

June 2013

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Activity Report of the Chief Officer



HAMPSHIRE
FIRE AND
RESCUE
SERVICE

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Front page photo:

29 March 2013 - Thatch Fire, East Meon, East Hampshire

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Introduction

This report covers the period 1 January to 31 March 2013. Any notable incidents that have occurred after 31 March and before the report was issued are listed in the Stop Press section at the back of this report.

This reporting period sadly saw three fatalities in fires. Two of these were non-accidental (see 1.2 and 1.4). The other fatality was that of a 61-year-old male who sadly died several weeks after a fire at his house in Portswood, Southampton (see 1.5). He suffered severe burns in the incident. The most likely cause of the fire was found to be discarded smoking materials.

Towards the end of this first quarter of the year we saw the first in a spate of thatch fires, with the Service dealing with three separate fires on Good Friday in Hythe, Wherwell and East Meon. Faulty chimney flues or liners were found to be likely causes in all of the fires, which prompted a renewed community safety campaign to remind the owners of thatched properties about the importance of maintaining and cleaning chimneys.

The reporting period has seen more valuable community work carried out by our increasing team of volunteers (see 2.3). Since the completion of the successful pilot in June last year, we now have 34 volunteers carrying out a range of activities including home safety visits and providing 4x4 vehicles to help in times of adverse weather.



Our Urban Search and Rescue team continues to work with international teams on preparing and training for global disasters (see 2.7). They attended a week-long exercise in Denmark with personnel from around Europe to train for earthquake scenarios. They have also been providing the New Forest authorities and the Forestry Commission with chainsaw training for incidents involving fallen trees.

01 Responding to incidents

1.1

Hampshire firefighters protect residents after electric blanket fire

Firefighters responded to Maisemere Gardens in Emsworth after an 87-year-old man suffered smoke inhalation and burns to his face, airway and hands when his electric blanket caught on fire on 26 January.

More than 30 firefighters attended the fire at the elderly man's property after control room operators were alerted to a fire in the bedroom. A fire investigation concluded that the cause of the fire was the occupier's electric blanket.



Crews from Havant visited Maisemere Gardens and its surrounding area with the Community Contact Point vehicle to carry out home fire safety visits, install free smoke alarms and give vital safety advice to residents.

Working in partnership with Trading Standards, HFRS opened its fire stations throughout the winter of 2012 and invited the public to bring electric blankets in for testing. Following its success this will be undertaken again later this year when electric blankets are in use again.

01 Responding to incidents

1.2

Man dies in van fire in Chandler's Ford

Crews were called to reports of a van on fire at an address on Donnington Drive, Chandler's Ford, at 04:58 on 2 February.

The fire involved one van and a crew from Eastleigh extinguished the blaze using two sets of breathing apparatus and one hose reel.

The body of a man was found in the van.

A joint investigation was carried out between Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Police but the death was not treated as suspicious and the cause deemed non-accidental.

1.3

Woman rescued from house fire in Stroud School, Romsey

A woman in her 80s was rescued from a house fire after crews were mobilised to Stroud School, Romsey, at 07:08 on 9 February.

Upon arrival crews found a developed fire inside the property. The lady suffered smoke inhalation and was handed over to South Central Ambulance Service for further treatment. More than 50 personnel from Romsey, Eastleigh, St Mary's and Redbridge attended the fire at a detached two-storey domestic property, inside the school grounds.

Three jets, two hose reels, six sets of breathing apparatus, together with a special equipment unit and two water carriers were used to control and extinguish the fire.

The property consisted of two floors measuring 6m x 11m and was destroyed by the fire. The fire is still subject to an ongoing police investigation.



01 Responding to incidents

1.4

Man's body discovered following vehicle fire

Crews were called to reports of a vehicle fire at an address on Windmill Lane, Bursledon, at 08:47 on 12 February.

The fire involved a 4x4 vehicle and also spread to another vehicle. Crews from Hightown and Hamble extinguished the blaze using four sets of breathing apparatus, two jets and two dry powder extinguishers.

After extinguishing the blaze, the body of a 57-year-old man was discovered in the 4x4 vehicle.

