

ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



MEETING

Audit Governance & Review
Committee

AGENDA ITEM

10

MEETING DATE

7 October 2015

REPORT NUMBER

EFA/092/15

SUBJECT

Safer & Resilient Communities Update

REPORT BY

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Paul Hill

PRESENTED BY

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Paul Hill

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to update the Committee with a summary ECFRS Safer & Resilient Community activity in 2014/15.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Members of the Audit, Governance and Review Committee note the contents of this paper.

Background

The Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the duties and powers of fire authorities. Under the Act, the Fire Authority has a number of core functions:

- Fire Safety - promoting fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on steps to be taken to prevent fires and the giving of advice on how to prevent fires and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire.
- Fire Fighting - extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fires.
- Road Traffic Accidents - rescuing people in the event of road traffic accidents and protecting people from serious harm in the event of road traffic accidents.
- Emergencies - when necessary deal with emergencies, other than fires and road traffic accidents.

ECFRS engages in activities that support the development of community resilience and the improvement of community safety in all parts of its service delivery. This paper captures major activity of 2014/15.

TECHNICAL FIRE SAFETY

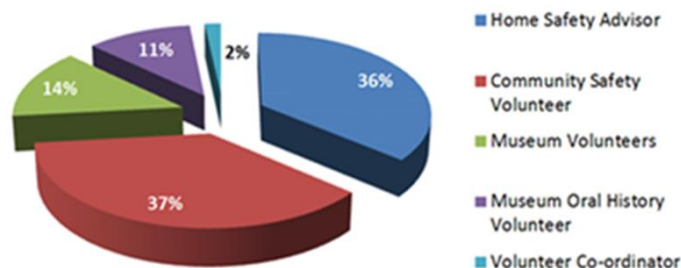
ECFRS visits commercial premises to check the fire risk assessment and fire prevention measures are appropriate. Fire Safety Officers help owner/occupiers understand the rules and how to comply with them. ECFRS can take action if we think their fire safety measures aren't adequate. For example, we might issue an informal notice suggesting safety measures. We could also give a formal (*Alteration, Enforcement or Prohibition*) fire safety notice. Minor penalties can be up to £5,000. Major penalties can have unlimited fines and up to 2 years in prison. ECFRS supports a number of other Fire Services with legal advice as SMB Member Roy Carter is a solicitor, firefighter and fire law expert.

The drive however is not to enforce but to support the creation of a safe space. This is usually best achieved in the timeliest way by working with the occupant, helping them understand their responsibilities and then offering advice on any solutions to fire risk.

In 2014 we visited approximately 3,100 premises and completed fire safety audits. We also consulted the Local Authority on approximately 4,000 new build schemes or alterations to premises. Of those audits about a quarter needed to improve fire safety standards in some way and we issued 11 enforcement and 15 prohibition notices

VOLUNTEERS

ECFRS Volunteer Service began to see significant returns on investment in 2014/15, with volunteers supporting all work streams in safer and Resilient Communities. The total number of hours donated in 2014/15 was 6,965. This is a 95% increase on the previous year (3570) and is equivalent to 995 working days, 4.2 full time posts. Volunteers support delivery of administration, home safety visits, crucial crew, roadster, firebreaks, flood alleviation and various other community safety events



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAMS

In 2014/15 we started a new community engagement activity, which we called '**Targeted Interventions**'. We used our own data to identify which household types have most fires and matched them with a programme called Mosaic that uses 440 data elements and aggregates 141 person types into 67 household types. The outcome is that we can identify households that are most likely to have fires in the future – and so our operational crews knock on their door and offer them fire safety advice and a free home safety visit. This programme started in 2014/15 and has already visited over 12,000 households and made referrals for hundreds of full home safety visits.

After a significant fire a community engagement officer arranges an '**After Incident Response**' or AIR. ECFRS representatives (Crews, Fire Safety and Community Officers, Volunteers and Technical staff) visit premises that are local to the incident and talk to the owner/occupier about how they can protect themselves against a similar incident whilst the awful reality of the outcome is fresh in their mind. Approximately 300 AIRs were delivered between 2014/15.

We not only carry out fire investigations to determine the cause of a fire starting, but have started to carry out **Community Safety Investigations** to determine the circumstances that

allowed the fire start. The aim of the investigation is to determine whether the fire was preventable and if so why we have not, and then what we might need to do differently.

