

# PRE-PRO-005 - Arson Reduction Procedure

#### **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

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# **Revision and Signoff Sheet**

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#### 1 Introduction

Deliberate fires constitute the largest single cause of major fires in the United Kingdom. The crime of arson has been recognised as one of the most destructive of all crimes and ultimately, can lead to loss of life, serious injuries and a substantial cost to the economy. Each week in the UK:

- There are 2,213 arson attacks.
- Arson kills 2 people.
- Arson injures 53 people.
- 20 schools and colleges are damaged or destroyed by arson.
- 262 homes are damaged or destroyed by arson.
- 360 businesses and public buildings are damaged or destroyed by arson.
- 1,402 cars are damaged or destroyed by arson.

Arson costs the economy around £53.8 million pounds each week in England and Wales. Source: Arson Prevention Forum

Deliberate fires have a negative effect on the quality of people's lives. In 2012/13 there were 4,803 deliberate fires in West Yorkshire, **62%** of the total fires attended. These fires impact directly on the residents and business owners whose properties are damaged or destroyed. Arson also indirectly affects communities by adversely impacting on the reputation and image of the area. Negative perceptions of an area gained by the constant visible aftermath of deliberate fires presents a barrier to inward investment, impacting on regeneration, businesses and housing stock. In the case of burnt out vehicles, these often deprive the residents of recreation and green space areas, free from the dangerous residue resulting from the fires.

Those living on the lowest incomes are 31 times more likely to suffer an arson attack and 16 times more likely to die in a fire.

Source: Arson Prevention Bureau

#### 2 References

For the purposes of this document, the following references are used:

EVA - Environmental Visual AuditDPA - District Prevention AssistantDPM - District Prevention Manager

DVLA - Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
FPTM - Fire Prevention Team Manager

FRS - Fire & Rescue Service
HFSC - Home Fire Safety Check

WYFRS - West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service

WYP West Yorkshire Police

#### 3 Risks and Hazards

#### Attacks from Animals –

It is possible that you may encounter animals whilst carrying out your duties under this procedure. Care must be taken when entering either inhabited or derelict properties and also when delivering leaflets through letterboxes.

## Lone Working –

There will be times when it is necessary for WYFRS employees to be left alone for a period of time whilst completing HFSCs, conducting EVAs or contributing towards community activities. The decision to work alone will be made by District Prevention Managers / Station Commanders using <a href="PRE-NFG-058">PRE-NFG-058</a> for guidance. Ensure you are familiar with <a href="OHS-POL-14">OHS-POL-14</a> when working alone, completing Dynamic Risk Assessments and avoiding situations that may put you at risk.

#### Letterboxes –

Letterboxes should be operated in a way that avoids harm; open the letter box carefully and place leaflets through without putting your fingers through the letter box.

# Derelict/Unoccupied Buildings –

Extra caution should be taken when approaching and investigating derelict or unoccupied buildings in order to avoid harm. Under no circumstances should a WYFRS employee enter a derelict building other than under proper escort or in an emergency situation.

# • Drug paraphernalia -

Extra care must be taken when conducting EVAs and investigating buildings/fly-tipping sites. PPE should be worn at all times to protect from risks such as needle-stick injuries.

# 4 Terminology

FRS (Fire and Rescue Services) separate fires into two categories for reporting and statistical purposes:

# 4.1 Primary Fires

Generally those involving buildings and structures and other property such as vehicles, storage, plant and machinery, fires involving casualties, rescues and escapes and fires where significant FRS resources are employed (FRS Circular 44/2000 and Home Office Circular 21/2000).

## 4.2 Secondary Fires

Generally those involving:

- Derelict buildings and abandoned vehicles.
- Single buildings under demolition.
- Fires confined to chimneys.
- Other outdoor fires such as those involving grassland, gardens and fences.
- · Refuse and refuse containers.

Secondary Fires account for over **75%** of deliberate fires attended by the FRS across the country. These nuisance fires are often set by the same people who are responsible for other forms of anti-social behaviour in the community.

