



Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service

The Prevention Partnerships Annual Report 2020



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Partnership Management

Overview

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.

For many years, working with key partners has proven to be a vital component in delivering the Prevention department's objectives and managing community risk. The partnership arrangements in place support the provision of risk reduction services we offer 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, some include to maximise the use of limited resources, build capacity, enhance delivery, share critical information and promote good practice. Working with carefully selected partners, challenges 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 birth fresh concepts. Partnerships which consider and promote equality and diversity are also central to eliminating barriers that prevent access to services, information and employment. All CFRS partnerships are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure accessibility and promote equality and diversity.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service defines partnerships in 4 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, e.g. Cheshire East Hoarding Forum.

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, e.g. Local Resilience Forum.

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, e.g. Early Help and Prevention Programme

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), e.g. Public Services Transformation Board.

Included within this report is an overview of performance of some of the more significant partnerships led by the prevention department involving seconded staff, additional funding or large data sharing arrangements.

Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Service employs a dedicated Partnerships Coordinator who oversees the partnerships policy and management arrangements within the Prevention department. Live partnerships are managed through an internal database system. Each partnership record contains; legal agreements, progress updates, associated risk management information, outstanding actions, review and monitoring documentation 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.

Each partnership is subject to a cyclical review process which is carried out by the Partnership manager in conjunction with the partners to maintain optimum performance, manage issues and resolve problems as they arise. Each partnership that involves a formal partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding is subject to an end of year evaluation which captures the end of year performance and enables the Service to determine whether the partnership is performing as expected and should be renewed.

In the past regular meetings with partners have taken place individually throughout the life of each partnership. For additional governance and monitoring purposes the Service has introduced a Prevention Partnerships Scrutiny Board which will provide a forum for all partners to meet, submit quarterly progress reports and monitor performance in a more formalised setting. However, due to unexpected additional work streams which require strategic partnership agencies to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Service took the decision to delay the introduction of the Board until early 2021.

Partnership Overview and Performance

Fit4Safety

Overview:

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) and Halton Borough Council (HBC) have worked together since 2011 to support the targeted delivery and installation of child safety equipment (stair gates, fire guards) within households located in Widnes and Runcorn where children under 5 years of age reside at the property. Statistically, these areas have a higher number of burn related injuries than the rest of Cheshire. HBC Children Services identify eligible families and refer them to the Service's Prevention team for a home safety visit to be carried out.

Since the beginning of the partnership HBC have referred 595 households to the Service which has successfully resulted in improved home safety and fire injury risk reduction.

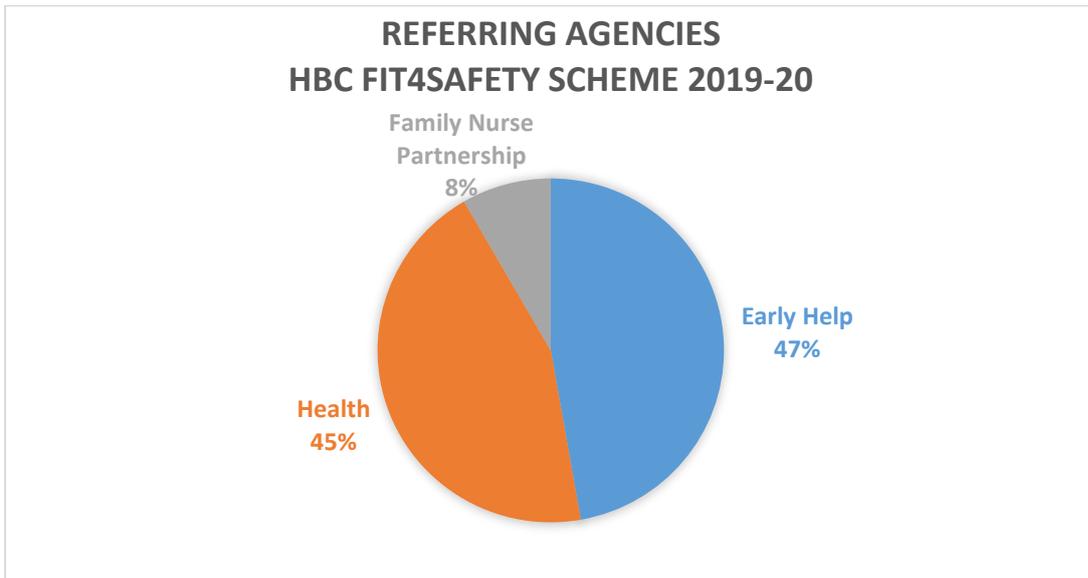
The aims of the Partnership:

