



West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Firesetting Intervention Policy

PRE-POL-006



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1 What is our offer?

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a statutory duty on fire and rescue services to carry out activities to promote community fire safety, with the aim of preventing deaths and injuries in the home and reducing the impact of fire on the community. This duty includes fire safety education.

WYFRS attended 5475 deliberate firesetting (including arson) incidents during 2019/20.¹ 23% of these were primary fires which caused damage to residential and non-residential properties, other outdoor structures, and vehicles. Deliberate firesetting can also result in the loss of life, cause serious injury and cost the economy substantially.

Young people can be interested in fire from a very young age and can present behaviour setting fires from as young as two or three years old.

Many studies identify two basic behaviours when setting fires - fire play and firesetting. The defining difference between the two types is the degree of intent to cause harm or damage.²

Young people who have fire play behaviours will have little intention to cause harm or damage. Firesetting behaviours are intentional acts that have a higher level of intent to cause harm or injury.

Children and young people can intentionally set fires but may not have the desire or intent to cause harm or injury; they may be unaware of the seriousness, or impact, of what they are doing. However, all fires have the potential to cause injury, death and property damage.

We will work with children and young people at risk of harm, their families and partner agencies to provide educational input to prevent further fires occurring.

An early intervention can significantly reduce the chance of continued 'firesetting' behaviour or reoffending.

Once a child or young person who is displaying fire play or firesetting behaviours has been identified, we decide on the intervention and setting most appropriate for that individual; this may be a

- One-to-one fire safety education session in a home, school or community setting. These sessions are offered face-to-face or on-line.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables#incidents-attended>
Fire statistics Table 0401

² McCardle, Lambie and Barker-Collo, 2004; Putnam and Kirkpatrick 2005

- Short talk/discussion to a small group in a school, community or youth justice setting.
- Adult fire awareness package that can be delivered in partnership with prisons and the probation service for individuals with a fire-related conviction.

We deliver fire safety education sessions to children and young people aged one to 25 years old. We acknowledge that in some cases providing home fire safety education to parents and carers will be necessary to reduce further risk.

We ensure resources, materials and language used during fire safety education are age appropriate and adapted to meet educational and learning needs.

Anyone who cares for, or about, a child or young person displaying fire play or firesetting behaviour can make a referral to us (See Section 2 - Accessibility below).

When a referral is made, we will carry out a Safe and Well visit in the child or young person's main home and any other residences where they regularly live i.e. where there are shared access arrangements. We will fit appropriate smoke detection to all rooms where they spend time. We will also inform the young person's carer, parent or guardian about general fire safety issues in the home and how to make it safer.

Additionally, we will deliver a fire safety education with the child or young person. We will explore why the child or young person has played with or used fire to communicate. We will educate the individual about how fire is created, how it spreads and how quickly it develops; what to do in the event of a fire occurring and how to prevent a fire from occurring. We will discuss with them the risks and consequences of their behaviour and the impact their actions may have on others. We will encourage the parent or carer's participation and engagement in the process. We may refer the child or young person to other agencies for further support. These interventions are delivered free-of-charge and according to individual needs and requirements.

After the delivery of the educational intervention, the young person's fire playing or firesetting behaviour is monitored for three months. In most cases, the behaviour stops. In the few cases where it does not, WYFRS will work with partner agencies to look at other ways to engage with the young person.

To enable WYFRS to deliver this element of our proactive community safety programme and our vision of Making West Yorkshire Safer, we have a specialist youth intervention team who deliver the above educational interventions along with trained fire prevention staff.

2 Accessibility

Referrals to our service can be made by:

- Phone on 01924 334057,
- Email to youth.interventions@westyorksfire.gov.uk
- Accessing our self-referral system through a request for a Safe and Well visit.

We actively promote our services internally, so that staff are aware and ensure active referrals are passed through to the youth interventions team at the earliest opportunity. Externally, by ensuring our referring partners, such as schools, youth organisations, youth justice services and probation teams are aware of our referral process and our easy to access partnership referral portal. Information is also available via our website and youth intervention booklet.

3 Partnerships

We actively work with our partners to positively identify individuals who may benefit from our service and run awareness sessions so that they are confident raising appropriate referrals.

If required, we will attend any Early Help Assessment (EHA) meetings or Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) meetings which are arranged to ensure that any services recommended, or opportunities identified as being suitable for the individual are maximised.

4 Data and information sharing

Any information or data gathered by us is recorded electronically and stored securely, at the earliest opportunity. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis only. We will use the data to prevent and reduce fire crime and firesetting, evaluate our work and inform decisions on improving our service. We will use compliant information-sharing protocols and agreements to share appropriate data and personal information with our partners and other relevant organisations which may improve your safety or benefit you.

People are able to access their data and information by request in line with current data protection legislation.

5 Equality and Diversity

We will work with our partners to ensure that our interventions and services are accessible to all individuals within our local communities, particularly those most at risk of displaying fire playing or firesetting behaviour. We will engage with diverse groups and communities in West Yorkshire, to ensure that we remain flexible and dynamic in our approach and continue to meet the changing needs of all individuals. We will ensure that all the children and young people we work with are treated fairly and with respect, irrespective of their faith, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or race and will adapt our interventions to meet the learning age of the participant.