#### 4.3 Arson

A person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property belonging to another intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged shall be guilty of an offence.

Criminal Damage Act 1971

Under the Criminal Damage Act 1971, if the offences of criminal damage and criminal damage with intent to endanger life are caused by fire, they are classified by the Police as arson. For a crime to be recorded, a victim must be identified.

#### 4.4 Deliberate Fires

FRS record deliberate fire incidents using the act or intent of the individual as the primary means of classification. In situations where items or objects of little or no intrinsic value (e.g. grass or rubbish) are classified as a deliberate fire for FRS purpose, the Police may not classify them as arson.

# 5 Target Hardening

Target Hardening consists of:

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- An Enhanced HFSC (Fitting additional detectors in vulnerable rooms/areas).
- The fitting of a flaplock device prohibiting burning materials being introduced to the house through the letterbox.
- Removing combustibles through partnership work.
- Arson related advice tailored to an individual's circumstances.

Credible threats of Arson are only accepted by WYFRS when approved by a Police Inspector. These cases are reported to WYFRS by WYP (West Yorkshire Police) through the online referral system, stating the authorising Inspector. This information then feeds into the Prevention Database, creating a case for WYFRS staff to act on. If a member of Police staff calls directly to station to make a referral, they must be re-directed to the online method. The online method is accessible via the Community Safety section of the Police Intranet site.

The WYFRS Prevention team responds to all such credible threats.

If a WYFRS employee gains knowledge from an occupant during a HFSC that they are receiving arson threats, they must encourage the occupant to report this to the Police before we can carry out Target Hardening. In this situation, an enhanced HFSC must be carried out at the property by the attending officer(s).

If information relating to a current arson threat is disclosed to a WYFRS employee, we have a professional obligation to report this to the Police as part of our duty of care to the community. The occupier must be informed that we will contact WYP to inform them of the arson threat. On return to station, this knowledge must be reported to the Police, by the WYFRS employee, via the Police Non-Emergency number (101) and this should be recorded on the HFSC notes section on the Prevention Database.

However, in the exceptional circumstance of a referral being received from Victim Support, where a client does not wish to report a credible threat, WYFRS will still attend and deliver the intervention but will not report the matter to the Police; Victim Support will continue to work and support their client in the matter moving forwards. For more information, see <a href="Partnership Register-Victim Support">Partnership Register-Victim Support</a>

#### 5.1 Out of Office Hours

Referrals received from WYP out of office hours will be dealt with by Prevention staff on their return to work, during normal office hours which are Monday to Friday, 08:45 – 17:20. Should WYP deem the perceived threat of arson to be so great, the responsibility for the occupant's / complainant's safety lies with WYP to consider other risk reduction methods available to them.

If WYP have concerns 'out of office hours' which may result in fire at a property and needs an immediate response, a HFSC can be requested. This will be conducted by the local Fire Station. Contact could be made directly or via Control. If a crew receives a call from WYP requesting this, the responding Crew must:

- First ensure a referral is made by WYP through the online referral system; this will notify the Prevention Team.
- A crime number should be taken from WYP by the attending Crew and this will need to be recorded in the notes section of the HFSC on the Prevention Database. (For a list of all information that should be taken from WYP, see Contingency Plan).

- Crews should then attend the property, complete an Enhanced HFSC and provide fire safety education to the occupiers. An Enhanced HFSC will include fitting additional smoke detection, covering all rooms in which an attack could be possible.
- It is understood that WYFRS operate a 24/7 service and that Operational Personnel, during the course of their duties, may be presented with people at high risk of fire. If the risk to the occupier is perceived to be so great then the attending crew should consider the fitting of a Flaplock device prohibiting burning materials being introduced to the house through the letterbox. This should be on a case by case basis only and approval must be sought from a District Commander to reduce risk in line with <a href="PRE-NFG-080">PRE-NFG-080</a> - Intervention Out of Office Hours Guidance

• The crew completing the HFSC will then input all known details into the Prevention Database on their return to the Station before the end of that shift, the HFSC should be recorded against the correct contact but under a new case, not the one created by the Online Referral from WYP, this will be in the ownership of the Prevention Department. This will ensure that the original WYP referral case stays in the relevant queue for the Prevention Team to see, and will enable them to follow up the case on their return to office during normal working hours.

