



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

The professional voice of the UK Fire & Rescue Service

Arson Reduction Strategy 2019 - 2022



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Foreword



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On behalf of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), we welcome you its first Arson Reduction Strategy supporting the Coordination Committee's aim to bring stakeholders together in our common drive to improve local communities, through reducing the incidence of arson and deliberate fire-setting.

Within the challenges of our changing environments, it is important that our approach in delivering services reflects and promotes the NFCC's vision.

By promoting and improving the safety and wellbeing of our communities across the UK, we can create safer places for people to live, work and prosper.

We would like to thank all involved in bringing this strategy and the supporting toolkit to fruition, and it is hoped that all Fire & Rescue Services take advantage of these resources to contribute to future national achievements.

Moving forward as a nation we are experiencing new challenges within the Fire & Rescue Service alongside some age old societal issues. This developing position presents us with opportunities.

In many areas arson and the blight from deliberate fires is back on the increase. Across the UK, arson is now the largest single cause of fires attended by FRSs.

Our prevention and protection services are praised by many and it has never been more important to build on our past successes and the dedication of our professional staff.

We will develop wider and new approaches, enhancing collaboration, strengthening partnerships and empowering local communities to become stronger and more cohesive; reducing the incidence and impact that arson has on people, families, businesses, organisations and local areas.

Introduction

Arson has been a blight on our local communities for some considerable time resulting in economic loss to people, businesses, communities and local authorities. Aside from this, the demands on some Fire & Rescue Services (FRSs) from arson and deliberate fires far outweighs that of other incident types; resulting in resources being diverted away from life risk incidents and preventive activities.

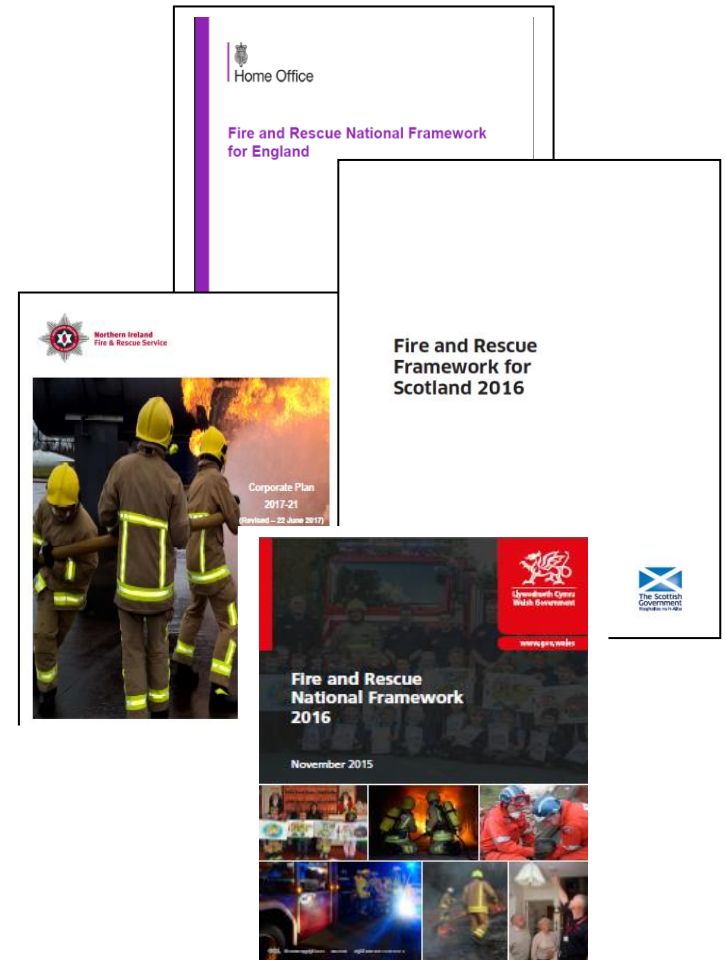
National Framework documents for FRSs set out the strategic expectations to identify, assess and target risks which could affect their communities with arson and deliberate fire-setting being specifically referenced; England in section 2.4, and Wales in sections 1.11, 1.19 and 1.25. Scotland's strategic priority No.2 covers the need to identify and target inequalities. Northern Ireland's Corporate Plan takes cognisance of the three National Framework Documents capturing the reduction of deliberate fires in strategic objective No.1.



