

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 27TH NOVEMBER 2019
REPORT OF: HEAD OF PREVENTION
AUTHOR: VICKY WREST

SUBJECT: ANNUAL 'ON THE STREETS' YOUTH WORK
REPORT 2018 - 2019

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:

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

Background

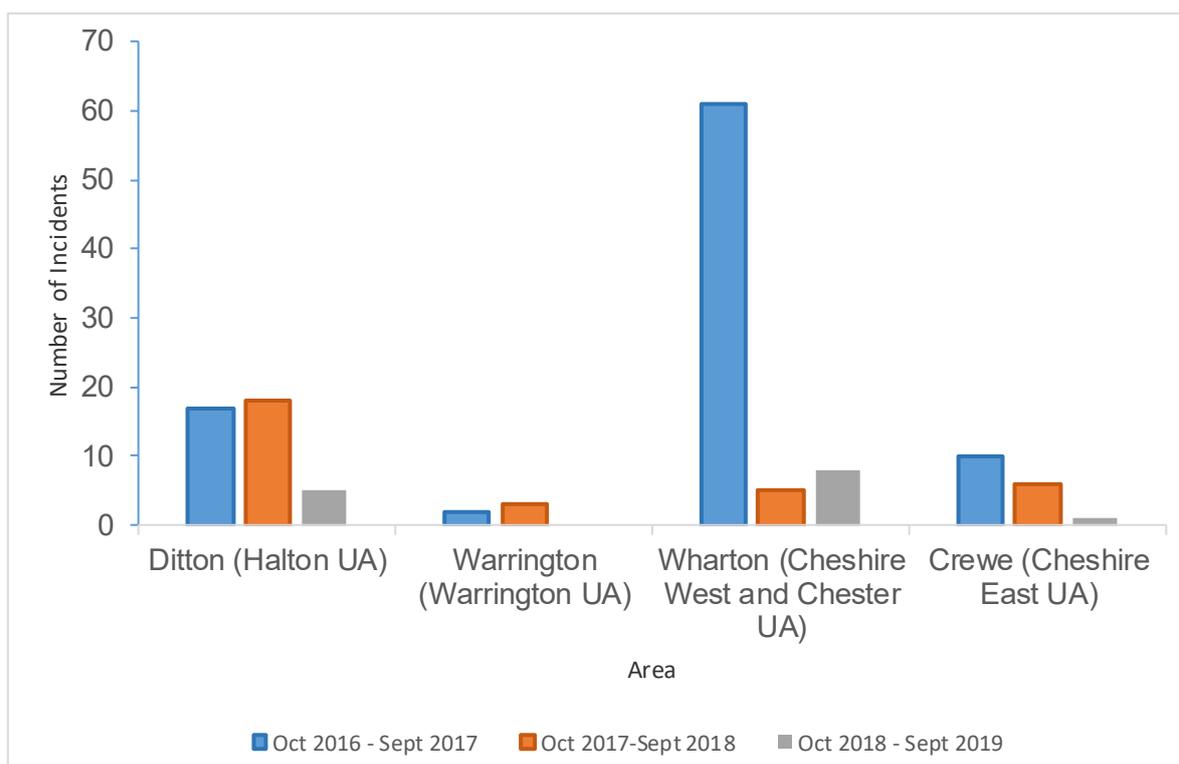
2. Historically, Members have continued to fund this initiative and requested that an annual performance report be presented to the Performance and Overview Committee.
3. The aim of the OTS programme is to meet and engage with young people on the streets in areas of 'embedded youth nuisance'. A team of youth workers employed by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (the 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 joint Business Intelligence Team, 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; this is then reviewed and extended if problems still exist.
6. Due to the identified need and ongoing issues, the OTS team historically work predominantly across Warrington and Halton (more so than other areas as this report reflects). Although over the last three years the team have become well established in areas across Cheshire West and Chester and in Cheshire East, specifically Crewe.

Information

7. The OTS team are working across all four unitary areas and as a result of this community 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	865	12 - 17
Halton	964	14 - 17
Cheshire East	720	8 - 17
Cheshire West and Chester	1663	4 - 17

8. The graph below shows the number of small deliberate fire incidents across specific areas in Widnes, Warrington, Crewe and Winsford for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19;



The numbers are as follows:

Area	Oct 2016 - Sept 2017	Oct 2017 - Sept 2018	Oct 2018 - Sept 2019
Ditton (Halton UA)	17	18	5
Warrington (Warrington UA)	2	3	0
Wharton (Cheshire West and Chester UA)	61	5	8
Crewe (Cheshire East UA)	10	6	1

9. There has been a reduction of small deliberate fires in the areas where young people are engaging well with the team. Wharton is the only exception with a slight increase of three small deliberate fires compared to the previous year. However, in comparison to the figures for 2016/17 this is still a big reduction.