This process, when followed correctly, negates the requirement for additional emails or telephone calls to Prevention Team members.

## 5.2 Contingency Plan

Should a situation arise in which the online referral system becomes unavailable, an e-mail can be sent by WYP to the secure e-mail account <a href="mailto:arson.threats@westyorksfire.cjsm.net">arson.threats@westyorksfire.cjsm.net</a>. Any emails sent to this address should only be in cases where the web referral system has been tried and failed.

This e-mail should state (In full):

- Referring Officer (Name and badge number).
- Contact Details of Officer.
- Authorising Inspector (Name and badge number).
- Crime number.
- Name of occupant.
- Date of birth.
- Address.
- Postcode.
- Contact telephone number.
- Risks to WYFRS personnel.
- A brief detail of the issue.

These e-mails will be picked up by the Prevention Department on a daily basis and manually entered on to the Prevention Database. It will be the responsibility of the FPTM (Fire Prevention Team Manager) and Fire Prevention Assistants to monitor this e-mail Inbox. This process is detailed on the Police's own intranet web page.

#### 6 Environmental Visual Audits

All community facing WYFRS staff are expected to complete EVAs (Environmental Visual Audits) when working within the community. EVAs include reporting occurrences of fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and un-secured buildings, as well as identifying areas in which there is a possibility that issues may occur.

#### 6.1 Common Issues to Look Out For

## 6.1.1 Fly-Tipping

Fly-tipping is becoming an increasing problem for FRS. Fly-tipping can range from small amounts of household rubbish to large quantities of commercial waste including tyres.

WYFRS has made good links with Environmental Action Teams, local authority cleansing departments and housing estate caretakers to ensure a fast removal of the waste.

In areas where fly-tipping is a recurring problem, covert cameras have been installed by local councils in order to obtain prosecutions. Local knowledge of WYFRS personnel can be key to identifying and addressing this issue.

#### 6.1.2 Abandoned Vehicles

WYFRS are attending an increasing number of incidents involving abandoned vehicles, with 83 incidents attended in 2012/13.

There is no legal definition of an 'abandoned vehicle' but the list below shows some of the criteria that are considered by local councils:

- Whether taxed or not.
- Doors open/unlocked.
- Flat tyres/missing wheels.
- Windows open/broken.
- Burnt out.
- Rusty brake discs.
- Containing excessive waste.
- Significant damage.
- Unhealthy levels of mould on the inside.
- Stationary for a significant time.
- Missing one or more plates.
- Location of vehicle.
- Details of vehicle held by DVLA.
- Status of land where vehicle is located.

### 6.1.3 Derelict and Un-Secured Buildings

Empty properties quickly become a target for anti-social behaviour and often attract those engaged in drug taking and fire setting. These un-secured properties are often in a state of poor repair and present many operational fire fighting problems including missing floorboards and

deliberately set traps. It is essential that when any property, both residential and commercial, becomes unoccupied, that it is effectively secured as soon as possible.

Extra caution should be taken when approaching and investigating derelict buildings in order to avoid harm. The hazards of investigating derelict buildings can be:

- Presence of homeless people.
- People under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Drugs paraphernalia
- · Possible violence to WYFRS staff.
- High levels of fire loading (Interior and Exterior).
- Hazardous materials.
- Open Voids.
- Unsafe Building Structure.

Under no circumstances should a WYFRS employee enter a derelict building other than under proper escort or in an emergency situation.

# 6.2 Reporting EVA Findings

EVA findings should be reported to the local council (See <u>Appendix 1 – EVA Contacts</u>) and all action taken should be recorded on the Prevention Database. (See <u>Appendix 2 – How to Record an EVA on the Prevention Database</u>) This will ensure we have a record of any action taken and will also allow us to identify trends and problem areas. No other method of recording EVAs will be accepted.