The Service's **Monthly Media Campaigns** focus on a range of subjects throughout the year which are aligned to the Chief Fire Officers Association national campaigns. There have been some exciting methods of delivery, created by the services media team. Below is an example of one of the kitchen fire campaigns:

There is always a strong focus on the danger of cooking fires and distraction in the kitchen. Last year 56% of Essex house fires started in the kitchen and cooking was responsible for five fires a week; making cooking fires the single most common cause of house fires in the county. Leaflets are distributed to crews and community engagement teams to support local activities, along with a full social media campaign which shares the messages with a further 18,000 people who subscribe to the Service's feeds.



The community engagement team devise, co-ordinate and attend about 750 **Community Based Events** annually. These community safety officers are regarded by our partners 'as the first port of call' when events are in the planning stage, and the seven community safety officers attend a whole range on community groups throughout the week. In addition the Community Safety Officers are able to support and assist station based personnel to deliver their own events as well as initiatives that are designed to address local trends or issues in the stations local area.

Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods is a project started in 2014 that is driven from a desire to understand the potential for Essex's communities to play a more active role in helping to prevent Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) across the county. A review of ECFRS Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAOR) document revealed that whilst a great deal of work was going on to support local communities there was more could be done to explore the potential for closer working and greater participation of community groups in the prevention of fire risks. What we have found from the community and organisations so far is a genuine appetite to work more closely with the fire service; we have also recognised that for the fire service to have a greater impact on the community this will require a cultural shift and change of emphasis from response to prevention. We are currently piloting work in four areas of Southend (St. Lukes), Harlow (Staple Tye), Thurrock (Purfleet) and Basildon (Vange).

Our Community Engagement Teams are supporting a number of **Partners Agendas**, a small number of examples are 'Prevent', 'Human Trafficking', 'Crime Prevention' and 'Winter Warmers'.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2014/15 522 participants attended 64 **Firebreak** courses, a 237% increase from the 27 Firebreak courses held during 2013/14. (*A further 4 courses were cancelled due to industrial action*). ECFRS works with many partner agencies to deliver these courses, including several Essex schools, councils, youth offending services, Extra 21, Little Havens and the office of the police and crime commissioner. Two significant contracts were delivered in 2014/15 – one with the Department of Work and Pensions for 8 Firebreak courses and one with Essex Council's Family Solutions for a further 16 courses.

Progress reports for each student are completed by their teachers three and six months after the course concludes. The reports for 2014/15 show very positive improvements in key areas.

Approximately 45% of students are said to have improved their attitude to their peers as well as their attitude to staff. Just 5% were reported to have deteriorated in this respect. Substantial improvements in attendance, punctuality, and motivation in lessons were also noted. Partner agencies have reported success for many 2014/15 Firebreak students. Several courses were funded by the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner, all currently reporting that 100% of participants have not currently reoffended and a 100% compliance rate with referral orders. Working alongside the Probation Service and Youth Offending Service, these Firebreak courses have helped their participants to greatly exceed national expectations for reoffending – 35.8% for young offenders¹. The DWP has also reported positive outcomes for the long term unemployed participants of their first Firebreak. One student has secured a car mechanic apprenticeship and another has found a job working on the rail network. Others have found places on training courses and several are completing work placements. All 12 are said to be meeting the criteria by which the DWP evaluate the success of the course – they are taking positive steps to gain employment.

Our **Fire Cadets** scheme is designed to take young people and impart motivational and team building skills using the Fire Service ethos. The course involves many of the skills and techniques used by operational firefighters, such as hose running, ladder pitching, using breathing apparatus, search and rescue, team building exercises, and first aid. Cadets will be taught the importance of teamwork, communication and community engagement. The first course was held in Clacton in 2013/14, part funded by the Tendring Community Safety Partnership. Another 4 squads have been established in 2014/15.

Fire Cadets have the opportunity to earn the Duke of Edinburgh award - Bronze, Silver, or Gold - and also to earn the BTEC Level 2 "Fire and Rescue Service in the Community" award/certificate. These are nationally recognised award schemes and will be of benefit to the student in his or her future life. The Clacton Fire Cadets were recognised in 2014 by the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner, Nick Alston, for their "outstanding contribution to community safety."