A joint investigation was carried out between Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Police but the death was not treated as suspicious and deemed non-accidental.

1.5

Crews rescue elderly man from Southampton house fire

A 61-year-old male was rescued by fire crews following a fire at a house on Osborne Road South in Portswood on 15 February. Control room operators received a 999 call at 15:56 from a member of the public reporting smoke issuing from the bedroom window of a house in Southampton.

Upon entering the building crews helped the man escape the severe fire in the first-floor bedroom, which was successfully contained and was fully extinguished by 17:54.

The man was conscious and breathing and treated for smoke inhalation at the scene. He also suffered burns and was taken to hospital by South Central Ambulance Service. A fire investigation found the most likely cause to be discarded smoking materials.

Crews from St Mary's, Hightown, Redbridge, Winchester and Eastleigh used 10 sets of breathing apparatus, three hose reels and a jet to tackle the blaze.

The 61-year-old man suffered burns to his legs, body and airway and sadly died later in hospital.

01 Responding to incidents

1.6

Crews tackle roof fire near Andover

Control operators were alerted to a major fire at a private property at 09:33 on 24 March. Two fire appliances were initially mobilised, along with support crews, to the property in the village of Appleshaw in the Andover area.

The response swiftly escalated to eight pumps, the aerial ladder platform, the multi-role vehicle and a water carrier.

Crews from Andover, Whitchurch, Winchester and Sutton Scotney, together with support from colleagues from Wiltshire Fire and Rescue, fought the blaze in the roof of the Grade II listed period detached property.

It was brought under control and the stop message was issued at 12:32. No people were reported at the property but 100 per cent of the roof was destroyed.

In total more than 60 firefighters were at the scene and four officers were in attendance. 40 sets of breathing apparatus, three main jets and five hose reels were used.

The cause was found to be overheating light fittings.



2 Community Safety

2.1

Schools Education Team

We have evaluated our Arson Reduction Programme at Key Stage 2 during this period, with particular focus on our primary and junior schools. Using data provided by the Community Risk Intelligence Department we are pleased to report:

- 63 per cent of Hampshire schools on the programme showed a reduction in deliberate secondary fires in 2011/2012 compared to the previous year. This was also true in 47 per cent of Southampton schools and 57 per cent of Portsmouth schools
- We continued to educate more adult members of the school community by encouraging them to join us when we visited schools. The number of parents, carers and school governors attending has increased steadily since the last report, as shown below:

Key 1

Number of school visits – 87

Number of pupils engaged – 5,316

Number of adults who attended – 540 (previously 381)

Key 2

Number of school visits – 81

Number of pupils engaged – 5,032

Number of adults who attended – 458 (previously 198)

Key 3/4

Number of visits to schools and youth settings – 37

Number of pupils engaged – 2,004

In addition to the above, we supported the joint agency Think Safe Week at Manor Farm Country Park, organised by Eastleigh Borough Council, attended by 644 children and 32 adults.

We also attended an Internship Fair at Hampshire County Council where we talked to 10 young people who have recently left the care system, about the opportunity of becoming an intern with us. We are delighted to report through this internship, we have a young lady starting work with the schools team in September.

2 Community Safety

2.2

Home Safety – Safeguarding

- **Home Safety Visits carried out this quarter – 2,487**
- **Smoke alarms fitted this quarter – 2,554**

We are responsible for providing a universal response to safeguarding and to do that we have a dedicated 24-hour safeguarding team consisting of five employees.

We have provided safeguarding training to all front line staff who engage with the public in the course of their day-to-day role. This enables a response to be implemented across all activities that we undertake, from operational situations to attending community events. Our community safety team work closely with our partners organising and attending case conferences to reduce the fire risk to the vulnerable person.

For this reporting period our personnel and the dedicated safeguarding team referred 27 potential safeguarding issues - these ranged from poor physical condition and vulnerability, drink and drugs to heavy fire loading and the person's physical ability to exit the property in the event of a fire. These referrals were all passed to the local authority and/or passed internally to the community safety department for a high risk home safety visit and subsequent partnership working.

2 Community Safety

2.3

Volunteers

During this reporting period, our volunteers completed 13 home safety visits, made four referrals to the Sensory Loss Team and attended 17 community events - a total of 178½ voluntary hours.