This process is a formal part of the role of all WYFRS Operational and Prevention personnel and is used to help drive risk-based work in station areas.

## 6.3 Areas of Potential/Recurring Issues

If you notice an issue re-occurring at a particular location, for example, repeat car fires within a short distance and a group of youths watching nearby, please report this through to your DPM (District Prevention Manager) or DPA (District Prevention Assistant) in order to initiate action. By reporting such issues, action could be taken through local community groups/police or land owners/property owners to secure the area or work with the group of youths to prevent any further arson attacks.

## 7 Bonfire Period

Arson activity often peaks in the weeks leading up to Bonfire Night. During this period of elevated risk, District Prevention Teams will plan arson reduction work and identify potential problem areas. Prevention and Operational personnel may be required to step up EVA work in these areas of risk. Activities conducted over the bonfire period can include but are not limited to:

- Bonfire and Fireworks talks to schools.
- Additional EVA patrols in risk areas by Operational personnel.
- Police involvement (Additional patrols in high interest areas).
- Working closely with local councils to identify and clear up fly-tipping sites.

- Campaigns to restrict the sale of fireworks, lighters and matches in areas of risk.
- Seeking the advice of the Protection Team should concerns arise over the storage of fireworks.
- Poster/education campaigns in areas of risk.

For an example of best practice see <u>Appendix 3 – Leeds District Bonfire Reduction Plan 2013</u> and Appendix 4 - Leeds District Bonfire Feedback 2013.

#### 8 Education

WYFRS has a wide selection of education packs available to raise the awareness of Arson issues and help prevent anti-social behaviour. These courses/packs are available by contacting the Prevention Training Team or Youth Training Team.

#### 8.1 Child Fire Awareness Course

The Child Fire Awareness Programme aims to address fire setting behaviour by juveniles. It offers one to one education to young people by trained Prevention staff, normally within their own home and in the presence of a parent or guardian. Referrals to the Fire & Rescue Service are usually from the parents or guardians of the child, although this is often prompted by other professionals working in the community. This is sometimes delivered in schools or at another location where the child can be contacted and communicated with safely.

#### 8.2 School Talks

Prevention personnel deliver arson education presentations to schools in areas experiencing high numbers of deliberate fires. Arson education is given in both Primary and Secondary schools.

#### 8.2.1 Primary Schools

Primary school talks are a 60 minute presentation and include the video 'It's Only a Game'. The aim of these talks is to examine the possible consequences of deliberate secondary fires to individuals, the community and the Fire Service.

#### 8.2.2 Secondary Schools

Secondary school talks are a 60 minute presentation and include the Channel 4 programme, which focussed on the death of Fire Fighter Fleur Lombard, who died in a deliberate fire. The aim of these talks is to examine the overall social, psychological & economical cost to society of arson.

# 9 Multi Agency Days of Action

Multi agency 'Days of Action' are well established in each of the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities. Often going under locally adopted names i.e. Operation Champion in the Leeds area, these Days of Action bring together the FRS, Police, Housing, Community Safety, Anti-social Behaviour Units, Education Welfare, Environmental Enforcement and Streetscene Services. Generally the objectives of these operations are to:

- Tackle priority crimes in the designated area.
- Reduce incidents of anti- social behaviour.
- Provide re- assurance to local residents that their problems are recognised and are being addressed.
- Address underlying environmental issues.

Fire Prevention Teams play an important role in these operations, carrying out pre-operation EVAs and giving advice to residents on arson issues. Educational talks are often carried out in the schools within the target area, addressing local issues relating to deliberate fires.

WYFRS involvement in Days of Action will be arranged and co-ordinated by DPMs who will liaise with the Fire Prevention Team. Local fire stations will also provide support in the form of Home Fire Safety Checks and leafleting.