We have an extensive and inclusive **Education Programme** that delivers classroom-based fire safety awareness programmes to young people in Essex. The aim of the team is to help reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires and incidents of arson and hoax calls among young people. The Education team now cover all year 3, year 7 and year 8 children in the County: approximately 2000 classes (60,000 children). The Education Team instructed 117,147 children across the county between April 2014 and March 2015, a 13% increase on the previous year's performance.

The Education team now offer a pedestrian safety programme to all year 7 groups in the county. This was previously only delivered in Basildon, Braintree and Southend.

The two programmes that achieved the greatest increase in audience numbers were:

- Making a Safer Journey (RTC) – year 7. A 480% increase.
- Home Fire Safety programme – year 8. A 933% increase.

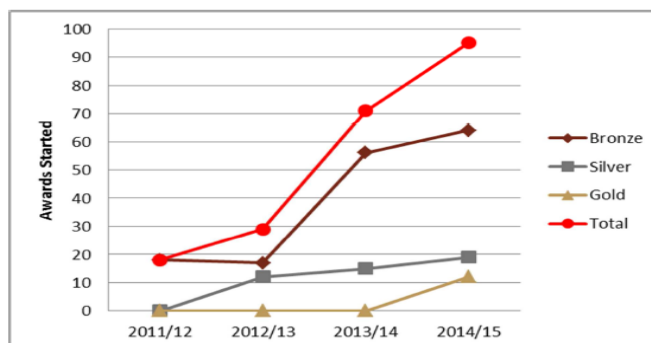
¹ Based on 2011/12 figures for England and Wales, released by Ministry of Justice in 2014 (most recent available). The report shows that 35.8% of young offenders reoffend within a year. This figure is far higher at 69.3% for young offenders who have been released from custody.

Both of these programmes were trialled and rolled out across the county in 2013/2014. The feedback from schools has been very positive and this has led to a big uptake in requests for both programmes. Additional programmes have been developed and reviewed by Roehampton University, to cover requests for year groups outside of the Education Team's core remit.

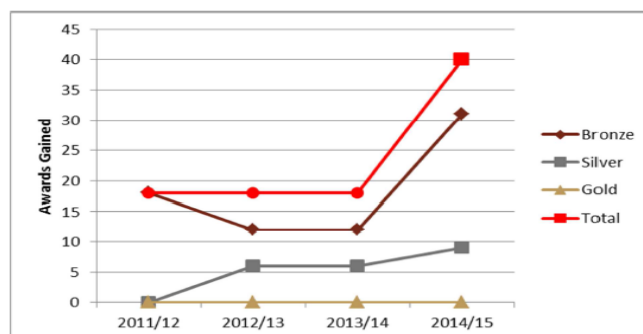
Through the **Juvenile Firesetter Scheme (JFS)** ECFRS engages with young people aged between three and seventeen years old to modify their fire setting behaviour. 100 JFS referrals made between April 2014 and March 2015. 20% cases did not complete because parents would not respond to phone calls / letters or refused the JFS service. 8 child safeguarding referrals were made (linked to JFS cases). 11% of JFS cases received between April 2014 – March 2015 were re-referrals from previous interventions (dating back 5 years).

Duke of Edinburgh Awards (DofE) - Local (ECFRS) The graphs to the right do not take into account students progressing to the next level, or those that are awaiting results. The graphs show the number of live accounts on ECFRS electronic DofE account :

Total – 128 participants.



Duke of Edinburgh Awards (DofE) - National (CFOA) – ECFRS has been selected to be the National Centre of Excellence for Duke of Edinburgh Awards for the Fire Service nationally; which forms part of the National Fire Cadet Framework. ECFRS will be responsible for the training of staff, compliance, registration, assessment, and verification of all DofE FRS' and their participants. The licence will be held by ECFRS for the next 3 years.



ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION (RTC) REDUCTION

The RTC Reduction Department promotes road safety and seeks to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the roads of Essex as a result of RTCs. ECFRS has a range of products, initiatives and activities designed specifically to engage with and educate road users as to the risks and potential consequences associated with using the roads. In 2007 1,065 people were killed or seriously injured on the roads in Essex, in 2014 this fell by 30.6% to 740. The number of KSI remains unacceptably high and disappointingly between 2013 and 2014 the number of RTC KSI casualties increased by 7.4% overall.