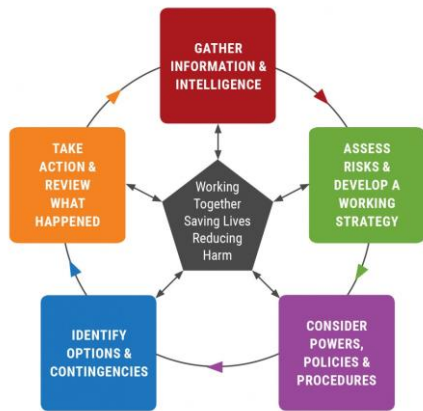
To assist with achieving these, section 5.1 of the National Fire Chiefs Council's Strategy 2017/20 includes collaboration to reduce risk, specifying amongst other things: arson and wilful fire-setting.

Demand on FRSs from arson differs across the UK.

Since 2011/12 arson has reduced by 30% (England, Wales and Scotland) however, since 2014/15 there has been an upward trend with arson increasing by 15%. The reported economic cost of arson was £1.2 - £1.49bn, with the potential real loss being between £5.73bn and £11.46bn.



A set of operating principles have been developed to provide a framework and reference point for the continuous development of our approach to arson reduction, tying in with the strategic interests of the Arson Prevention Forum, the Home Office Fire Safety Unit and the National Anti-Social Behaviour Steering Board.



For some significant time, the more affected FRSs have been proactive in developing local solutions through collaboration, partnership working and as a standalone fire service. Through these approaches we will align our efforts to the four components of the Government’s Serious & Organised Crime (SOC) Strategy; prevent, protect, prepare and pursue.

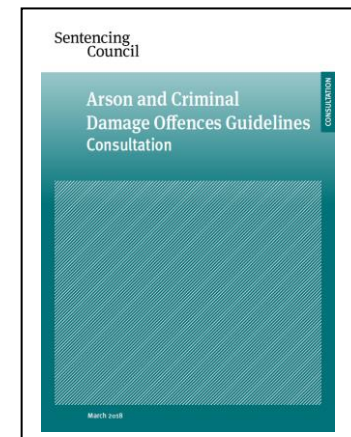
The Criminal Damage Act 1971 (England & Wales), Order 1977 (Northern Ireland), the Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014 (England & Wales), ASB Order 2004 (Northern Ireland) and the ASB (Scotland) Act 2004 are the main pieces of legislation that will facilitate the reduction of arson through; Community Protection Notices, Public Space Protection Orders, Criminal Behaviour Orders, Civil injunctions, Dispersal & Closure Powers.

The JDM (Joint Decision Model) developed for operations can be used in an arson context to assess the community impact, this will assist the development of partnership solutions, using a common recognised platform, *“Working together to save life and reduce harm”*.

This strategy aims to build on past success in order to reduce the incidence of arson on a national perspective within people’s homes, businesses and neighbourhoods. A national toolkit has been developed to complement this framework giving FRSs access to elsewhere developed initiatives and working practices.

Low crime detection rates remain an area of frustration for many FRSs. It is hoped that national collaboration developments in the Fire Investigation arena will improve these. In the case of incidents of arson with low financial value; namely ‘small fires’, we recognise the National Police Chiefs Council’s (NPCC) difficulty encountered in obtaining resource allocation to progress any investigation for a meaningful detection and prosecution.

For incidents where detection is successful, prosecution levels have been historically low. To assist improvement the Sentencing Council conducted a 13 week consultation on arson offences from 27th March to 26th June 2018 with members of the public, judiciary, legal practitioners and partners. New guidelines are expected in 2020. Promoting these when published will assist as a deterrent. Until this time, maximising the media coverage from successful prosecutions is essential for FRSs.



