the exact age range of the young people the OTS Team worked with as we do not capture this data, however it is estimated that the age range of recorded contact is with 13 to 17 year olds.

20. Contact broken down into unitary areas:

Halton engaged 644 times, 43% of the overall total.

Warrington engaged 406 times, 27% of the overall total.

CWAC engaged 377 times, 25% of the overall total.

Cheshire East engaged 64 times, 5% of the overall total.

21. Comparison table for Deliberate Secondary Fires by Unitary Area from 2022/23 to 2023/24.

Deliberate Secondary Fires	Financial Year		YoY Change	% Change
	2022-23	2023-24		
Cheshire East	165	93	-72	-44%
Cheshire West and Chester	319	179	-140	-44%
Halton	289	282	-7	-2%
Warrington	137	97	-40	-29%
Grand Total	910	651	-259	-28%

22. OTS staff are mainly offering a reactive service to the information received via Business Intelligence. Partnership work is currently underused due to low staffing levels and availability; however, a Tier 2 model of intervention is currently being developed to look at ways the wider service and Education Team can provide intervention to referrals they receive.
23. Meeting and planning sessions with Firesetter Crews have been productive in supporting targeted provision. Referral pathways have been established and key points of contact have been developed both internally and externally.
24. During periods of inclement weather, the OTS Team do not meet many young people out on the streets, during this time the team focus on updating their skills and knowledge and seeking diversionary activity information from key stakeholders who have a role in youth engagement matters and tackling secondary deliberate fires.

Financial Implications

25. The budget for the OTS project was approved within the Prevention budget and the work is currently being delivered well within this budget. The OTS initiative has been reviewed as part of the Service Improvement Prevention Department review; this will result in minor changes to the budget.

Legal Implications

26. There are no legal implications associated with the submission of this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

27. There is currently no Equality Impact Assessment for the On The Streets programme.

Environmental Implications

28. As a fire and rescue service we have a pivotal role to play with regards to the environment. The OTS programme supports the Service's Environmental Policy and targets.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE