



Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Prevention Partnerships

Annual Report 2021



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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.

For many years, working with key partners has proven to be a vital component in delivering the Prevention Departments' 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; it helps to maximise the use of limited resources, build capacity, enhance delivery, share critical information and promote good practice. Working with carefully selected partners, challenges Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (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 develop fresh concepts. Partnerships that consider and promote equality and diversity 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) to ensure accessibility and promote equality and diversity.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services' Prevention Department 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.

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.

This report includes an overview of performance of some of the more significant partnerships led by the Prevention Department including those involving seconded staff, and additional funding.

Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Service employs a dedicated Partnerships Coordinator who oversees the partnership policy and management arrangements within the Prevention Department. Live partnerships are managed through an internal database system. Each partnership record contains; agreements, progress updates, associated risk management information, outstanding actions, and 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 each 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 (MoU) is subject to a yearly evaluation which captures performance and enables the Service to determine whether the partnership is performing as expected and should be renewed.

Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation Updates

Currently regular meetings with partners take place individually throughout the life of each partnership. For additional governance and monitoring purposes the Service decided to introduce a Prevention Partnerships Scrutiny Board providing a forum for partners to meet, submit quarterly progress reports and monitor performance in a more formalised setting. 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 a more appropriate time.

The Partnership Policy was updated in December 2020 to reflect lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. The policy stipulates that during local or national emergencies, community safety takes priority and only mandatory documentation needs completing immediately; this deviates from the usual process set out in the rest of the policy related to the recording of partnership activity.

Work to improve the partnership database is ongoing. Improvements will include the ability to record data sharing agreements and/or regular, daily partner interactions, these are currently recorded manually by partnership managers and the co-ordinator.

Partnership Overview and Performance

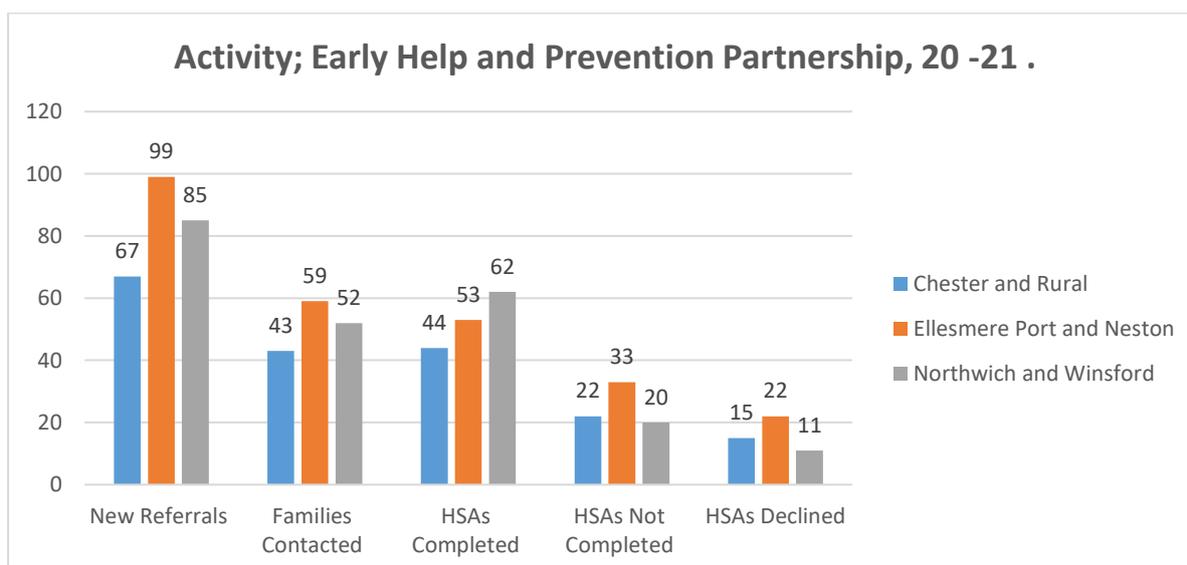
Early Help and Prevention Partnership

For a number of years, 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 (CWaC) Local Authority. This department offers a wide range of services for families including supporting young people and children with specific risks. Some of the services offered include support for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, family intervention, youth work and home safety. 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 health and wellbeing.

2020-2021 Performance

The Family Fire Engagement Officer supported the Family Intervention Team with Home Safety Assessments (HSAs) and risk assessments. In total 159 HSAs were completed during the year.

As detailed in the graph below (Activity: Early Help and Prevention Partnership, 2020-21) the highest number of new referrals came from the Ellesmere Port and Neston areas, this area also had the lowest uptake rate (44%). Winsford and Northwich had the highest uptake of HSAs, with 72% of new referrals receiving a HSA in this locality. Sixty-seven new referrals were from the Chester and rural area with an HSA uptake rate of 65%.