Case for change

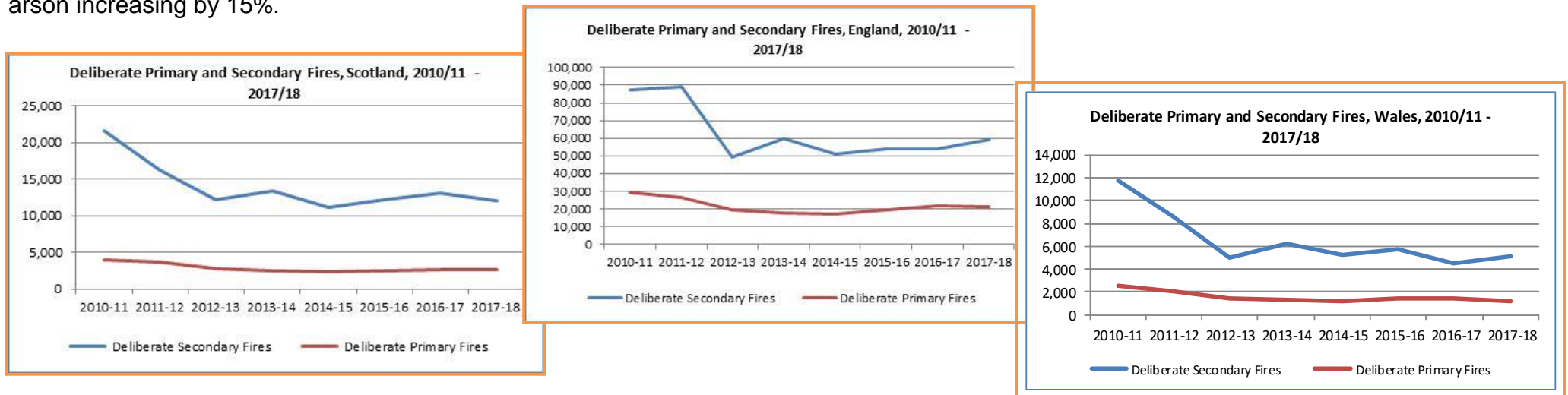
Demand

Arson accounted for 49.8% of all fires attended in 2017/18 by FRSs in England, Scotland and Wales (204,426 fires attended; 101,809 deliberate). This is the largest, single cause of fire attended by FRSs:

- England; 48%. (167,291 fires attended, 80,610 deliberate; www.gov.uk/statistics)
- Scotland; 57% (26,115 fires attended, 14,828 deliberate; <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/about-us/fire-and-rescue-statistics.aspx>)
- Wales; 58%. (11020 fires attended, 6,371 deliberate; (<https://gov.wales/fire-and-rescue-incident-statistics>)
- Northern Ireland: Figures not available

181 fire deaths resulted from deliberate fires in England and Scotland (161 England; 20 Scotland; no data for Wales or Northern Ireland).

Since 2011/12 arson has reduced by 30% (England, Wales and Scotland) however, since 2014/15 there has been an upward trend with arson increasing by 15%.



Economic cost

The Arson Prevention Forum use the 2008 Department for Communities and Local Government calculation for economic cost and apply a 2.6% annual increase to indicate current position. The reported cost of fire insurance claims was £1.2bn. The estimated economic cost attributed to arson from statistics in 2017-18 was £1.49bn.

We have long recognised that not all fires are reported. Historic Home Office Crime Surveys estimated that FRSs were only notified of between 13% - 26% of all fires, indicating that this economic loss could be greatly under estimated.

Scaling this up, the potential economic cost attributed to arson in the UK for 2017-18, is more likely to be between £5.73bn and £11.46bn.

Strategic interest

The 'reduction of arson' is included within the NFCC's overall strategy. This is embedded within the Prevention Coordination Committee's Delivery Plan under the Home Safety Committee, and this strategy aligns to and underpins the NFCC arson position statement.

The Home Office Fire Safety Unit and National Anti-Social Behaviour Steering Board both have vested interests in reducing the high occurrence rate of low financial value incidents that pose barriers to improving local communities through safer neighbourhoods and societal change. These none life risk incidents are in the main classed as Anti-Social Behaviour incidents and do not feature highly in the NPCC's strategy. Neighbourhood policing is widely regarded as the 'bedrock' of British policing, however, as forces have adapted their operating models the form in which it is delivered has diversified, and in some areas diminished. Local delivery plans covering Neighbourhood Policing provides for collaborative inputs into tactical and operational levels through for example: Safer Partnerships, Problem Orientated Policing, Joint Action Groups and Neighbourhood Policing Teams. These differ in force areas.