# 10 Appendix

# 10.1 Appendix 1 – EVA Contacts

When you are out working within the community and notice an accumulation of rubbish (materials which could be used in arson), this must be reported to the local council. They are able to attend and remove fly tipping. Below is the referral method in each district:

#### 10.1.1 Leeds

The fire service will send e-mails to <a href="mailto:refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk">refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk</a> marked with the subject line 'West Yorkshire Fire Service'. Leeds City Council will ensure this inbox is checked every morning and will treat them as priority as they are identified as possible arson risks.

#### 10.1.2 Bradford

Telephone: 01274 431000

Online: <a href="https://online.bradford.gov.uk/ufs/ufsmain?ebz=1\_1385464256060&ebf=1&ebp=150">https://online.bradford.gov.uk/ufs/ufsmain?ebz=1\_1385464256060&ebf=1&ebp=150</a>

#### 10.1.3 Calderdale

Telephone: 0845 245 7000

Online: http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/siteinfo/online-services/forms/index.isp?formid=17

#### 10.1.4 Kirklees

Telephone: 01484 414700 E-mail: waste@kirklees.gov.uk

Online: https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/you-kmc/kmc-formsindex/reportit/locality.asp?type=flytipping

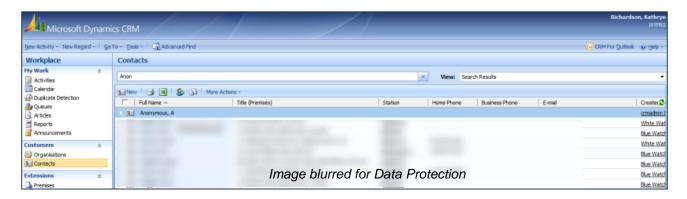
#### 10.1.5 Wakefield

Telephone: 0845 8 506 506

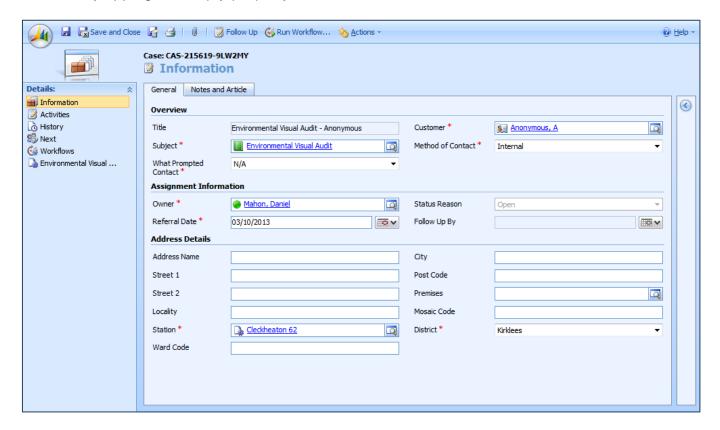
Online: https://eforms.wakefield.gov.uk/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=LFfndudZsD3

## 10.2 Appendix 2 – How to Record an EVA on the Prevention Database

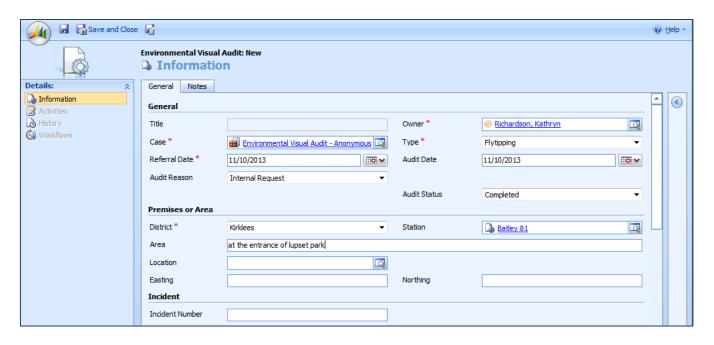
1. Enter the Prevention Database and search for "Anonymous, A" under the contacts tab



- 3. In the subject drop down menu, select "Environmental Visual Audit" from the list.
- 4. Set what prompted contact to "N/A" and method of contact to "Internal".
- 5. The Owner box will be automatically populated with your name, the referral date will need to be set to today's date.
- 6. Set the Station and District according to the location of the reported activity, whether this is fly tipping, an empty property or an abandoned vehicle.