- To identify and work collaboratively to visit families with children under the age of 5 who may require information and support regarding safety within the home.
- To reduce the likelihood of unintentional injuries such as scalding, burns, falls and poisoning by installing child safety equipment within the homes of families where under 5's reside as identified by HBC professionals working with the families.
- To promote home safety education and provide a safer home environment in which children can learn and develop safely.

2019-2020 Performance:

Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, 52 households were referred to the Service for a home safety visit and 36 were completed. 13 were incomplete for a number of reasons; occupants were unresponsive to attempts to visit, had moved, no longer had children living with them or had a change in circumstances and were therefore referred back to HBC for further case management. The additional 3 visits were completed within the 2020-2021 financial year due to restrictions imposed at the end of March 2020 by the government due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In total, 70 child safety items were installed across 36 households, vastly reducing the risk of injury.

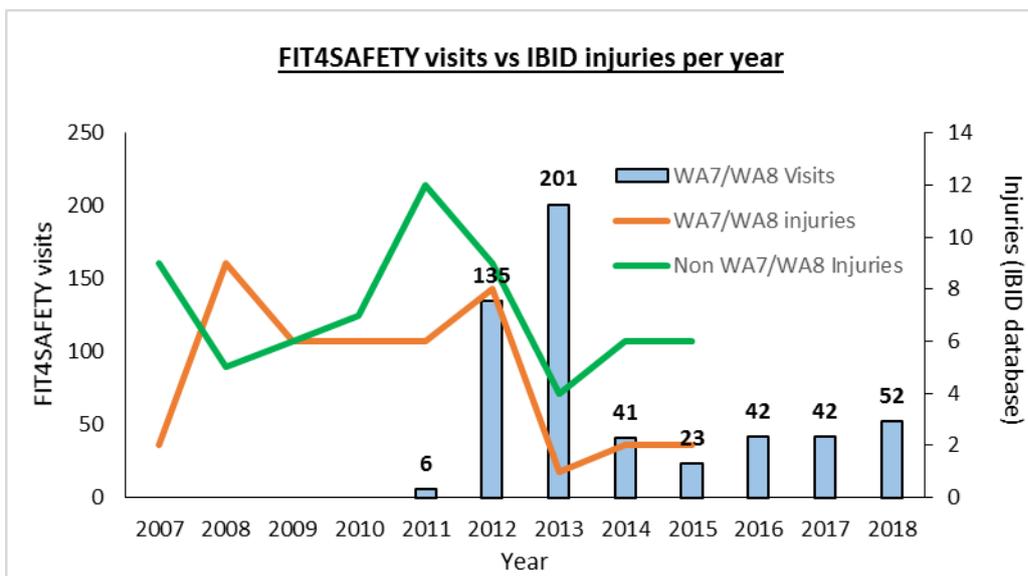
The chart below details the agencies making referrals for families to access the HBC Fit4Safety Scheme:



Over the past 9 years the Fit4Safety Scheme has made 595 referrals into the Service’s Prevention department which has resulted in 493 completed home safety visits, including the installation of child safety equipment achieving an overall success rate of 82.8%.

Evaluation findings

In addition to the cyclical reviews that the Service carries out in conjunction with HBC, CFRS also commissioned an independent light touch evaluation. The evaluation was conducted by a medical professional and burns injury expert to assess the impact of the partnership from its initial formation. The data contained below compares the injuries recorded in the national burns database within the Runcorn and Widnes areas versus the Fit4Safety visits conducted.



A larger decrease in burns injury numbers is apparent when compared to other ward areas. The partnership completed 403 visits from late 2011 to 2015. However, a large number of postcode areas where intervention did not occur also seen a decrease but not at the same rate that the areas that did. It could however be the case that other societal factors may have contributed to the decrease, alongside intervention visits.