Local authorities have a distinct integrated interest through the reduction of costs associated with asset or facility repairs and replacement such as bins, road furniture, community play and leisure facilities. Clean up and making safe also feature within local authority reactive costs.

The Arson Prevention Forum (APF) is the strategic stakeholder group for the Association of British Insurers (ABI), with the NFCC, NPCC, Heritage England and other bodies forming membership of the group. The APF has a vested interest in developing and aligning their national strategy, encouraging developments in the judicial system through improving identification, detection and prosecution rates, and improving communications to support the reduction of fire losses to communities and businesses.

Early intervention

It is recognised that low level deliberate fire-setting can commence through a number of factors, developing in seriousness as individuals or groups ASB increases. It is essential that fire-setter intervention programmes are seen as an early help intervention method to achieve behavioural change. Extensive work is being undertaken within the sector with regards to fire setting behaviours and the links to child and adolescent mental health, this work can be accessed via NFCC Workplace.

The benefits and impacts of early interventions should be understood by partners working with fire setters or those at risk. The breadth of these interventions should not be restricted to children/youths who have been identified and referred to FRSs. They should be offered as educational support interventions to those deemed as being more vulnerable or requiring support following assessment; for example, those receiving enhanced support from local authorities including 'Troubled Families' and 'Domestic Violence' teams.

Youth diversionary tactics and bespoke engagement programmes have been developed by FRSs to support young people at risk of exclusion; those involved in anti-social activity or those exhibiting fire setting behaviours. Work with partners can enhance these interventions whilst offering opportunities for bespoke tailoring and commissioning. It is essential that such programmes are well communicated and offered as alternative education schemes, life skills programmes, family cohesion programmes etc. The toolkit will encourage sharing of established practices for FRSs to widen early intervention involvement, preventing more serious use of fire developing as individual's age.

Enough is enough

Under the Criminal Damage Act 1971, Order 1977 and Criminal Law Act 1995 arson is crime. Over the years some effects of arson have become an accepted norm within communities. The *lack of respect* for other people's property and *lack of pride* for local community assets and safe neighbourhoods, often feature in underpinning societal issues. Local resident reluctance to report crime has created desensitisation, facilitating the prevalence of arson mainly in areas associated with higher levels of deprivation.

2016 data shows 21,961 arson cases recorded by the Police (Source: Home Office) with 984 convictions (Source: Ministry of Justice) excluding cautions or 1,242 convictions if cautions are included. This equates to 4.4% or 5.6% of arson cases recorded resulting in a prosecution respectively.

All partners and communities have a part to play in saying "*Enough is Enough*". Engagement is essential to develop the community empowerment required to change individuals' behaviour and drive a shift in community perception against the acceptance of deliberate fire setting and arson. Powers contained within the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014 (England & Wales), ASB Order 2004 (Northern Ireland) and the ASB (Scotland) Act 2004 and use of the 'Community Trigger' and Community Remedy' routes will help facilitate this shift.

Strategic aim & outcomes

The overall aim of this strategy is to reduce the incidence of **deliberate fires** and their **consequential impacts** including personal and economic loss; contributing to **community empowerment** and **economic growth**.

