

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 28 NOVEMBER 2018
REPORT OF: HEAD OF PREVENTION
AUTHOR: VICKY WREST

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT – ‘ON THE STREETS’ YOUTH WORK 2017-2018

Purpose of Report

1. This report presents the work that the ‘On the Streets’ (OTS) team has been involved in over the last twelve months.

Recommended that:

- [1] Members note the content of this report and seek clarification on any of the matters presented.

Background

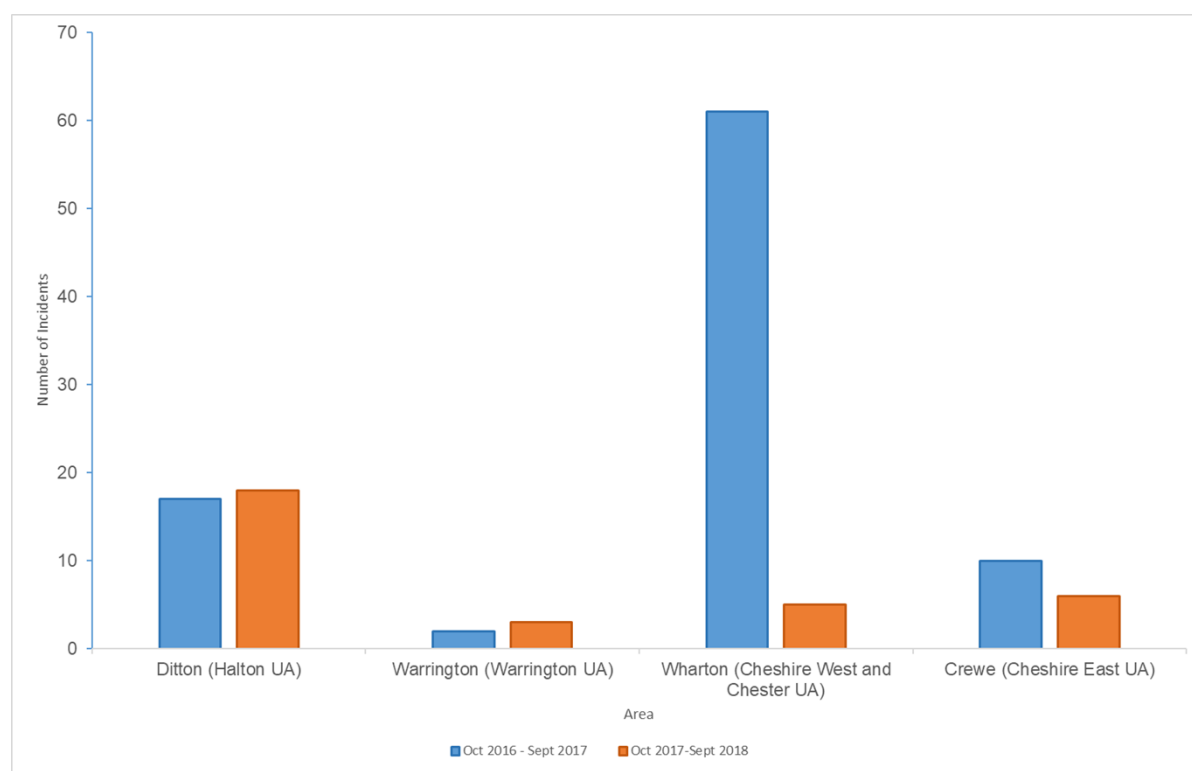
2. Historically, the Authority has continued to fund the OTS initiative requesting an annual performance report be presented to the Performance and Overview Committee.
3. The aim of the OTS programme is to meet and engage with young people on the streets in areas of ‘embedded youth nuisance’. A team of youth workers employed by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service work to develop activities and facilitate positive links between young people and others in their community.
4. OTS projects are delivered in areas with high levels of arson, small deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour using information from the Research and Analysis team (part of the joint corporate services) Station Managers and other local stakeholders.
5. When an area is identified, an OTS team is deployed and works in the locality one evening a week for a period of six months.
6. Due to the identified need and ongoing issues, the OTS team has historically worked predominantly across Warrington and Halton. However, over the last two years the team has become well established in areas across Cheshire West and Chester, and more recently in Cheshire East.