Further scrutiny of more recent data is required to identify and confirm a comparable link between the number of injuries occurred, versus the targeted intervention. The findings of the analysis will be contained in the 2020-2021 Prevention Partnerships Annual report.

Loneliness and Social Isolation

Overview

Recent studies have suggested that individuals who are lonely and socially isolated are at heightened risk of fire due to the negative impact on mental health and wellbeing. Both health and voluntary sector organisations often find it difficult to engage with the most vulnerable in our communities as they often lack social engagement to help identify risks and access professional support.

Working in collaboration with The British Red Cross (BRC) and The Silver Line, this partnership aims to identify individuals experiencing Loneliness and/or Social Isolation (LaSI) and by asking lone occupants a set of pre-determined questions during a Safe and Well visit. If LaSI is identified, a referral is made to The British Red Cross (BRC) with the individuals consent to access services to help and support them reconnecting with their local community. The BRC and the individual will mutually determine whether a 6 week home visiting service or a telephone befriending service from The Silver Line is most suitable. If The Silver Line service is offered and accepted, with the individual's consent The BRC will refer them to The Silver Line.

The BRC offer a 6 week home visiting service to help people to regain their confidence and independence by offering setting personal goals, providing companionship and assistance with daily living such as shopping. The duration of support is determined by the needs of the individual.

The Silver Line offer a telephone assessment call with the individual to establish which services best meet the needs of the individual. If the telephone befriending service is deemed suitable then a weekly keeping in touch call is be made to the individual until a match with a long term volunteer is established.

2019-2020 Performance

An overview of the first year performance broken down by local authority area is below:

	Cheshire East	Cheshire West and Chester	Halton	Warrington
Screenings	1319	925	221	701
Referrals to BRC	21	9	11	19

Of the 60 referrals that were made to The BRC, 9 were referred to The Silver Line to partake in the telephone befriending service. The Office for National Statistics released a report in June 2020 that suggests Loneliness and Social Isolation could increase as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the more obvious reasons include decreased social interaction due to social fears around contracting the virus. It is anticipated that numbers for referrals will see an increase over the next financial year.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, an outcome-based review was scheduled to take place to assess the effectiveness of the partnership on a long term basis. It is expected that the review will now take place towards the end of the year.

Early Help and Prevention Partnership

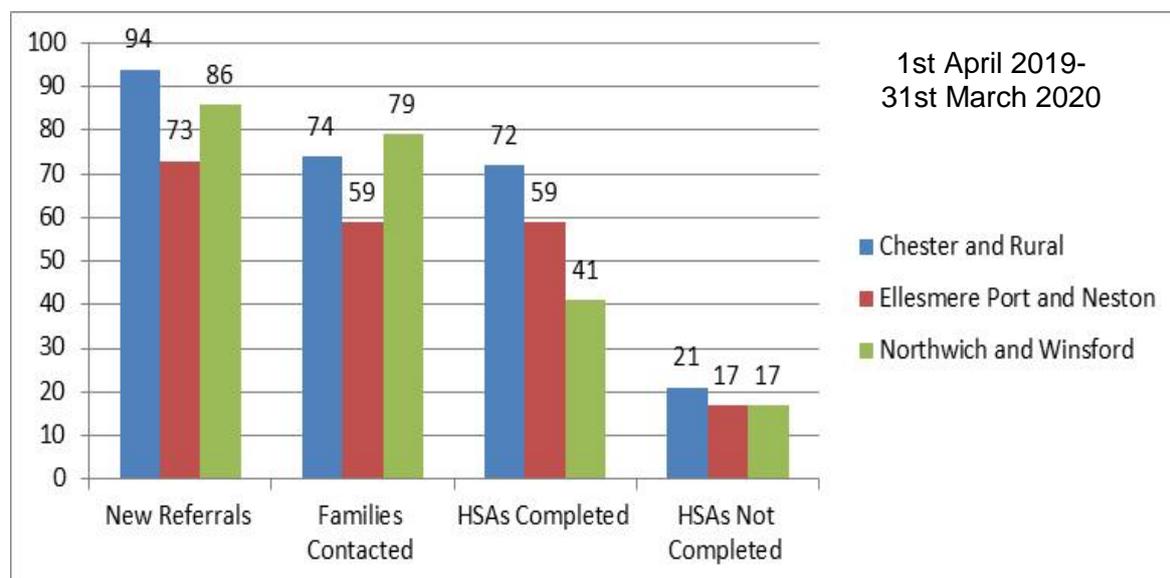
Overview

For a number of years, the Service has seconded staff from the Prevention Community Safety team to Cheshire West and Chester to work within the Early Help and Prevention department and bring with them a breadth of Home Fire Safety knowledge. Working with specific heightened risk demographics, the team offer a wide range of services for children, young people and their families including family intervention, youth work and home safety. They also offer critical support for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

