

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Activity Report of the Chief Officer



HAMPSHIRE
FIRE AND
RESCUE
SERVICE

Front page photo:
Celebrating Success 2012

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Introduction

This report covers the period 31 October 2012 to 31 December 2012. Any notable incidents that have occurred after the 31 December and before the report has been issued are listed in the “stop press” section at the back of this report.

The reporting period has been a rather wet one with wide spread concern about flooding across the country. The Service worked with partner agencies to ensure that disruption and damage was kept to a minimum across Hampshire, while maintaining critical emergency response for life threatening incidents. The reporting period was a very positive one with no fire deaths recorded, however one gentleman was hospitalised following a fire in his home and remains in a serious condition.

As well as the challenge of inclement weather the Service also hosted exercise Tusker and exercise Petworth during November and December, testing our search and rescue capabilities for UK and international deployment.

Our community safety teams continued their hard work to prevent death and injury and to support the wider elements of community safety. In particular our strong relationship with the Prince's Trust was recognised in a 10 year anniversary celebration in December where we were able to hear some very brave young people tell their story.



During this period we also recognised the endeavour and ability of our own people at our Celebrating Success evening. This was a well supported and very well received evening well supported by the Fire Authority.

In October the Service's fundraising achievements were recognised with a Special Recognition award at the eighth annual Fire Fighters Charity Spirit of Fire Awards. The Service raised £301,951 during 2011/12 which was testament to our commitment to the charity.

01 Responding to incidents

1.1

Fire crews tackle a fire in Portswood High Street

Control operators were alerted to a fire at Roosters Piri Piri food outlet at 11:07 on 3 November 2012.

The building was used as a food outlet on the ground floor with sleeping accommodation above and the fire involved the internal and external extraction system.

Five people were led to safety by firefighters and there was smoke logging throughout the premises as well as neighbouring properties.

Crews in attendance from St Mary's, Redbridge, Hightown and Winchester used 12 sets of breathing apparatus, three jets and an aerial ladder platform to bring the blaze under control.

The fire was accidental and started by the spread of a cooking fire (fat) into the extraction system. A protection officer conducted a post-incident audit and served a prohibition notice due to an inadequate escape route. We are currently proactively supporting the business to resolve fire safety issues.

1.2

Crews called to high rise fire in Portsmouth

Fire crews were called to a fire in a tower block in All Saints Road, Buckland on 3 November at 20:00 hours. Fire crews were unable to use vital dry risers because three landing valves were missing.

Investigation with Portsmouth City Council determined the valves had been stolen for the value of the metal. Regular checks by the council are made to all high rise blocks to ensure fittings are serviceable and ready for use.

Firefighters had to take hoses up seven flights of stairs to the affected flat. Fire damage was contained within the lounge and balcony, and the flat had significant smoke damage. There was also smoke damage to the communal hallway on the seventh floor.

Crews from Southsea, Cosham, Portchester, Waterlooville and Eastleigh were in attendance along with the aerial ladder platform from Southsea.

The investigation indicated that the fire spread from the balcony to the lounge. It was deemed to be accidental, from a stray firework or burning embers from a firework igniting dried leaves and plastic plant pots on the balcony.

01 Responding to incidents

1.3

Burghclere school evacuated after fire in outside storage area

On 7 November, Clere Secondary School in Burghclere was evacuated after a fire started in the school's sports hall.

Crews were alerted to the fire at 13:52 and arrived to find a developed fire in the roof space. The roof housed a number of solar panels which altered fire fighting tactics, as by nature solar panels hold a charge, making it difficult for crews. The crews used compressed air foam (CAFS) to fight the fire internally, but soon feared the roof would collapse, so requested a structural engineer from Basingstoke City Council. The engineer was on the scene within ten minutes to complete the survey and give approval to continue with fire fighting operations.

This quick response enabled crews to stop the fire at 20 per cent damage to the roof. Crews in attendance included Overton, Basingstoke, Eastleigh and two appliances from Berkshire.