Some HSA's were not completed due to a lack of engagement from residents when offered the services provided by the Family Fire Engagement Officer. The total number of new referrals compared with the figures for HSAs completed, not completed, declined is due to some HSA jobs occurring in 20/21 following a referral in 19/20.

Thirty-one of the properties visited were subject to additional risk assessments and categorised as at heightened risk from fire due to issues such as significant hoarding or fire setting behaviour.

In addition, 93 smoke alarms and 8 fireproof letterboxes were fitted at some properties, as per the table below. This illustrates the need for additional fire safety measures at some properties to help mitigate fire risk.

Area	No of Smoke alarms:	No of Fire-proof letter boxes
Chester and Rural	23	8
Northwich and Winsford	34	9
Ellesmere Port and Neston	36	8
Totals:	93	25

Fire Data from April 01 2020 – 31 March 2021

The role also provided vital support to the local community in relation to the COVID-19 response, assisting with 110 prescription and 57 food deliveries.

Outlook

The Family Fire Engagement officer role was established in CWAC in 2015 and continues to be reviewed annually. Due to its success, the Service expects the role to continue to be funded by both parties and be replicated in other areas.

Early discussions with representatives from other local authority areas – Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington Borough Council are ongoing regarding establishing Family Fire Engagement Officer roles Pan-Cheshire to offer parity to residents living in all local authority areas.

Mental Health Partnership with Cheshire and Wirral Partnership

In May 2019, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership (CWP) NHS Foundation Trust and the Service collaborated to provide a jointly funded Mental Health Engagement Officer to support individuals with a mental health diagnosis, registered with CWP who may be at heightened risk from fire. CWP provides mental health and care services to residents living in the Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester areas.

The role supports people with a mental health diagnosis who may be at heightened risk from fire due to a number of factors such as smoking, lone occupancy, hoarding, cognitive difficulties, substance and/or alcohol misuse. CWP identifies individuals who would benefit from the Services input and makes referrals to the Mental Health Engagement Officer. Ongoing support and case management is offered to the individual to assist in mitigating fire risk.

The role also includes engagement with wider CWP staff teams in relation to recognising fire risk and meets with teams to ensure referrals into the Service, keeping fire risk relevant. The role also undertakes regular meetings with CWP staff

to ensure fire risks remain a priority and gives the opportunity to discuss any related issues the Service can support.

2020-2021 Performance

In March 2020 the role adapted to new ways of working due to the pandemic with core services suspended unless necessary to maintain public and staff safety.

During this time, CWP utilised the role to help deliver 47 Basic Life Support (BLS) and 7 ProActive Approach Training (PAT) sessions. The post-holder delivering training provided resilience to CWP, and enabled CWP staff to support core NHS functions within the trust. These sessions also enabled networking opportunities with CWP teams and an outlet to provide information in relation to the Mental Health Engagement Officer role and the Services Family Fire Engagement Officer in the Early Help and Prevention team at CWAC.

The post holder also supported the Service with COVID-19 community safety activity, assisting in the delivery of over 95 food parcels, 257 medicines to vulnerable individuals from pharmacies and completing welfare phone calls and physical checks.

Core business resumed sporadically throughout the year, this allowed for 128 Home Safety Assessments (HSAs) to occur. 100 of these were referrals from CWP, and 28 came via CFRS. This partnership has significant benefits for both CWP and the Service. COVID restrictions had a significant impact on all Prevention delivery, however the role still completed more referrals during 20-21 than the pre COVID, 8-month period (102 referrals). This illustrates that despite COVID the role is embedded well into CWP and referrals for fire risk support, mitigation and management were occurring.

Outlook

Until March 2021, the Education department within CWP managed the role, however they concluded it was not the correct department to oversee the partnership activity. Discussions are ongoing with the CWP Medicines Management and the Community Teams to reinstate the role with an enhanced remit to include ongoing intervention, assessment and support to those prescribed heavy sedatives. Expanding the partnership into these areas will help to manage heightened fire risk and/or other lifestyle factors along with the potential to offer support for independent living for those moving from inpatient care in to the community.

Initial discussions have also taken place with Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust who are keen to scope and establish a similar role covering Warrington and Halton. The aim is to create a business case to support this joint initiative over the coming months.

Health and Wellbeing Partnerships through Safe and Well

Safe and Well visits screen individuals who may be at heightened risk of fire for a number of contributing factors. Working with statutory and third sector partners and with householder consent, individuals are also invited to discuss other 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 and smoking cessation,
- loneliness and social isolation,
- atrial fibrillation,
- affordable warmth,
- high blood pressure.