ECFRS works alongside partners with responsibilities for road safety activities and is a key partner in the Essex Casualty Reduction Board and its new subsidiary the **Safer Essex Roads Partnership**.

FireBike is ECFRS's specialist motorcycle safety product through which we promote motorcycle safety. Motorcyclists remain the highest RTC KSI group in Essex. Motorcycles account for just 1% of the traffic on the roads of Essex, yet in 2014 were involved in 27% of all KSI collisions (an increase of 33.5% compared with 2013). The FireBikes attended 54 different

events in total and achieved 5,172 direct interactions with motorcyclists. FireBike 'Better Biking' Courses include a one-hour classroom session on motorcycle safety/roadcraft followed by a 4-hour observed ride on urban and rural roads to provide practical advice and guidance. The FireBike Advanced Machine is all about sharpening some key skills which, unfortunately, are rarely practiced but will help improve riding on the road and reduce the chances of a collision. 5 Advanced Machine Skills Courses were held in 2014 with 56 participants (compared with 3 courses and 32 participants in 2013).

Community Wheels is ECFRS's bespoke multi-media vehicle used to deliver road safety/RTC reduction messages to a wide audience. Community Wheels is well designed with SMART Board Technology, enabling mapped collision data to be displayed in great detail to the public and also has TV/DVD presentation facilities. It features a driving simulator fitted which is a popular and effective educational tool for use with young drivers in particular. In 2014 Community Wheels attended 153 Events in total and achieved 14,138 interactions with road users, compared with 136 events and 12,031 interactions in 2013, an increase on 12.5% and 17.5% respectively. 56 Community Wheels deployments were in direct support of partnership events. RTC KSIs involving young car drivers fell by 58.3% in 2013 compared with 2007. Between 2012 and 2013 they fell by 29.3%. RTC KSI's involving children and young people fell by 64.6% in 2013 compared with 2007. Unfortunately however, 2014 saw an increase in young car driver KSIs of 12% when compared with 2013. Increases were experienced across all key road user groups in 2014.

The **Ford Driving Simulator** at Waltham Abbey Fire Station is a dedicated resource which is used to provide road safety education to young drivers and those about to start their driving careers. A Ford Fiesta car body with a state of the art driving simulator inside and panoramic projection screens create an experience so immersive that it is almost indistinguishable from driving an actual car. The simulator is used as part of a robust educational programme involving a classroom. In 2014 41 programmes were delivered using the Simulator, involving 738 young people.

Significant, and growing problems with street racing activities have been experienced in several locations around Essex. These activities present a risk not only to the drivers but also to others who often gather in significant numbers to spectate.

Fire Car is a new initiative by which ECFRS seeks to engage and educate young 'cruiser car' or 'performance car' drivers in Essex, and affect behaviours and RTC risk amongst that road user group. The Fire Car is a Ford Focus 2.0i ST3, donated by the Ford Motor Company. The vehicle is appropriately 'branded' to identify it as part of the Fire Service, with an RTC reduction theme closely aligned with that used for the Community Wheels vehicle. The Fire Car was donated by Ford in July 2014, and by the end of the year it had been deployed on 39 occasions in 82 different locations achieving 6,572 interactions with drivers and event spectators.

Essex Fire Museum continued to see significant development in 2014. Our Museum remains a key part of the Safer Communities strategy for delivering safety messages to at risk groups and shares a strategy with the Museum association – 'Museums Change lives'. 2014 saw the centenary of WW1, and Essex Fire Museum was at the centre of local activity and research. Partnered with Essex Records Office, "Now the Last Poppy has Fallen" project focused on the lives of individuals, families and communities during the First World War in Essex. It resulted in a touring exhibition reflecting on stories from the Essex home front, developed museum education sessions for Secondary school pupils, created reflective school performances and commissioned artists to produce performances relating to these stories.