2019-2020 Performance

During the last financial year, the seconded staff have continued to support the family intervention team with home safety assessments (HSA) and risk assessments. In total, 172 HSAs were completed during the year. The highest number of referrals came from the Chester area but proportionally Ellesmere Port had an enhanced take

up of assessments. HSA's that have not been completed have been because families have been offered a service and have either declined or not engaged.



19 properties were deemed high risk and additional risk assessments were completed. These were highlighted due to issues such significant hoarding and young people fire setting.

19 referrals were made from the Domestic Abuse Intervention and Prevention Team during Q4. As a result of these referrals, 14 fireproof letter box covers were fitted during the home safety visit.

Health Partnerships through Safe and Well

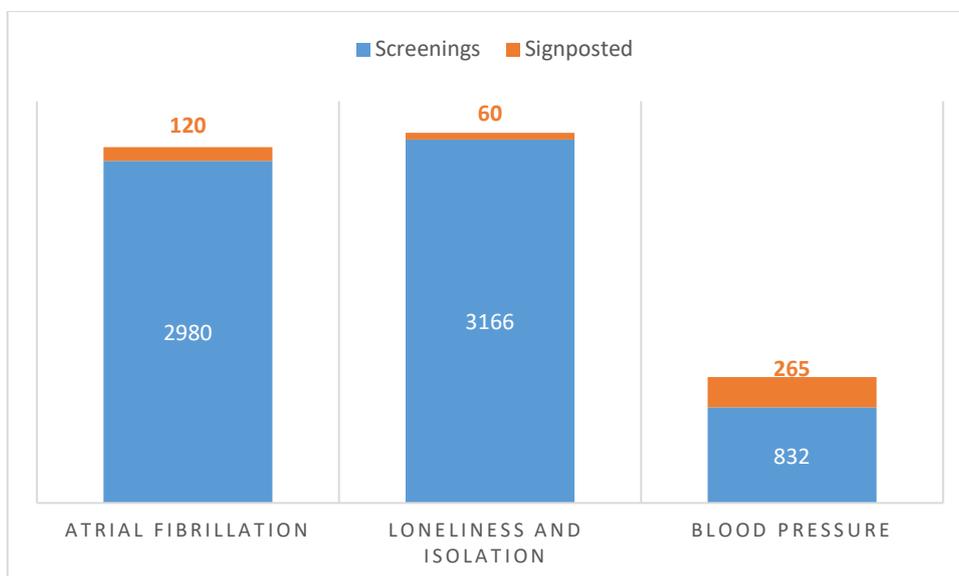
The Safe and Well programme screens individuals deemed to be of heightened risk of fire for a number of contributing factors such as falls, fuel poverty, alcohol reduction, atrial fibrillation, high blood pressure, loneliness and isolation (detailed earlier in this report). Working with trusted partners the service refers or signposts these individuals for support or further screening.

The Safe and Well initiative has a longstanding record of successful intervention and is exemplary of effective cross-agency working to provide enhanced services to the community. In light of this, the partnership initiative has been formally recognised and earned the following awards:

- Excellence in Fire and Emergencies Awards 2017 – Partnership of the Year
- IESE Public Sector Awards 2018 – Working Together
- Energy Impact Awards 2018 – Affordable Warmth
- Arrhythmia Alliance Healthcare Awards 2018 – Atrial Fibrillation Screening

2019-2020 Performance

During the last financial year the following referrals and signposting were made:



Additionally, 273 people were referred to the falls prevention team within their local authority, 6 people were referred to their local alcohol reduction team and 104 people were referred to Energy Projects Plus for support with affordable warmth.