Halton

10. The OTS team continue to work across Runcorn and Widnes. The team work closely with station staff and receive the daily incident reports that allow them to target areas of concern. The team have good connections with local agencies who also inform them of other areas of concern and provide local information the team can sign post young people to.

11. Areas the OTS team has covered within Runcorn are:

- Runcorn Hill Park
- Phoenix Park
- Castlefields
- Grangeway
- Church Street
- Windmill Hill
- Hallwood Park
- Palace Fields

Areas the team have covered within Widnes are:

- Hough Green (Becher's)
- Upton Rocks
- Stewarts Avenue
- Cunningham Road

12. 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 and Upton Rocks area due to the current incident levels. The team have historically struggled to engage with the young people who tend to move on when they see the OTS team. In an effort to respond to this the team have arranged regular evenings where six team members have gone out into the area in a group and then spilt up in order to cover more of the area. They will continue to work in the area and build relationships with the young people who are engaging, to spread the word of the work they do. The team have noted the installation of CCTV at Upton Rocks helped to identify and prevent incidents.

13. The team continue to work with the local police, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and local Council targeting areas of anti-social behaviour. They have also more recently targeted businesses in the Runcorn area to discuss the importance of securing any waste materials to prevent fires where possible.

Warrington

14. The team currently work across four different geographical areas:
 - Orford Skate Park
 - Sankey Valley Park
 - Radley Common
 - Poplars Avenue
 - Woolston Park
15. The work of the team is well established and embedded in these areas, they have strong relationships with local youth teams, Police and residents.
16. The team continue to work across the area and focus their work based upon the incident reports, feedback from the watches and the station managers. Recently the team has assisted in addressing a number of wheelie bin fires by leafleting the local area with information on keeping wheelie bins locked away. For any wheelie bins they came across the flyer was used in a sticker form to be attached to the bin. The team were praised by the Station Manager for their support and that they had managed to cover 170 houses.
17. One new area the team have been working in is Woolston Park. The team monitor daily incident reports and identified an increase in this area of small deliberate fires. Working with further information from the crew's at Birchwood station, the team began working in the park. Although the numbers of young people willing to engage were low, the incidents have decreased significantly.

Cheshire West and Chester

18. 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, this work has continued which has resulted in great work and successful engagement.
19. The main areas are:
 - Bunbury Green
 - Whitby Park
 - Civic Way
 - Bus depot
20. 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.

21. More recently, the team have been working in and around Chester including:
- Chester City centre
 - Blacon
 - Lache
22. 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. They also work closely with the local authority particularly to report any fly tipping they come across that needs removing to prevent small deliberate fires. The team has also engaged with local residents at community meetings and by leafleting areas where wheelie bin fires are high to try to raise awareness for the importance of locking wheelie bins away. They have also engaged with local businesses to discuss arson reduction and the importance of securing waste materials.
23. The OTS team continue to engage with the young people in Winsford. The main areas targeted are:
- Bradbury Road Park
 - Esk Road
 - Mount Pleasant
 - The Marina
24. Historically the team has worked across the Wharton Estate where there has been a significant reduction of incidents over the last two years. They typically engage with around 25 young people per night. Over the summer months, the team spent a lot of time around the marina engaging with young people and families offering safety advice for those having BBQ's and water safety advice during the hot months. This area generated a lot of engagement and the team now visit the area regularly and find many young people use the area for fishing and tend to be happy to engage with them.
25. 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 the OTS team play in making their communities safer, and in turn are less likely to engage negatively with the fire and rescue service.

Cheshire East

26. The OTS team have been working with young people in and around the Crewe area for just over two years.
27. The team liaise with firefighters and the Station Manager at Crewe fire station on a weekly basis and follow up on any information received.

28. The areas they cover are:
- King George Playing Fields
 - Valley Park
 - St. Barnabas
29. The team has established good relationships with the young people around the skate park next to the gym on King George V playing fields. They also visit Valley Park and find the young people congregating there are happy to talk.
30. The team continue to work 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 are happy to engage with the OTS team. Due to the reduction in incidents the main priority for the team is to promote how young people can engage with: the fire and rescue service via the Cadets; Prince's Trust and the local Youth Service via the HUB on Market Street.
31. During the winter months when the teams often do not meet many young people out on the streets the team focus is on updating their e-learning and getting to know new areas. Early this year the team engaged in some key areas of training they identified through team meetings, including;
- Detached Youth Work skills
 - Understanding Fire Setting Behaviour
32. The team found both courses very useful and spent four evenings covering the two topics. The facilitators were able to tailor their delivery to the team and ensure the information given was relevant to their role. The team now feel more able to understand why young people set fires and will continue to address any concerns they have about young people at risk through the relevant channels.

Financial Implications

33. The budget for the OTS project was approved by Members and the work is currently being delivered well within budget.

Legal Implications

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

Equality and Diversity Implications

35. The OTS programme is inclusive, with young people from all backgrounds and abilities able to 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

36. 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