One of the services supplied by our volunteers is a pioneering arrangement with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (HLOWLRF) and our communities to provide 4x4 vehicles to help in times of adverse weather. In January, the snow we experienced saw a number of our volunteer 4x4 drivers called on to assist with almost 300 tasks including:

- Transporting fire and police control room staff to and from the control rooms to enable us to continue to answer and respond to emergency calls
- Moving critical resources for Hampshire County Council to various locations to support on-going efforts
- Transporting ambulance staff, nurses, doctors, care home staff and social workers as well as delivering meals on wheels throughout the day to vulnerable residents

We now have a total of 34 volunteers who support a wide range of the Service's activities including:

- Home safety visits, including two volunteers who can use sign language
- Assisting with community events and campaigns
- Training Age Concern's Village Agents to promote fire safety and undertake Home Safety Visits
- Support the RideSMART programme to raise awareness of motorcycle safety

2 Community Safety

2.4

Prince's Trust

During this quarter the New Forest team, based at Hardley station, recruited 17 young people in January.

In the same month the Basingstoke team, based at Basingstoke station, recruited 18 young people.

2.5

Young Firefighters Association

Sadly, during this reporting period we saw the tragic loss of one of our Young Firefighters in a hit-and-run incident.

Jade Clark, 16, was a member of the Young Firefighters Association (YFA) based at Ringwood station. Her moped was involved in a collision with a car on the A31 near Ringwood on 24 February. Jade was a much-loved and valued member of the Ringwood team and members of the station supported the family during this difficult time.

2 Community Safety

2.6

Fire Investigation

There have been 68 fire investigations in the reporting period - 38 deliberate fires, 26 non-suspicious, four undetermined and there have been three fatalities over the reporting period.

Fire Investigation (FI) and Arson Task Force (ATF) supported the investigation of 38 arson offences, with arrests made in relation to 14 of the offences committed in Basingstoke and Deane, New Forest, Rushmoor and Hart, Southampton, Test Valley and Eastleigh and Winchester Groups.

Additionally case results were received in relation to four investigations during this reporting period:

- Following an act of arson at 102 Oceana Boulevard, Briton Street, Southampton on 25 August 2012, a youth offender was found guilty of committing arson. At the hearing on 4 March 2013 at Southampton Magistrates Court, the youth offender was sentenced to an 18-month Youth Rehabilitation Order and placed under curfew from 04/03/13 with an electronic tag.
- Following an act of arson at Harrowdene, Cracknore Hard Lane, Marchwood, Southampton on 16 November 2012, a youth offender was found guilty of committing arson. At the hearing on 14 January 2013 at Southampton Youth Court the youth offender was sentenced to an 18-month suspended sentence.
- Following an act of arson at 187 Tukes Avenue, Gosport on 17 October 2012, a male was found guilty of committing arson. At the hearing on 15 February 2013 at Portsmouth Crown Court the male was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.
- Following an act of arson at 42 Dunkirk Road, Lordswood, Southampton on 11 January 2013, a youth offender was found guilty of committing arson. At the hearing on 7 March 2013 at Southampton Magistrates Court the youth offender was sentenced to a 12 month Youth Referral Order.

Evidence found at the scenes by HFRS fire investigators, HFRS fire crews and Hampshire Constabulary Crime Scene Investigators was instrumental in securing these convictions.

2 Community Safety

2.6 cont.

The ATF and FI team have also been actively involved carrying out multi-agency fire investigations throughout Hampshire. Together with continuing the regional fire investigation search dog cover for the south east region, we undertook the following work within this reporting period:

- Regional Fire Investigation Search Dog training
- Police Community Support Officers FI training at Hampshire Police HQ, Netley
- Fire investigation input to Portsmouth University students
- FI Search Dog intervention to Gosport school students
- Continuous training HFRS Fire Investigation First Response Officer (FIFRO) personnel
- Continuous South East Regional Fire Investigation Group Joint Working/Shared Services and project work
- Arson Reduction and FI awareness training for Hampshire Constabulary crime scene investigators
- Blue Lamp Trust Business Conference – Netley

In addition to the above the team have deployed the FI search dogs throughout Hampshire and the south east region to assist with 11 fire investigations, and taken a total of 19 statements relating to arson in preparation for evidence packages.