Equipment used included one compressed air foam jet, a water jet, two hose reels and 12 sets of breathing apparatus. The incident stopped at 17:19, allowing the school to open as normal the next day.

A fire investigation confirmed the cause as arson and the police investigation is on-going.



01 Responding to incidents

1.4

Firefighters battle to save Gosport disabled sports club

On 27 November Crews were called to the Gosport and District Sports and Disabled Association (GADSAD) building on Elson Road at 01:28.

On arrival crews discovered a fire in the flat felt roof of the 13 metres x 24 metres single-storey building.

Around 40 firefighters used the aerial ladder platform, 16 sets of breathing apparatus, three main jets and two hose reels to contain the fire.

The fire started on the roof of the L-shaped building but with some aggressive fire fighting we managed to control and contain the spread of the flames. Much of the building has been saved and the crews deserve a lot of credit for their quick and effective actions.

Around half the building was damaged in the fire, with smoke damage throughout.

Crews from Gosport, Fareham, Cosham, Southsea, Portchester, Wickham, Hightown and Eastleigh were on the scene to tackle the incident.

The fire investigation determined that the fire was accidental due to an electrical fault in the immersion cupboard.



01 Responding to incidents

1.5

Pre-Christmas turkey rescue for Hampshire firefighters

A shedful of turkeys were helped to safety as firefighters battled a blaze on a Hampshire farm on 19 December.

Around 250 of the birds were moved from the shed after fire spread to the structure from the workshop ablaze next door.

Crews were initially called to deal with the fire in the workshop on the farm at Colemore, north of Petersfield at 06:58. They worked quickly to contain the flames and restrict the spread to the surrounding buildings.

The timber workshop was completely destroyed by the fire, while the turkey shed suffered only slight damage.

Crews from Alton, Petersfield, Alresford, Bordon, Basingstoke and Eastleigh extinguished the blaze using 12 sets of breathing apparatus, two main jets, two compressed foam jets and one hose reel. The fire was out by 10:12.

A farm vehicle was also completely destroyed by the fire.

The cause of the fire was accidental.

1.6

Fish and reptiles perish in Kingsclere garden centre fire

Tropical fish and reptiles worth thousands of pounds were killed after a fire broke out in the aquatic department of a Hampshire garden centre on the afternoon of 19 December.

Crews were called to the centre on Newbury Road, just outside Kingsclere, at 15:14.

They found a fire inside the wooden-clad aquatic section of the centre and used breathing apparatus, hose reels and jets to quickly contain the fire.

Sadly the animals housed in the section, which included around 150 snakes and lizards and hundreds of tropical fish, were all killed.

The owners of the centre acted very quickly to move gas cylinders away from the fire, which enabled the crews to get to work on extinguishing the flames straight away.

Around 30 firefighters from Tadley, Overton, Basingstoke, Winchester and Rushmoor battled the blaze, which was out by 17:08.

The wooden aquatic section was almost completely destroyed by the fire, while much of the rest of the centre was damaged by smoke.

The cause of the fire is thought to have been an electrical fault due to rodent activity.

2.1

Prince's Trust

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service celebrated its ten year partnership with Princes Trust on 13 December. Over 200 guests attended an event on at the Winchester Guildhall. The event was marked as an overwhelming success by all who attended. Young people from the past 10 years told the audience of their success stories. Dr Julian Lewis MP attended along with the Vice-Lord Lieutenant, Mayors and Mayoress' from across the county.

During this report period Rushmoor Team 5 was completed by 16 out of 17 young people with a 94% success rate. They worked alongside young people from the Nepalese community over the 12 weeks on what was called a 'national scavenger hunt', this was to integrate the two communities and publicise this community cohesion.

Southampton Team 31 was completed by 16 out of 18 young people with a 89% success rate.