- 7. Use the SAVE icon.
- 8. Press NEXT.
- 9. On this EVA screen, select the Audit reason from the drop down list.
- 10. Select the correct Type e.g. Fly Tipping.
- 11. Describe the area or, if able to locate to a specific address use the location look up.

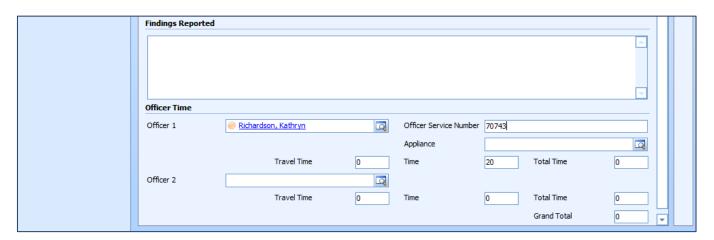


NOTE: If the activity is as a result of an incident, always include the incident number.

12. Identify the agency that has been contacted regarding the issue and type in the reference number if one has been given.



- 13. Record all comments/outcomes in the "Findings reported" box.
- 14. Add the reporting Officers details and time.
- 15. Once all relevant boxes are completed, you can now click SAVE AND CLOSE.



# 10.3 Appendix 3 – Leeds District Bonfire Reduction Plan 2013



# Leeds District Bonfire Risk Reduction Plan 2013



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## 1 Aim of Document

The purpose of this document is to outline the Leeds District Bonfire Risk Reduction Plan for 2013. The plan will be delivered in 3 phases:

Phase 1 - Pre Bonfire Period Prevention Activities

Phase 2 - Bonfire Period

Phase 3 - Debrief

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#### 2 Phase 1 Pre Bonfire Period Prevention Activities

#### Bonfire Period Youth Education Programme 2013

The education programme will commence in October until November 2013 and will be delivered to schools / youth groups in areas identified as Leeds hotspots from fire data analysis.

The programme will be delivered to schools by the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Prevention Team and Operational Fire Crews. The programme will focus on highlighting the risks involved in bonfires and fireworks and the enforcement activities that will hold young offenders accountable. The aim of the presentations will be to strongly encourage young people to have a safe and sensible approach to the bonfire period and discourage fire related anti-social behaviour.

Operational Fire Crews Supported by Prevention Staff will be targeting secondary schools in hotspot areas to deliver education packages. All other schools will be contacted and offered educational resources if they wish to deliver themselves.

Youth Services have been provided with educational resources including leaflets, booklets and posters. If any issues emerge locally in targeted areas Prevention staff may offer informal educational talks.

These presentations are held within the West Yorkshire Fire Service Fire Space and can be found here:

#### Firework Presentations

Please Note: Leeds School Half Term is Monday 28th October - Friday 1st November 2013.

#### Media Campaign

Leeds District Prevention Staff will liaise with Corporate Communication to repeat and build upon previous media campaigns.

Corporate Communications will be promoting a Leeds District Press release to local and regional press and broadcasters. They will also be utilising social media methods including Facebook and Twitter to communicate key messages during this period.

The "Gone with a Flash" media campaign material will be published on West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services external website.

#### Bonfire Clearance Plan

Firework displays and bonfires can be enjoyable and safe occasions; however, there are risks in creating or attending an unofficial bonfire or display that has been poorly organised. Residents in Leeds are encouraged to attend organised displays and bonfires in order to minimise risk to individuals and harm to the environment. Details of events are listed here in phase two. In order to limit these risks, any unofficial bonfire will be removed prior to bonfire night. Members of the public, Councillors and staff are asked to be vigilant in reporting potential bonfires in order that Environmental Services and Housing staff can remove them.

Please See Appendices A for Guidance on completing Environmental Visual Audits and reporting fly tipping.