2020-2021 Performance

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Safe and Well visits were amended in line with COVID restrictions. In agreement with our health partners, partnership activity in relation to the health elements was suspended in all cases however, significant developments in relation to partnership activity continued in order to improve and expand SAW delivery going forward:

- Various Public Health Directors and NHS England agreed for the health elements to be offered to under 65's during Safe and Well visits, the variation to the terms of the partnership were finalised in line with the Services updated targeting methodology.
- In November 2020, Dr Julian Clarke evaluated the affordable warmth element of SAW and concluded that the affordable warmth screening has made significant savings to householders on their fuel bills, reducing the likelihood of householders using unsafe fire practices to heat their homes.
- Dr Clarke also researched the Service's work on reducing Atrial Fibrillation. During the reference period of evaluation over 200 residents were signposted to primary care for further investigation following a Safe and Well visit. It is estimated that the Service's Atrial Fibrillation screening has helped avert between 3 and 18 strokes. This has saved between two and thirteen lives and realised financial savings of between four and twenty six million pounds.
- From Sept 2020, Loneliness and Social Isolation screening questions were asked in SAW visits occurring over the phone and where applicable individuals directed to the British Red Cross (BRC). The Silver Line could no longer support the partnership following a change in ownership nationally, therefore BRC continue to support the SAW work within Cheshire East, Warrington and Halton. Discussions are ongoing to identify a referral partner in Cheshire West.

Outlook

In August 2021, “Making Every Contact Count”(MECC) training relating to all SAW work streams was delivered to individuals including Station Managers, Lead Advocates and representatives from Service Delivery and will be cascaded out to relevant teams. This provided updated information regarding the health and wellbeing aspects of SAW visits and reiterated how including these elements within SAW visits could improve residents’ quality of life and instigate preventative health measures for health and wellbeing partners.

Dr Julian Clarke has also undertaken evaluation of the blood pressure element of the Safe and Well work in 2021, this should be published later this year and findings will be included in next years report.

All elements of the SAW visit with the exception of the falls risk assessment, will hopefully be offered to under 65 residents going forward to further enhance the SAW offer to all members of the community the Service engage with via its Prevention programme.

[Supporting the Community throughout the Covid-19 pandemic](#)

In March 2020, the Service made a commitment to support third sector and statutory partners throughout the pandemic, supporting provision of essential services to residents and prevent crisis or additional pressures on public sector organisations.

The Service helped to provide vital items, health care provision, welfare support and education supplies. This included delivering food, prescriptions, PPE, COVID test kits, laptops, school meals, blood and vaccinations. Visits and/or phone calls were also made to residents who were shielding or requiring a welfare check.

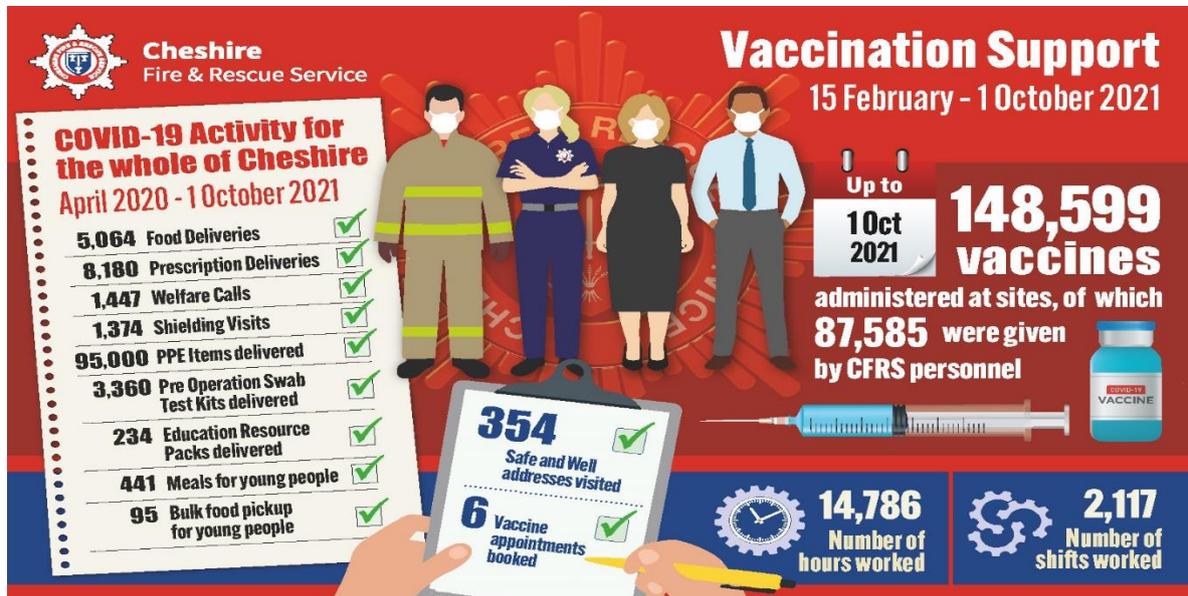
2020-2021 Performance

Staff from across the organisation supported both statutory and third sector partners to deliver services to residents within Cheshire, Halton and Warrington with the aim of keeping them safe from and reducing the impact of COVID-19. The timeline included in appendix two illustrates the work the Service was involved in between April 2020 and March 2021.