2.2

Firesetters Intervention Scheme

The Firesetter Intervention Scheme has undertaken 19 juvenile referrals and one adult referral in this reporting period. They have also attended multi-agency meetings and events.



02 Community Safety

(incorporating Prevention and Protection)

2.3

Road safety

Two major campaigns took place during this period:

- National Road Safety Week (19 - 25 November) - nine events were organised locally, emphasising the key message of 'Slower Speeds = Happy People'. These events were delivered at Bordon, Fordingbridge, Gibraltar Barracks, Rushmoor (working with the Army), Petersfield, Copnor Junior School, Portsmouth College, Highbury College, Southdowns College (supported by Portsmouth City Council Road Safety) and at Asda in Havant.
- Christmas Drink Drive 'Smashed' campaign - we supported the police and local authority road safety teams with the campaign using the crashed vehicle and 'Take Time Out' resources. Personnel assisted at seven locations across the county, targeting the message towards members of the public visiting evening entertainment venues.

In addition the resources were taken to the Isle of Wight to support three dates. We supported the military drink drive campaign with events at St Omar Barracks (Aldershot), Prince Phillip Barracks (Bordon) and HMS Sultan (Gosport). These involved a static display of the RTC trailer and presentations.

We have continued to assist with the College Road Safety Week programme, providing resources at Basingstoke College of Technology, Eastleigh College, Farnborough College of Technology,

Queen Mary's College (Basingstoke), Peter Symonds (Winchester) and Andover College (Gosport), raising awareness of seatbelt and moped safety.

The Winchester Road Safety Centre has also been used to support partners' motorcycle activities. The police have run a BikeSafe course and Solent Advanced Motorcyclists (IAM regional group) have held a training day.

2.4

Home safety visits

During this reporting period we have conducted 2134 home safety visits, targeted at those we consider to be most at risk, and fitted 1360 smoke detectors.

The visits were delivered all over the county and were targeted where the need was greatest. The visits were identified through MOSAIC data, partnerships, post incident protocols and referrals through other agencies. This reflects our drive to target the most vulnerable people in Hampshire. The visits were delivered by a combination of whole time, retained duty system, green book personnel and on occasion, other organisations that we are in partnership with and delivering the visits on our behalf.

02 Community Safety

(incorporating Prevention and Protection)

2.5

Schools Education Team

We have seen an increase in the number of parents and carers that are accepting our offer to join their children in our safety education introduction assemblies in schools, and have decided to record numbers in our future reports. This success is reflective of the teams efforts to include the wider school community.

Our work with older pupils has developed to include more challenging vulnerable groups in more diverse settings. This quarter we have worked with young people who are currently serving a custodial sentence and in residential care.

Key 1

Number of school visits - 55
Number of pupils engaged - 3358
(up 18 per cent from Oct – Dec 2011)
Number of parents and carers who attended - 381

Key 2

Number of school visits - 39
Number of pupils engaged - 2052
Number of parents and carers who attended - 198
Key 3/4
Number of visits to schools and youth settings - 30
Number of pupils engaged - 1747

We attended the following additional education events with partner agencies:

- As a result of our work with post graduate teaching students at Southampton University, we were able to support a student during their teaching practice with a safety education day for 60 primary aged children.
- We attended two Think Safe events organised by East Hampshire District Council and Havant Borough Council for 1548 Year 6 pupils.
- We attended a Say No and Phone (SNAP) disco organised at Fernham Hall by Fareham Borough Council for 750 secondary aged pupils.



02 Community Safety

(incorporating Prevention and Protection)

2.6

Fire investigation

There have been 45 fire investigations in this reporting period, 23 deliberate fires, 21 non suspicious and one undetermined. There have been no fatalities over this reporting period.

