

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee

Item 8

14 October 2014

Safeguarding

Report by the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 HFRS have a statutory duty to have effective policies and procedures to protect vulnerable groups within our communities, utilising local safeguarding multi agency protocols.
- 1.2 This report explores the position of HFRS following assessment by the safeguarding lead in Hampshire and confirms HFRS has suitable policies, procedures and structures in place.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That PRSC acknowledge and accept the current position and progress regarding safeguarding.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 "Safeguarding is everybody's business with communities playing a part in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. Measures need to be in place locally to protect those least able to protect themselves." (DoH, 16 May 2011)
- 3.2 As a professional organisation there are a number of legal requirements imposed upon HFRS to ensure that we safeguard vulnerable people whilst undertaking activities such as community safety and operational incidents. Acts such as "Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006", Human Rights Act (1998), the Childrens Act (2004), "Working together to Safeguard Children" statutory guidance (2013) and the "No Secrets" statutory policy guidance (2000).
- 3.3 Whilst undertaking our activities it is anticipated that HFRS will encounter vulnerable groups. As such we need to discharge our responsibility to provide Safeguarding mechanisms to protect them however the law is explicit in that the local authority takes the lead for conducting investigation/enquiries under Safeguarding multi agency protocols.

4 Current Position

- 4.1 HFRS officers are active members on the Local Authority Strategic Safeguarding Boards for adults and children for the County and Unitary Authorities.

- 4.2 Suitable policies and procedures have been designed and implemented by the service. These have been externally verified by the county safeguarding boards through audit. The results of these audits demonstrate that HFRS are compliant in their approach to Safeguarding and are performing strongly in all areas. Further improvements have been identified and these are managed through an action plan.
- 4.3 The Service maintain a dedicated Safeguarding team who provide support for Service Delivery crews regarding safeguarding matters. Our Service Delivery staff receive training to allow HFRS to recognise safeguarding matters and for these to be suitably reported to the local authority lead agencies.
- 4.4 All of our Community Safety actions are recorded on our current database CFRMIS (Community Fire Risk Management Information System). Within the system is a secure area where safeguarding and details of other interactions with vulnerable people are recorded.
- 4.5 All Service Delivery staff who may encounter matters of a safeguarding nature have undertaken the disclosure and barring service check (DBS). This ensures we have staff who are suitable to work with people.

5 Future Improvements

- 5.1 Many issues which result in an adult being vulnerable and subject to work with our safeguarding partners, see them with an increased risk of being injured or dying within a fire. These factors include elderly living alone with high care needs, individuals with mental or physical impairments and those using alcohol or substances. HFRS have forged close links to safeguarding leads in Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth authorities
- 5.2 Our close links and work with our partners has led to the formation of a sub group of the strategic Adult Safeguarding Boards in Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth. This pan Hampshire Fire Safety Development group has key representation from health, social care and safeguarding partners and is a multi agency working group to make people safer as a result of shared characteristics. Notably, as a sub group of the safeguarding boards, there is greater compulsion to resolve take part and resolve issues and this has had productive progress in the early stages. The group is chaired by HFRS and reports to the Local Authority Safeguarding boards.
- 5.3 HFRS are planning to appoint a dedicated Safeguarding lead in autumn 2014. This resource will continue to provide opportunity to identify vulnerability for fire risk and work with our partners extensively to embed fire risk assessment within their work when engaging with people likely to be at greatest risk. This post will additionally strengthen further our procedures for dealing with safeguarding and ensure HFRS is better trained and prepared to deal with identified cases, as recorded within our improvement action plan.

6 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives

- 6.1 Strengthening our position towards safeguarding and working closely with partners to do so will only serve to make our communities safer which sits at the heart of our work as an organisation.

7 Risk analysis

- 7.1 HFRS are managing the risk identified regarding safeguarding through the corporate risk register. The current position outlined and progress work, maintain this at an acceptable level.

8 People Impact Assessment

- 8.1 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the equality and human rights legislation.

10 Resource implications

- 10.1 All required resources are currently located within the current Community Safety Prevention establishment.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 HFRS are performing strongly with suitable policies and procedures endorsed through the findings of external audit. Improvements are planned and ongoing from the findings of audits.

12 Background papers

- 12.1 The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

1. Section 11 Audit Report 2013-14.
2. Section 11 Audit Report 2014-15.
3. Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) Audit 2013.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-safeguarding-statement-of-government-policy>

Note: The list excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.