Evaluation

During 2019-20, the Service commissioned an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the atrial fibrillation and affordable warmth screenings as part of Safe and Well for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 financial years. The independent report was produced by Dr Julian Clarke, a Senior Research Fellow at Edge Hill University, Ormskirk. The study concluded that atrial fibrillation screening has potentially averted up to 12 strokes and saved the NHS up to £500,000 in gross treatment costs and actual savings to householders resulting from fuel poverty checks were £19,495.

Mental Health Partnership with Cheshire Wirral Partnership

Overview

The Mental Health Support Partnership with Cheshire Wirral Partnership aims improve standards of fire safety for people living in the areas of Cheshire East and Cheshire West & Chester. The Service and the CWP jointly fund a dedicated Mental Health Engagement Officer, a new and innovative role that works within the Prevention Community Safety Team. The role works with people who suffer from mental health issues who are also deemed at heightened risk of fire due to factors such as smoking, lone living, hoarding, cognitive difficulties substance and/or alcohol

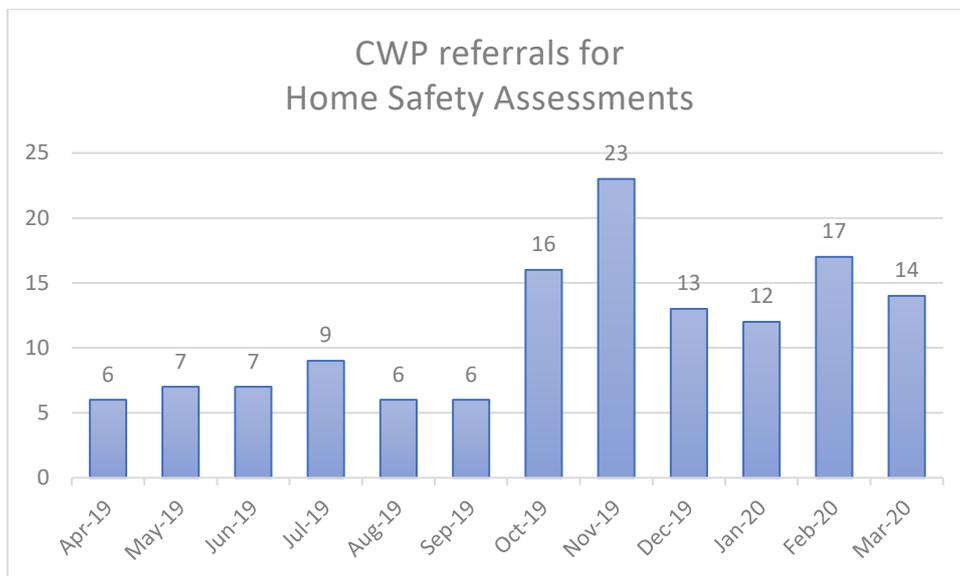
misuse through the development of cross agency support. CWP identify the individuals at risk and make a referral into the Service to access targeted intervention.

The partnership provides health colleagues from the CWP Community team with a direct pathway to support households at heightened risk from fire alongside other complex needs. The Partnership aims to achieve a number of mutual aims:

- Identify and address common causes of fire amongst CWP service users, in particular smoking related fires and those relating to substance misuse
- Identify and mitigate key risks to a person's physical health including those from fire.
- Co-produce goals with identified individuals which promote physical health and fire safety.
- Discuss and create personal actions with residents with the aim of reducing fire risk via a person centred fire risk assessment.
- Provide support and advice to vulnerable persons within their own home assess fire risk and access support services