Fire Investigation and Arson Task Force have supported the investigation of 23 arson offences with arrests made in relation to three of the offences committed in Basingstoke and Deane, Winchester and New Forest groups. Additionally case results being received in relation to six investigations during this reporting period:

- Following an act of arson to three vehicles in Rushmoor Arena, Rushmoor on 9 December 2011, Clive Keith Cooper was found guilty of committing arson. At the hearing on 2 November 2012 at Winchester Crown Court Mr Cooper was sentenced to a Hospital Order without time limit and detained without time limit.
- Following an act of arson to a premises in Basingstoke on 10 March 2012, a youth offender was found guilty of committing arson. At the hearing on 8 November 2012 at Basingstoke Magistrates Court the youth offender was sentenced to a six month referral and to pay £10 costs.
- Following an act of arson to Tatchbury Mount, Woodhaven, Loperwood Lane, Calmore, Totton on 2 January 2012, Terrance Rayner was found guilty of committing arson being reckless as to whether life is endangered. At the hearing on the on 22 November 2012 at Southampton Crown Court, Mr Rayner was sentenced to a 12 month Community Order which includes a 12 month Mental Health Treatment Order – (non-residential).
- Following an act of arson to Flat 47 Milton Road, Copnor, Portsmouth on 29 April 2012, Liam Steve Early was found guilty of committing arson being reckless. At the hearing on 4 December 2012 at Portsmouth Crown Court Mr Early was sentenced to two years imprisonment suspended for two years.
- Following an act of arson to 81C High Street, Aldershot on 24 April 2012, Nicholas Baker was found guilty of committing arson being reckless. At the hearing on 14 December 2012 at Basingstoke Crown Court Mr Baker was sentenced to a Hospital Order without time limit.
- Following an act of arson to Flat 51 Ironside Court, Hampton Street, Southampton on 30 March 2012, Victoria Dawn Makey was found guilty of committing arson recklessly endangering life. At the hearing on 16 November 2012 at Southampton Crown Court Ms Makey was sentenced to six years imprisonment plus four years extension of additional supervision or licence.

02 Community Safety

(incorporating Prevention and Protection)

Evidence found at the scenes by HFRS fire investigators, HFRS fire crews and Hampshire Constabulary crime scene investigators was instrumental in securing the convictions.

The Arson Task Force (ATF) and Fire Investigation (FI) team have over the last two months been actively involved in carrying out multi agency level 2/3 fire investigations throughout the county. They have also continued to maintain regional fire investigation search dog cover for the South East Region. The FI and ATF Force have undertaken the following work in this reporting period:

- Regional fire investigation search dog training
- Police Community Support Officers - Hampshire Police HQ – Netley
- Involvement in a project to improve 'operational diversity' to help reduce the different risks people face in the community.
- Carrying out continuous professional development training for the three Fire Investigation group managers

Additionally the team have deployed the fire investigation search dogs throughout Hampshire and the South East Region to assist with nine fire investigations, and taken 12 statements relating to arson in preparation for evidence packages.

2.7

National Resilience Capability

Exercise Tusker took place 15-18 November at Fort Widley. This UK-ISAR exercise was a full team deployment with all 15 UK fire services represented, with the Belgian USAR Team (B-FAST) sending a full team to participate. In addition to the UK-ISAR team contingent the exercise was supported by USAR team members from the USA, Australia and Abu Dhabi. The primary aim of this exercise was the integration of new teams from London and Merseyside fire services. A number of Fire Authority Members attended this exercise as observers and were given a full overview of team set up and facilities deployed overseas.

Exercise Petworth took place on 3 December. This was a combined exercise with the police and USAR. The purpose of this exercise was to test interoperability between USAR and Police Disaster Victim Identification (DVI).

DVI is an international standard set by INTERPOL and interoperability between USAR and the police has been well established within Hampshire. This process has now become the subject of a ACPO/CFOA joint working protocol. The development of this capability has been significantly supported by HFRS and Hampshire Constabulary which culminated in this exercise. This exercise was run by the Hampshire USAR team and was also attended by the National Resilience Assurance Team, National Police Improvement Agency, Hampshire Constabulary and Buckinghamshire's USAR team.