A central COVID-19 Community Support Management Team (CSMT) was established within the Prevention department to manage requests for community support from partners. Single Points of Contacts (SPOCS) were appointed within the team aligned to local authority areas and managed requests based on these geographical boundaries.

Requests from partners mirrored the pandemics course nationally, initially coming from third sector organisations (e.g. foodbanks) and local authorities (welfare checks, shielding visits, pharmacy deliveries) to help people to stay at home.

In the latter stage of 2020, early 2021, requests from health partners became more frequent and focussed on prevention of transmission whilst maintaining some normality (e.g. pre-operation COVID-19 swab testing, lateral flow support, vaccination delivery). The below infographic captures the work the Service has contributed to so far:



Outlook

The majority of requests from partners for community support has ceased with some small pockets of activity continuing, dependent on local need. The expectation is that this will continue unless further help is required to stem the transmission and severity risk of COVID-19.

Vaccination programmes locally continue to be supported by the Service with over 87 thousand vaccinations delivered by CFRS staff so far.

The Service has commissioned an evaluation of the response provided by CFRS during the pandemic. The research (led by Dr Julian Clarke of Edge Hill University) will evaluate the following workstreams:

- Food deliveries
- Shielding visits
- Pharmacy deliveries
- Pre-operation swabbing
- Vaccination support
- Fire-prevention activity for high risk household

The research will comprise qualitative research and interviews with partner agencies and Cheshire FRS staff who were involved in the Services' response to the pandemic. It will also comprise quantitative research looking at data held by the Service in relation to COVID-19 activity.

In particular, the research and evaluation work will examine:

- Strategic adaptability
- Capacity for innovation
- Understanding views of local authority and health managers and Cheshire FRS staff
- Outputs and Outcomes (including social value)

Safety Central Collaborations:

Cadent Gas:

Cadent Gas supplied equipment and gas safety information for visitors engaging with programmes at Safety Central. This will support the delivery of information in relation to the causes and risks of Carbon Monoxide poisoning to Key stage 1 and 2 children and also community groups.

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The health trust used Safety Central's first aid/quiet room for antenatal appointments as part of a trial from Sept-20 to March 21. The room was well utilised by midwives and expectant parents living in the Lymm area.

The NHS trust and Safety Central staff will continue the collaboration to aid accident prevention education to expectant parent's and relevant documentation is being put together to support this.

Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN)

SP Energy Networks provided Safety Central with a mock substation to demonstrate the dangers of entering compounds, and overhead cables in the centre's countryside area. These simulations are used in a number of safety and lifeskills programmes at the centre.

The company also supports the running and development of Safety Centrals' volunteer ranger programme.

This aids both safety education locally and supports Scottish Powers' OFGEM obligations to actively support community development and the promotion of public safety.

SPEN continue to support the promotion of public safety however due to COVID-19 little activity occurred linked to this collaboration during April 2020-March 2021.

Current Work streams

The Prevention department are currently working with a range of organisations to establish new collaborations and partnerships. These include working with Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) to scope the possibility of Service staff discussing the benefits of the Priority Services Register (PSR) with residents during a SAW visit and adding them to the register. The PSR holds the details of those individuals who may be at greater risk during a power cut and require additional support, which SPEN can put in place. SPEN could also refer individuals to CFRS for a SAW visit. Depending on the success of the scoping exercise, the Service will also look to work with other utility providers in a similar format to help keep local communities safe and enhance the Safe and Well offer.

The Service liaise with many different organisations on a daily basis (known as light touch collaborations), although these do not warrant full partnership documentation the Prevention department try to keep a record of these engagements. Examples of these include voluntary organisations such as Narcolepsy UK, Deafness Support Network, Age UK Mid Mersey. Others include housing associations or departments within local authority organisations.

Early discussions with mental health trusts and local authorities are also under way to scope establishing further joint roles to support families with complex needs and/or those with mental health conditions who may require support from the fire service.

The Service is involved with the Cheshire West and Chester local COMPACT which sets out how statutory and voluntary sector organisations can enhance the opportunities of working together.

The Service is also a member of boards such as the Cheshire East Dementia Steering Group, The CWAC Domestic Abuse Partnership, Cheshire Anti-Slavery Partnership and the Cheshire and Merseyside No More Suicide Board. The Service aims to work closely with other member organisations and collaborate on any specific areas of work from these partnerships, which can enhance their offer to the communities of Cheshire.

Appendix Two: Timeline of CFRS activities during the COVID-19 pandemic