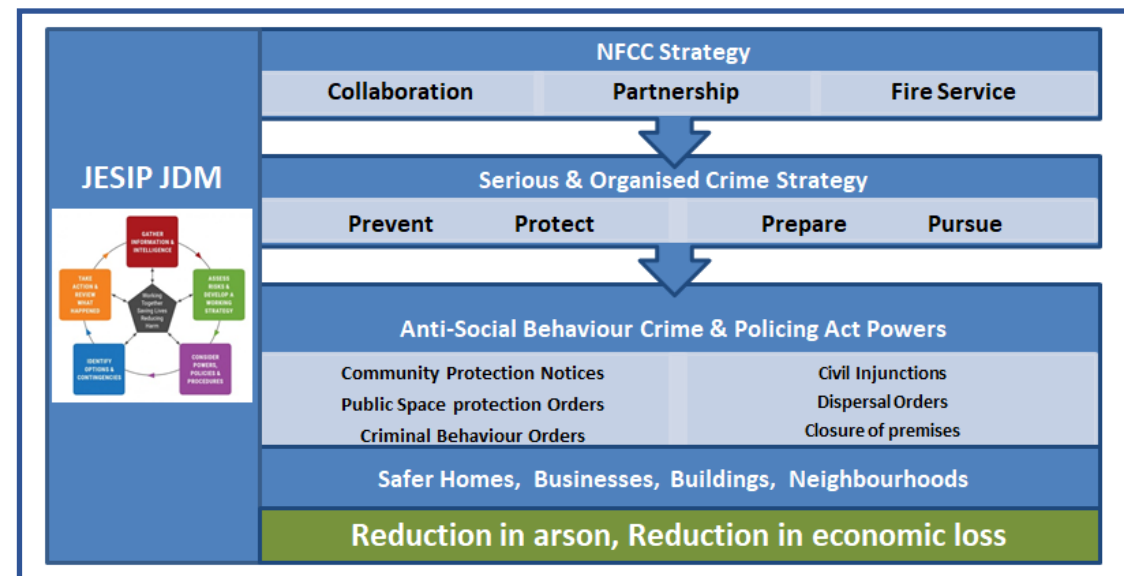
Operating principles

To assist in maximising our success, we will be guided by a set of clear operating principles as a framework and reference point for the continuous development of this strategy and assistance to FRSs on a common approach to reducing arson.

Building upon existing FRSs foundations of risk identification, assessment and management, our approach to reducing arson will be to work in collaboration, in partnership and when required as a standalone service, aligning our efforts to the four Ps of the SOC strategy and engaging partners for wider use of Powers under respective ASB legislation. The JESIP JDM will facilitate a joint approach through its commonly understood platform.

By working with our communities, individuals, businesses, and partner organisations, we will develop and deliver the best possible services that maximise outcomes for local communities.

In developing solutions, we should aim to be innovative, using solutions that assist to deliver efficient and effective services, which we can continually refine, evaluate & share good practice.



The desired outcomes of this strategy are to create **safer homes**, **safer businesses** and **buildings**, and **safer neighbourhoods**.

National arson reduction toolkit

In order to provide a clear and user friendly standardised approach, a National Arson Reduction Toolkit has been developed to provide a structured framework for multi-agency use.

The framework integrates the four Pillars of the Government’s S&OCG Strategy; working collaboratively, in partnership and as a stand-alone FRS, producing the desired outcomes relative to ‘safer homes’, ‘safer businesses, buildings’ and ‘safer neighbourhoods’.

STRATEGIC APPROACH		In Collaboration	In Partnership	As a standalone FRS
		PREVENT - PROTECT - PREPARE - PURSUE		
OUTCOME	Safer Homes	Catalogue of initiatives and working practices	Catalogue of initiatives and working practices	Catalogue of initiatives and working practices
	Safer Businesses / Buildings	Catalogue of initiatives and working practices	Catalogue of initiatives and working practices	Catalogue of initiatives and working practices
	Safer Neighbourhood	Catalogue of initiatives and working practices	Catalogue of initiatives and working practices	Catalogue of initiatives and working practices

Collaboration

Greater collaboration with partners is essential to continue breaking down the barriers of information and data sharing. FRSs have encountered inconsistencies between incident and crime data leading to challenges with collaborative resourcing. We must continue to seek to remove the barriers to joint working and information sharing through the use of the JESIP JDM and Information Sharing Agreements.

Using recognised analysis and crime reduction techniques such as the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) and SOLVE (Situation, Offender, Location, Victim, Environment) processes, it will be possible to determine commonalities and links to potential benefits that could be realised through collaborative approaches with police and local authorities. Previous successes have been seen through joint arson task forces, integrated community safety teams and embedding staff within policing and community safety teams.