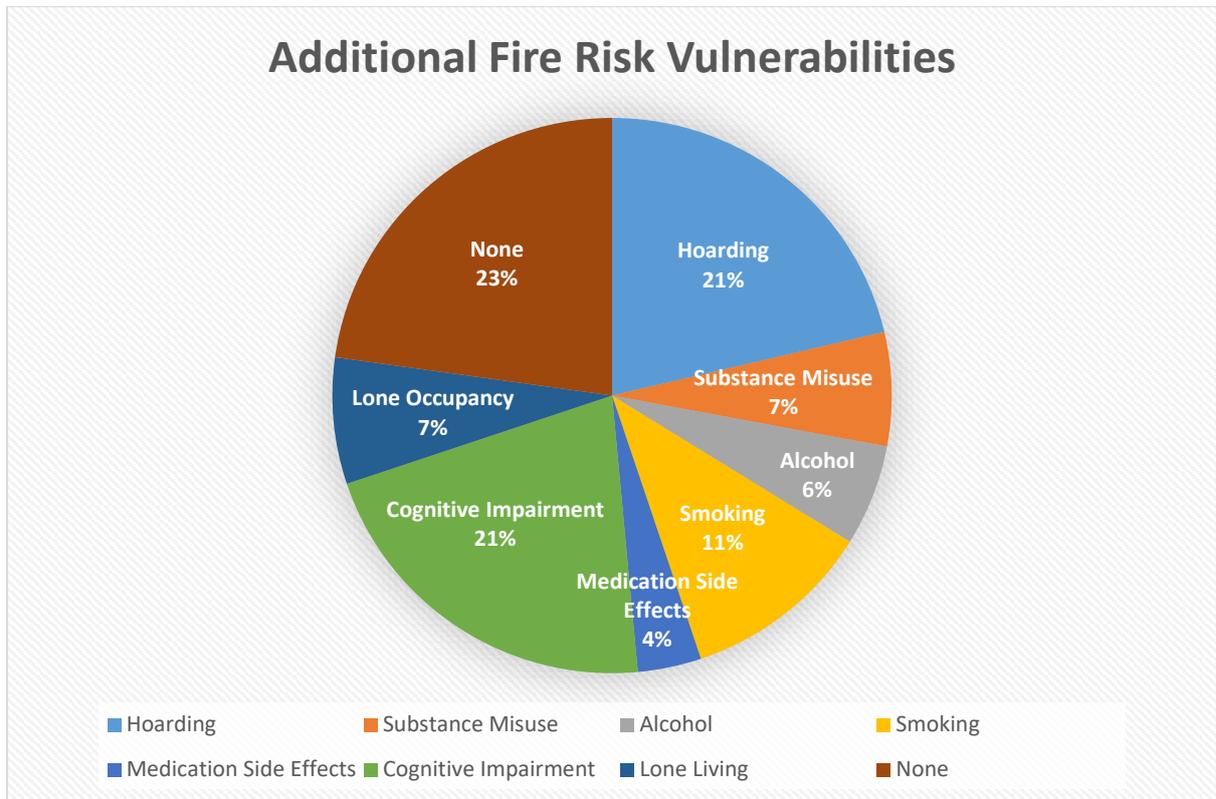
2019-2020 Performance

In its first year, the partnership has performed well overall. Initially there were some concerns around the low number of referrals received. However, this quickly improved and the partnership saw a notable increase in numbers. There were a number of factors that contributed to the improvements, the main one being that the role became further embedded within the CWP community team which resulted in a higher number of referrals.



During some of the home safety visits, additional fire risk vulnerabilities were identified and highlighted to the CWP for further case management and support

from a wide range of agencies. A breakdown of the vulnerabilities is provided below.



The most common additional vulnerabilities are hoarding and cognitive impairment which both have a direct link to fire risk.

Supporting the Community through the Covid-19 pandemic

In March, the Service made a commitment to support the local authorities, through the Covid-19 pandemic by helping them provide essential items, welfare support and other provisions to the most at risk households across Cheshire. A community support management team was formed within the Prevention department to coordinate the community response effort.

A single point of contact was internally appointed for each local authority area and was responsible for managing the requests in each area. Effective partnership working relationships were established and further developed over the following months and an overview of the community support activity can be seen below.



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COVID-19 Activity Chart 2020/21 - Quarter 1

					
Cumulative Summary	Food Deliveries	Prescription Deliveries	Welfare Calls	Shielding Visits	Bulk PPE Deliveries
Halton	189	245	25	341	1
Warrington	81	129	1	352	0
CWAC	2229	4298	879	441	21
Cheshire East	171	815	475	46	15
Totals	2670	5487	1380	1180	37

The Service is also heavily engaged in community support activities for young people and has facilitated the delivery of laptops and educational resource packs on behalf of the Department for Education and free school meals during the summer holidays to eligible households.

An annual overview of the Service' community support activity during the Covid-19 pandemic will be included in the Prevention Partnerships Annual Report 2021.