Overall numbers are down from the previous year but we have seen a significant growth in Family and Group attendance which are the audiences we are targeting.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Adult	36	42	40	4	327	258	290	190
Family	4	3	5	17	96	116	164	353
Group	20	40	52	77	31	221	427	626
School	60	131	36	118	261	251	830	510
Total	120	216	133	216	715	846	1711	1679

EVALUATION

The perennial challenge when evaluating prevention and protection activity is how you prove something didn't happen because of what you did or did happen in spite of what you did or might not have happened if you did something differently. It is generally recognised that there is no science driven solely by statistics but common sense and an art to the design of solutions or interventions. This does not mean that we don't and won't continue to evaluate our work; constantly looking for more accurate ways of directing our efforts and honing our approach to protect the population of Essex.

We have many, many project, methodology, case study, partner examples of success; where our actions and interactions have kept our communities safe. A few simple examples of current outcomes and evaluation include:

Our extensive and destructive (we dismantled the internal walls and ceilings) **fire investigation** of a significant fire in Basildon provided evidence for remedial work that includes the installation of sprinklers, wholesale re-wiring and fitting of fire proof external cladding across an estate. A subsequent fire has not spread, not caused significant damage and did not pose a life risk to residents.

We have completed a detailed **evaluation of our methodology for delivering 'Targeted Interventions'** (see page 2). The objectives of the evaluation were to:

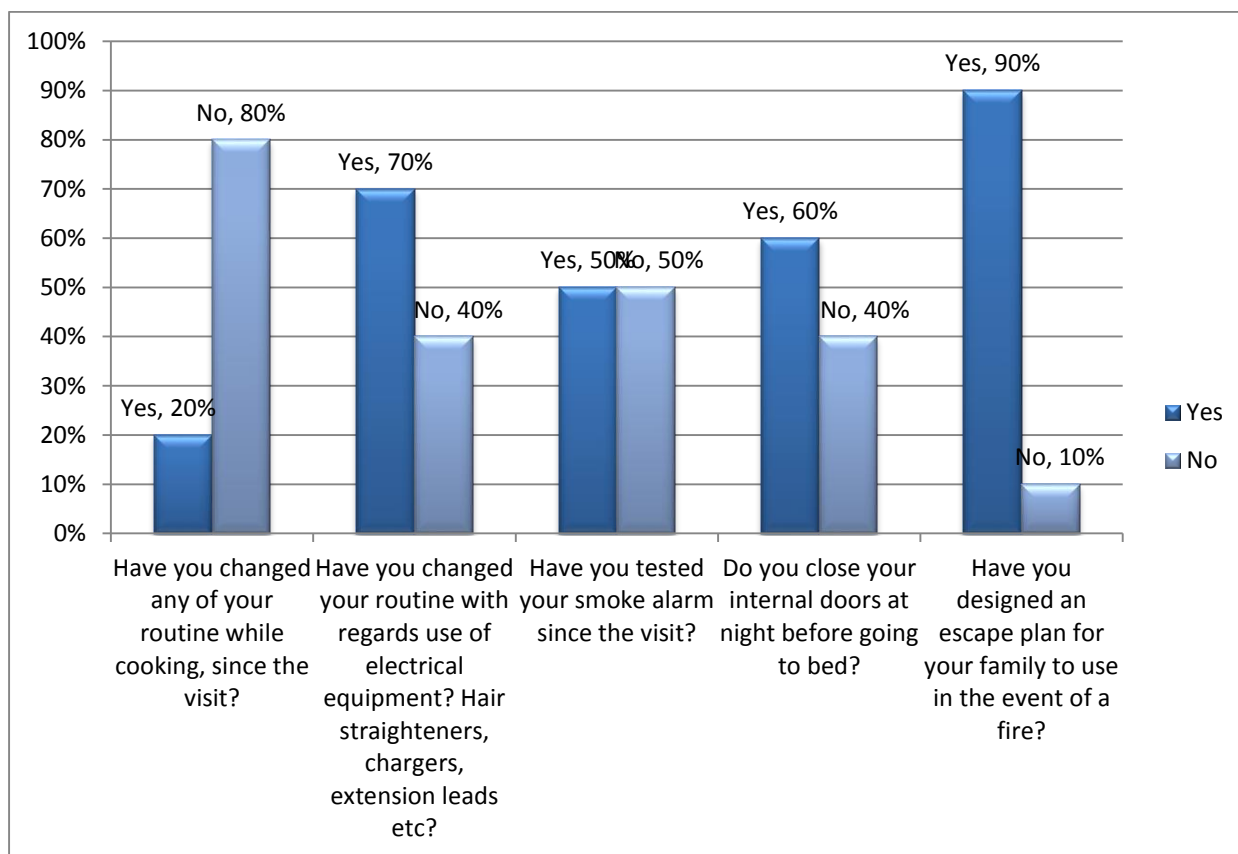
1. Examine the process and make recommendations on efficiency and effectiveness.
2. Capture data relating to smoke detector ownership in the area, and any links to ownership and behaviour.
3. Challenge and test assumptions made by Mosaic².
4. Include station personnel in a functional role and measure the impact on time / morale / motivation.
5. Test communication channels to prompt self-referral, including the use of short code text messaging.
6. Increase the number of Home Fire Safety Visit referrals from the area, specifically from the target group, and measure the timescales of visit after the request.
7. Measure the effectiveness of Home Fire Safety Visits in terms of message memory of key information, and subsequent behaviour after the visit.

