

24th February, 2015

Agenda Item: 11

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

JOINT AGENCY VULNERABLE PERSONS IDENTIFICATION PROJECT UPDATE (NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, HOME SAFETY CHECK PROJECT)

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members of the progress made by a partnership approach to reduce the vulnerability of individuals in their local communities in respect of fire prevention and to seek approval to embed this into our standard processes at the Customer Service Centre (once all district councils have been completed).

Information and Advice

2. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) have changed the way that they deliver their Fire Prevention activity over the last 3 years and now focus their activity on those that they consider most at risk from fire.
3. Through extensive data sharing with other organisations they have been able to build a picture of the demographic groups that are most at risk in certain situations and prioritise these groups.
4. Those over 65 and living alone were found to be particularly at risk of fire with the risk increasing as people get older. If these individuals are already in receipt of home care due to incapacity or disability that risk increases further.
5. In order to engage with these vulnerable people NFRS have been working closely with the County Council in order to help to establish lists (by district) of the most vulnerable people across Nottinghamshire. Access to the Framework Social Care database has been instrumental in achieving this.
6. A working group has been in place for over a year now, to review how the two organisations, and others, can work together to develop a service to protect the vulnerable.
7. Mansfield, Bassetlaw and Ashfield have now been completed with a fourth district now well underway (Gedling).

8. The County's Customer Service Centre (CSC) was commissioned to make calls and send out letters to those at risk, to promote a Home Fire Safety Check from the Fire Service. By NCC acting on behalf of the Fire Service this ensures that there was no physical data exchange between parties and Data Protection was therefore not compromised.
9. Over the last 12 months residents who, when contacted, expressed an interest were referred to NFRS and appointments were made for a free Home Fire Safety Check, these include
 - The installation of new smoke alarms free of charge or checks to smoke alarms already installed.
 - General advice and guidance relating to fire safety in the home (overloading or plus, overhanging or exposed wiring etc)

During conversations it was established that many residents having smoke alarms were not checking these regularly and some had removed the batteries.

10. In all, over 1000 people have been contacted resulting in NFRS receiving referrals for over 150 Home Fire Safety Checks.
11. Each resident who has undergone a Fire Safety Check has been re-contacted to gather feedback on the end to end process. This has resulted in further improvements being made to communication, letters, scripting and in turn delivery timescales. Feedback from residents has been very positive indeed.
12. Further roll-out is underway across the County. This is considered a major step forward for Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and NCC, which is enabling both partners to quickly and efficiently identify people most at risk of fire and, in turn, reduce the number of fires within this vulnerable age group. Once this roll-out has been completed it is planned to embed this into 'business as usual' processes at the CSC i.e. when a customer contacts the council and meets the NFRS criteria, the Home Safety Check will be offered. It is envisaged that this will happen across particular customer types, for instance:
 - Customers applying for a Blue Car Badge
 - Customers calling who require adaptations in the home
 - Customer enquiring about First Contact or Handy Persons Adaptation Scheme (HPAS)
 - Customers who have disabilities such as visual impairment or hearing difficulty

Once a vulnerable person has been identified a script will be presented. Advisors will then offer fire safety services immediately over the telephone and make referrals to NFRS in the way they do now.

13. Work is also underway with the current district (Gedling) to review the data available in relation to assisted bin collections. It is possible that if customers are in need of help when putting out their waste bins, it is also possible that there may either mobility or physical issues that NCC and NFRS may be able to support or assist customers with.
14. Customer feedback from the completed districts has been collated and is listed below.

	Ashfield	Mansfield	Bassetlaw
Advisor gave good explanation of service being offered	88%	90%	95%
Customer happy with timescales from initial call to visit	100%	93%	94%
Customer was happy with the advice given by NFRS	96%	93%	95%
NCC/NFRS were professions and helpful	96%	97%	97%
Customer felt more knowledgeable about fire hazards as a result of NFRS visit	75%	90%	89%
Customer remembering to test alarm regularly	66%	79%	75%
Customer you recommend service to others	100%	97%	97%
Overall Customer Satisfaction	89%	91%	92%

Other Options Considered

15. To continue with the current approach: i.e. once all districts are complete, beginning again on a rotational basis. .

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

16. A full evaluation has been carried out, and, as mentioned above, this is continuing to be rolled out across the county on a district basis. This process however, is labour-intensive and has led to some customers being wary of the 'cold call' approach used. By embedding this into our usual business would mean that customers have made the initial contact with NCC and are therefore be more receptive to the suggestions of a Home Safety Check. Our approach has to be to embed this into the standard processes ensuring there is a steady stream of referrals being made to NFRS through the identification of those most at risk.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

18. Channel Shift work and ever increasing demands on both partners means that this exercise can only be completed when resources and demand is allowed.

Equalities Implications

19. The initiative is focused on older members of society, who are more at risk from domestic fires, a risk which increases with age.

Crime and Disorder Implications

20. There are no crime and disorder implications linked to this initiative.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee:

- Notes the contents of this report and approves the move to embed this into business as usual processes.

PAUL MCKAY

Service Director for Access and Public Protection

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

19. As this report is for noting only no constitutional comments are required.

Financial Comments (SEM – 11/2/15)

20. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All