Through analysis of the local impacts of arson and deliberate fire-setting, FRSs will be able to determine if true collaboration is appropriate for their respective areas which could include the potential of pooling elements of financial or human resources. Likewise, the potential of co-location and space sharing may also provide opportunities. The toolkit includes the aforementioned approaches for consideration.

Partnerships

Establishing, maintaining and continually developing and engagement blue light services, local authorities, community planning agencies, voluntary organisations, local businesses, community and neighbourhood groups is key to the successful reduction of arson.

- **Safer homes**

In the deliberate fire context, this is the main area where human life is susceptible. Multi-agency partnerships supporting specific groups for example troubled families, domestic and sexual violence victims, multiple complex needs and so on, can establish joint targeted visits to ensure family unit safety, whilst providing arson and consequence education to children within the household who are often linked to venting frustrations outside the home through ASB and fire-setting.

Arson prevention advice provided during home visits coupled with target hardening measures for those under threat, and home security referrals to local police forces are just some of the many good practices included in the toolkit.

- **Safer neighbourhoods**

Contributing to the improvement of our local neighbourhoods and environments is a key component of empowering communities. Neighbourhoods would be more cohesive and enjoyable places to live and work if they exhibit less attributes of crime and deprivation. In the main, fires which cause this local blight are associated with deliberate vehicle and deliberate secondary fires.

Engagement with blue light and local authority partners has seen some excellent initiatives dealing with common issues impacting across services. Some decisions taken by local authorities in dealing with financial pressures have had unintended consequences for opportunist arson such as staffing reductions resulting in the reduced use of ASB powers; the introduction of facilities charges, waste collection and grounds maintenance frequencies extended all contributing to increases in illegally dumped waste.

New technologies and greater coverage of CCTV provides new opportunities for dealing with vehicle fires. Whilst CCTV will act as a deterrent for ASB and deliberate fires, the displacement of crime is often observed and requires additional approaches to complement.

Engaging communities, community leaders and groups is key to empowering communities, supporting them to take more responsibility, develop more respect and pride for their local areas and facilities such as through assisting to secure grant funding for local area projects, assisting in multi-agency action days and being involved in social regeneration plans. These are some of the areas included within the toolkit on how partnerships can develop support at a neighbourhood level.

- **Safer buildings and businesses**

Arson presents a risk to many businesses within excess of 3,000 attacks on the business community each year. Unfortunately, this risk is overlooked by many companies. Considering arson when undertaking Fire Risk Assessments and implementing responsible practices to minimise the potential for an arson attack is essential for building and business owners.

Raising the profile of arson with building and business owners through local enterprise partnerships, Chambers of Commerce and other local business groups present platforms where FRs and police forces can advise on simple actions. We will look to develop this area of the toolkit with members of the APF to reduce commercial impact and economic loss.

FRS specific activity

Many of the partnership initiatives commence as standalone FRS activities, attracting wider involvement as their success and effectiveness develops. We envisage this area of the toolkit will contribute to:

- **Safer homes**

Reducing the potential of arson being used as a mechanism to threaten or deliberately harm people within their home is essential. Community 'call back' initiatives reactively offer FRSs a potentially lifesaving and safeguarding opportunity through the identification of people; whether vulnerable or not, being targeted or victimised; and likewise, an opportunity for them to reach out for what could be the first, or only, offer of assistance.

- **Safer neighbourhoods**

Schools education is widely used to engage children and youths. This audience has proved successful for FRSs to develop relations with local education authorities, establishments and most importantly pupils up and down the country. Whilst contributing to the reputation of our service, this has undoubtedly improved fire safety knowledge and an influencing factor in the reduction of accidental dwelling fires.

We must use this established route in the intelligence led targeting of educational establishments and local facilities (such as youth centres) within deliberate fire hotspot areas and catchment zones, to provide specific localised interventions against arson.

- **Safer buildings and businesses**

Removing free fuel reduces the risk of opportunist arson and is a quick win for all building and business owners. Fire safety audits completed by FRSs are an ideal opportunity to assess and advise (using CFPAs guide7) on fuel and waste management, whilst all staff interacting with local businesses can advise on general arson reduction measures.