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#### 3 Phase 2 Bonfire Period

#### Planned Activities

The following approved public bonfire and firework displays are taking place on Tuesday 5th November 19:00hrs:

- Bramley Park
- East End Park
- Middleton Park
- Springhead Park
- Woodhouse Moor

For information about activities during half term week please visit:

http://www.leeds.gov.uk/sports/Pages/Children's-holiday-activities.aspx

#### Operational Fire Crews

Operational crews will be required to assist the operation by being vigilant to, spotting, mitigating risk and reporting bonfire material.

The Officer in charge of any appliance is responsible for taking the following actions throughout the bonfire period:

Patrolling station areas to identify and report instances of bonfire material including general household rubbish which poses a risk.

- High Visibility Patrolling hotspot areas. The presence of a Fire Appliance is likely to deter anybody
  from partaking in acts of anti-social behaviour. Crew/Watch Managers should consider the use of
  appliance CCTV when patrolling areas to capture any acts of anti-social behaviour.
- Assessing the risk potential for bonfire materials and taking action to mitigate the risk to an
  acceptable level. E.g. moving materials to a safer location (where viable) and soaking the
  materials to prevent ignition particularly where this occurs outside of the clearance teams
  operating hours.
- Provide accurate details of the location and description of the bonfire materials to assist with clearance.
- Identifying empty properties that are either open to access and/or are accumulating combustible materials. Empty properties and combustible materials should be reported to Leeds City Council.

#### Prevention Staff

Prevention Staff will attend Leeds City Council ASB Tasking meetings prior to Bonfire Period in order to present this bonfire risk reduction plan to different agencies. They will also attend the tasking meetings post bonfire period to provide a debrief.

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Image blurred for Data Protection

#### 4 Phase 3 Debrief

Following this year's Bonfire Period a debrief document will be circulated internally and externally covering the following items:

- Comparative analysis of 2013 deliberate fires during bonfire period compared against the same period the previous years.
- An overview of preventative activity completed prior to bonfire period.
- · Any hotspot issues or areas that emerged this year.
- · An action plan that will inform planning for Bonfire Period 2014.

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# 10.4 Appendix 4 – Leeds District Bonfire Feedback 2013



# Leeds District Bonfire Reduction Plan Post Bonfire Feedback 2013

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#### Performance

The period selected this year to compare performance against the previous year is 1st November until the 10th November. Overall there was a 6.1% reduction in the total number of secondary fires during this period compared with the same period last year. Furthermore, there were no recorded injuries that occurred as a result of bonfires/deliberate secondary fire this year.

	Leeds District – All Secondary Fires			
	Accidental Secondary Fires	Deliberate Secondary Fires	Cause not known	Total
2012	10	89	0	99
2013	17	74	2	93

Geographically we have had an increase this year in secondary fire incidents within East and South Leeds and we have seen a reduction within West Leeds.

#### Overview of Prevention Activity

This year the district outlined our commitment to prevention activities within the District Bonfire Risk Reduction Plan and we are pleased to report the following activity:

- ✓ Operational Crews and Prevention Staff targeted secondary schools within hotspot areas and delivered education packages to approximately 4800 young people in Leeds.
- Operation Crews and Prevention staff completed planned high visibility patrols and environmental visual audits in hotspot areas resulting in 147 referrals to Leeds City Council for fly tipping removal.
- Leeds City Council CCTV control room proactively monitored the city for the build-up on bonfire
  material resulting in the removal of 5 potentially dangerous bonfires.
- 54 shops in targeted areas across the district participated in the "Strike Out" campaign and voluntarily restricted the sale of lighters and matches to those under the age of 18 years old.
- Key bonfire safety messages were distributed throughout youth clubs, one stop shops, housing officers and family centres.

#### Recommendations for Bonfire Planning 2014

We aim to continue to build on this year's success by proactively engaging in preventative work across the city. Based on key learning outcomes for this year we will:

- ✓ Plan and book all secondary school talks in June prior to the school summer holidays.
- ✓ Consider completing Environmental Visual Audits during daylight hours to minimise the number of violence at work incidents.
- Continue to work in partnership with external agencies and begin the planning for bonfire period earlier in the year.

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