Information

7. The OTS team is working across all four unitary areas and as a result of this community youth engagement has increased. The table below indicates the number of young people engaged with and their age range:

Area	Total number of young people engaged with	Age range
Warrington	356	12 – 17 years old
Halton	212	14 – 17 years old
Cheshire East	328	8 – 17 years old
Cheshire West & Chester	824	10 – 17 years old

The graph below shows the number of incidents across Widnes, Warrington, Crewe and Winsford for 2016/17 and 2017/18;



The numbers are as follows;

Area	Oct 2016 - Sept 2017	Oct 2017-Sept 2018
Ditton (Halton UA)	17	18
Warrington (Warrington UA)	2	3
Wharton (Cheshire West and Chester UA)	61	5
Crewe (Cheshire East UA)	10	6

There has been a reduction of small deliberate fires in the areas where young people are engaging well with the team. Wharton for example is an area where the team is well established and has worked consistently for the last two years. Whilst this is the same for Warrington the team cover a much bigger area right across Warrington so the consistency of meeting with young people willing to engage can vary.

8. Halton

The OTS team is currently working across Runcorn and Widnes. The team work closely with station staff and also receive the daily incident reports which allows them to target areas of concern. The team has continued to build and strengthen connections with local agencies who also inform them of other areas of concern and provide local information that the team can sign-post young people to.

Areas the OTS team has covered within Runcorn are:

- Halton Lodge
- Runcorn Hill
- The Old Town
- Grange way

Areas the team has covered within Widnes are:

- Hough Green (Becher's)
- Upton Rocks

The Station Manager provides the OTS team with details of incident hot-spots and they then check the incident log for relevant updates. They have spent a significant amount of time in Hough Green area over the last few months due to the current incident levels within the area. The team is struggling to engage with the young people in the area as they tend to move on when they see them coming. They will continue to work in the area and attempt to build relationships with the young people who are engaging and encourage them to spread the word of the work they do. During hot and dry periods, the team spend time around Runcorn Hill as this tends to be a particular hot-spot for grass fires.

The team continue to work with the local police, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the local Council targeting areas of anti-social behaviour.

9. Warrington

The team currently work across four different geographical areas:

- Orford Skate Park
- Sankey Valley Park
- Sainsbury's (Chapelford)
- Radley Common

They are now well established in these areas and have built strong relationships with local youth teams, Police and residents.

The team has been working in and around Orford Skate Park since mid-2016. They work with Warrington Borough Council's Youth Service and when possible attend multi-agency youth support team meetings to discuss what is going on in and around the area and share the feedback they receive from young people.

Residents had been reporting small fires via 101, but these incidents were not being passed on to the OTS team. The team has requested support from the police and now receive this information so they can target any hot-spot areas.

10. Cheshire West & Chester

The OTS team has been working in the Ellesmere Port area for nearly two years. One team member particularly has worked hard in establishing strong connections within the area and this work has continued resulting in great work and successful engagement.

The team is now well established within the community. Team members attend a community centre drop-in service to liaise with local PCSOs and answer any enquiries from local residents. The team found attending local skate parks in Parkgate and Ellesmere Port helped them to engage with young people.

The team continue to liaise with local PCSOs and the police in order to gather intelligence and make sure they are targeting the right areas. They link in with the local fire stations and Station Manager to see how they can assist and check the incident log regularly to see what areas need targeting.

The OTS team has continued to engage with the young people in Winsford. The main areas targeted are Bradbury Road Park and the MUGA (sports facility) on Esk Road, both of which are situated on the Wharton Estate where there has been a significant reduction of incidents over the last twelve months. They typically engage with around 25 young people per night.

The team feel the work in Winsford will have lasting impact as the young people will now openly engage with them about issues in their local community. It is apparent from the interactions they are having on a weekly basis that the young people respect the role they play in making their communities safer, and in turn are less likely to engage negatively with the fire and rescue service.

11. Cheshire East

For just over a year the OTS team have been working with young people in and around the Crewe area.

The team liaise with fire-fighters and the Station Manager at Crewe fire station on a weekly basis and follow up on any information received. However, there have been no major issues of late.

The team is now building good relationships with the young people around the skate park next to the gym on King George V playing fields. They have also visit Valley Park on and find the young people congregating there are happy to talk.

The team has worked in the St. Barnabas ward in Crewe; including but not limited to the parks located at the Derby Docks, Broad Street and James Atkinson Way. The young people at these locations are happy to engage and take advice regarding how they can engage with the fire and rescue service via the Cadets, Prince's Trust and with the local Youth Service via the HUB on Market Street.

Financial implications

12. The budget for the OTS project was approved by Members and the OTS project is currently working well within budget.

Legal implications

13. There are no known legal implications arising from the information contained in this report.

Equality and Diversity implications

14. The OTS programme is totally inclusive. Young people from all backgrounds and abilities can access the programme. All children and young people can engage in this intervention regardless of gender, marital status, gender realignment, disability, race, colour, ethnic group, national origins, nationality, religious belief or sexual orientation.

Environmental Implications

15. 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