The Arson Reduction Task & Finish Group are currently assessing options for the most appropriate solution for bringing together national good practice and where this toolkit will be located for FRSs to use and expand on through dedicated member access.

This repository will form the basis of sharing existing and future good practice. A contact list will be available for instances where further information on specific initiatives or working practices is required.

Strategic objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: FRSs to develop and communicate a clear local arson profile, indicating its prevalence, impact and economic cost to partners and communities.

Action	
1	Affected FRSs to engage in data analysis to profile their local issues
2	FRSs to calculate their local economic cost to communities resulting from arson
3	Where applicable, FRSs to highlight the risk from arson in their integrated risk management plans (IRMP) and associated internal plans
4	FRSs to communicate local position with strategic partners to influence a partnership approach and encourage neighbourhood regeneration
5	FRSs to communicate local position with affected communities to influence social action and behavioural change
6	FRSs to work with local police forces to improve accuracy of recording incidents of arson

Anticipated outcome: Key local areas of focus identified; Raised profile with Strategic Partners and enhanced community awareness in preparation for engagement and empowerment.

OBJECTIVE 2: Develop and implement effective local solutions for collaborative interventions.

Action	
1	FRSs to assess the potential of collaborative approaches to integrated arson reduction
2	Where applicable, FRSs to use the joint NFCC / NPCC Arson Position Statement and this Strategy to develop a local level arson strategy
3	FRSs to use the toolkit to assess the feasibility and suitability of elsewhere developed collaborative approaches for local implementation
4	FRSs to maintain the ongoing expansion of the National Toolkit through uploading new local collaborative approaches - <i>“expanding the toolkit”</i>

Anticipated outcome: Safer Homes, buildings, businesses and neighbourhoods brought about by inter-agency collaboration.

OBJECTIVE 3: Develop and implement effective solutions for partnership and community intervention.

Action	
1	FRSs to actively encourage the use of Powers within the ASB Crime & Policing Act 2014; with local police forces, local authorities and community safety partnerships (CSPs)
2	FRSs to use the toolkit to assess the feasibility and suitability of elsewhere developed partnerships and community intervention initiatives for local implementation
3	FRSs to develop and implement a feedback process for detection and prosecution information, to ensure valid information is available on completed investigations
4	FRSs to maintain an ongoing expansion of the National Toolkit through uploading local initiatives - <i>“expanding the toolkit”</i>

Anticipated outcome: Safer Homes, buildings, businesses and neighbourhoods brought about by partnership and community co-operation.

OBJECTIVE 4: Develop and implement effective solutions for FRSs sole intervention.

Action	
1	FRSs to use the National Toolkit to assess the feasibility and suitability of elsewhere developed, stand-alone FRS arson reduction initiatives for their local implementation
2	FRSs to develop and implement a feedback process for detection and prosecution information, to ensure valid information is available on completed investigations
3	FRSs to maintain an ongoing expansion of the National Toolkit through uploading local initiatives - <i>“expanding the toolkit”</i>

Anticipated outcome; Safer Homes, buildings, businesses and neighbourhoods brought about by FRSs prevention and protection initiatives / services.

Performance targets

For any strategy of this nature the inclusion of targets is a key component for improvement. The effect of arson on individual FRSs differs throughout the UK therefore it would be inappropriate to set a specific target for all to aspire to.

FRSs should seek to determine their own aspirational targets within local IRMPs having due regard for their specific challenges, performance and resources.

The overall aim of this strategy is to reduce the incidence of deliberate fires and their consequential impacts. It therefore follows that the performance target on a national perspective is to achieve year on year deliberate fire reductions using a 5 year rolling average for a more robust and reliable dataset.

Measuring success

The baselining of deliberate fires has been completed. Ongoing success will be monitored on an annual basis through validated FRS incident data and reporting into the Home Safety Committee, through the NFCC Arson Lead, on the 5 year rolling average position of:

1. total deliberate fires
2. fatalities resulting from deliberate fires
3. deliberate dwelling fires
4. deliberate vehicle fires
5. deliberate F1 (other)
6. deliberate small / secondary fires
7. deliberate industrial & commercial fires

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