² Mosaic is a segmentation tool which can be used at household level to identify whether householders of a particular 'Type', based on a variety of factors including economics, demographics, lifestyles and behaviours, vary in their risk of having an accidental fire in the home. Those most at risk, the 'Top 10', are selected from the Mosaic database for each ward and their addresses supplied to Community Safety for face to face interventions (door-knocking).

The conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation were:

- Targeted Interventions are successful in increasing referrals for HFSV, its impact on the target at risk group is less impressive than for non-target/risk addresses. Without previous evaluation of Targeted Interventions it is difficult to credit this success with the social marketing theories applied, however we can assume they contributed.
- An investment in the research into the target group, via focus groups, qualitative methods, testing etc, would give us a greater indication as to what the “competition” is in terms of adopting safer behaviour. How Mosaic target groups are engaged with may require a more creatively thought through approach to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Mosaic is a useful tool which if used effectively and consistently should dramatically enhance all Community Safety initiatives.
- Smoke detector ownership is very important but not a reflection of how safe the occupants are. An increased awareness of this would benefit both the public and staff.
- The messenger of the safety message is a key factor of the success of the programme. The brand of the Fire Service is vital in the success of the adoption of safety messages.
- Our publicity and communication channels may need more budget for messages to reach the target audience. A bigger budget media campaign including radio, TV, bus back, bus stop, may make it easier to “cut through” to the people we want to reach. The publicity could adopt a “Present and Prosper” type message which has been successful in public health campaigns. The focus on individual behaviour in the home and what people can do to make themselves safer should be included.
- An investment into a deeper analysis of message delivery and subsequent message memory post HFSV would reassure us that our interventions are offering the best possible outcome for families at risk.

An example of the type of information we gain from our evaluation is demonstrated from the question about residents behaviour after our ‘Home safety Visit’ that was generated from the ‘Targeted Intervention’ knock on the door,



We ran 64 Fire Break courses last year and have had extremely positive feedback from every single course. As an example of the type of **evaluation completed for Fire Break courses** the following case study comes directly from the outcomes identified by the Department for Working Pensions (DWP).

The aim of these Firebreak courses was to work with DWP and their customers to try and help them regain employment. The reason for this undertaking was to not only try and reduce the cost of unemployment to the taxpayer, but to also reduce the cost of the fire service to the tax payer. Mosaic profiling suggests that a person who is unemployed can be more at risk of fire in the home; this is due to the lifestyle they may lead, the time ratio that they would spend at home being higher than average, and their personal circumstance and wellbeing. By delivering the message of home safety we can aim to reduce the cost of the service to the tax payer.

Student 1 is a man in his thirties who has been unemployed for a number of years and at a point in his unemployment was living on the street before being housed by local authorities in Jaywick, Clacton. He was one of the more difficult student's to engage with due to his attitude towards authorities and general lifestyle and experience. He was open to the challenge of improving himself but his personal barriers at some points of the course got the better of him.

Initially Student 1 took part in the Firebreak course to:

- *Regain employment*
- *Improve self esteem*
- *Improve confidence*
- *Overcome personal life barriers*
- *Improve communication skills*
- *Become more disciplined*

Since completing the Firebreak course He has turned his life around and achieved his ambition of becoming self-employed in the gardening and landscaping trade. Whilst attending the Firebreak course he expressed his ambitions to be self-employed, but didn't feel he had the credentials for this. He felt the Firebreak course had given him "more knowledge on fire safety and a better understanding of disciplines needs to gain employment". The follow up sessions offered as part of the course also allowed him to gain an understanding of money management, drugs and substance misuse, behaviour management, and employment preparation.

The following table shows the total entitlements student 1 would have been able to claim whilst being unemployed. This is based on student 1 not having any special circumstances or dependants.

Entitlement	per year	per week	notes	how to apply?
Jobseeker's Allowance	£3,822.09	£73.10	Your entitlement is made up of £73.10 in income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.	How to apply for Jobseeker's Allowance
Council Tax Support	£678.04	£12.97	Your full Council Tax bill of £16.21 per week will be reduced to £3.24 per week because of your entitlement to Council Tax Support.	How to apply for Council Tax Support

Housing Benefit	£7,200.00	£138.46		How to apply for Housing Benefit
Total Entitlements	£11,700.13	£224.53		

Having entered self-employment following the Firebreak course and based on a year one wage of £12,000 for a 30 hour week, student 1 would be claiming £5683.70 less housing benefit than when he was unemployed.

**You could be £67.99
per week better off in work**

Income	per year	per week
Tax Credits	£2,536.48	£48.78
Council Tax Support	£0.00	£0.00
Housing Benefit	£1,516.30	£29.16
Client Earned Income (net)	£11,158.07	£214.58
Total:	£15,210.85	£292.52

*Estimation figures supplied by entitledto.co.uk

This is one example of a student completing our 6 week programme, but, since the completion of all four courses funded by the DWP, 18 individuals have gained employment, training or ceased claiming (with more figures still to come in from our last course). With the figures provided above, this is an average saving of **£250k a year** to the tax payer, just in relation to claimed benefits. It must be noted also, the economic benefit to these individuals now contributing back to society through tax they'll now be paying. Following an end of course assessment of the courses ECFRS completed in partnership with DWP, 96% of participants felt that we achieved the aims and objectives set out at the start of the Firebreak course.

We also have many **individual case studies** such as:

We have over the last eight months, been dealing with Pauline (*Name changed for this report*). Safeguarding referrals have been made on a number of occasions. Pauline is blind and elderly and was living in a caravan with no services provided. She calls the Fire Service and Police on a number of occasions throughout the year to report a number of different types of incident on the land. She has reported everything from anti-social behaviour and trespassers to attempted arson for which no evidence was ever found. Pauline mistrusts authority and is extremely difficult when she wants to be.

Pauline had a stand pipe at the top of the land where she would follow bits of string to find her way to retrieve water. The land was extremely hazardous even for someone without impaired vision. She would wear all the clothes she owned at the same time and share her caravan with her cat. Pauline was not the only inhabitants of the caravan as rats often crawled over her bedding. There was significant evidence with droppings a foul smell from the dwelling. Pauline used a bucket as a toilet at night, but during the day would go anywhere on the land.

We engaged a number of services including Social Services, Housing and the Police trying to resolve this issue. Pauline is stubborn and very wary of any assistance offered but the conditions in which she was living were not fit for purpose. Social Services tested her capacity and said that they would close the case as there was nothing they could do after speaking to her on the phone. One of our Community Engagement Officers arranged for all the services to

visit the land and the property. Local Authority Housing however, were extremely helpful through the whole process finding her a new flat after our shared visit

Pauline was re-housed and now attends all the events that the “very kind staff” (her words), put on. She has help 4 times a day, is very house proud keeping herself and her new flat very clean with the assistance of the staff. Pauline now visits the land but she enjoys returning home to her flat.

The work involved by the Community Safety team with Pauline has reduced calls to the Police and Fire Service by approximately 20 a year. More importantly Pauline is safe and her quality of life has been hugely improved by spending time with her, having contacts with support agencies and ensuring all parties worked together.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial impacts as a result of this paper.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impacts arising as a result of this paper.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risks that change as a result of this paper.

USE OF RESOURCES

There are no resource impacts arising as a result of this paper.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
List of appendices attached to this paper:	
Proper Officer:	ACFO Paul Hill
Contact Officer:	Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, Kelvedon Park, London Road, Rivenhall, Witham CM8 3HB Tel: 01376 576000 paul.hill@essex-fire.gov.uk