2 Community Safety

2.7

National Resilience Capability

The Hampshire Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team continue to support operational activity within Hampshire utilising the centrally provided assets to resolve incidents at a local level.

Exercise Modex Falck took place in Denmark from 23–30 January as part of the UK-ISAR (International Search and Rescue) Team, working within the Base of Operations to provide support for welfare operations.

Hampshire USAR team provided the equipment and Base of Operations Team for UK-ISAR. This exercise was a large scale exercise involving an earthquake scenario with the objective of preparing European Union (EU) modules and experts for deployments, giving UK-ISAR the opportunity to test and assure all elements of its operational capability by a realistic and challenging environment to apply skills and expertise, within the European emergency response framework.

Approximately 100 participants took part in the exercise from the following countries:

- EU Community Protection Team (EUCPT) - six personnel from Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Lithuania and Poland
- ICE-SAR (Iceland) - medium USAR team, 46 personnel
- Advanced Medical Post (AMP) - Czech Republic, 35 personnel
- UK-ISAR – medium USAR team, 44 personnel.

In addition to the above the USAR team continued to work on the following projects:

- PoLSA Bramshill 6/2/13 - the USAR team continues to work closely with the College of Policing at Bramshill (formerly the National Policing Improvement Agency) and assist in the training of Police Search Advisors to ensure good joint working and the best use of USAR assets at local, regional and national levels
- Chainsaw training - the Hampshire USAR team has continued to work with the New Forest authorities and the Forestry Commission to deliver training to other fire and rescue services providing realistic formal training in dealing with incidents involving fallen trees
- BAE Systems Emergency Response Team (ERT), Portsmouth Dockyard - in line with the collaborative working undertaken between Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and BAE Systems ERT personnel, USAR have established close working links in the specialist rescue capabilities of both BAE ERT and those available from the USAR team.

3.1 Group activity - Basingstoke and Deane Group

Community Safety

The table below shows the number of home safety visits carried out in the group area between January and March 2013 and the number of smoke alarms fitted.

	Number
HSVs undertaken	231
Smoke detectors fitted	222

Fire investigations

Basingstoke and Deane Group have had five investigations in the reporting period, involving three houses, a flat and a community school.

Arson and risk reduction

Two fire investigation search dog deployments and four statements were taken.

Mosaic risk groups

D, H and K

Business Fire Safety

Our inspectors from the Basingstoke offices have been working hard to reduce the risk from fire to the public. This has included visits to carry out investigations of complaints, audits under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, consultations, presentations and business support visits (BSV) as well as dealing with premises that generate unwanted automatic fire alarms and lift incidents.

The fire safety officers from the Basingstoke offices have been working with the architects, building control, project managers and the hospital fire safety officer in the development of the North Hampshire Hospital Diagnostic Treatment Centre. On-going communications and consultation and site meetings have taken place to confirm fire safety standards. There will be additional consultation on the theatre extensions and new build of a private/ NHS combined consulting area opposite.

During our fire safety audits for this period our main focus has been on reducing incidents of unwanted fire alarm activations. We are pleased to report the number of unwanted automatic fire alarms has decreased over this period.

There were four premises (a block of flats, an office block, a rest home and a sheltered housing scheme) that reached the first trigger point and six that reached the second. The premises that reached the second were visited under a BSV and have triggered an inspector's visit. We addressed the issues of false alarms and how they can be resolved, which have ranged from better management of the system to requiring a system to be improved or replaced.

All inspections were very well received by the responsible persons with positive outcomes which improve the safety of the premises and their business continuity.

3.1 Group activity - Basingstoke and Deane Group

We continue to carry out BSVs, these have come from requests for advice where it is deemed it is not necessary to conduct a Fire Safety Audit but an opportunity to give advice is available.

As part of the Business Fire Safety initiative we have also continued to give free fire safety workshops at the Basingstoke office. These have been very popular and have been well attended with 13 and 15 persons respectively.

Enforcement

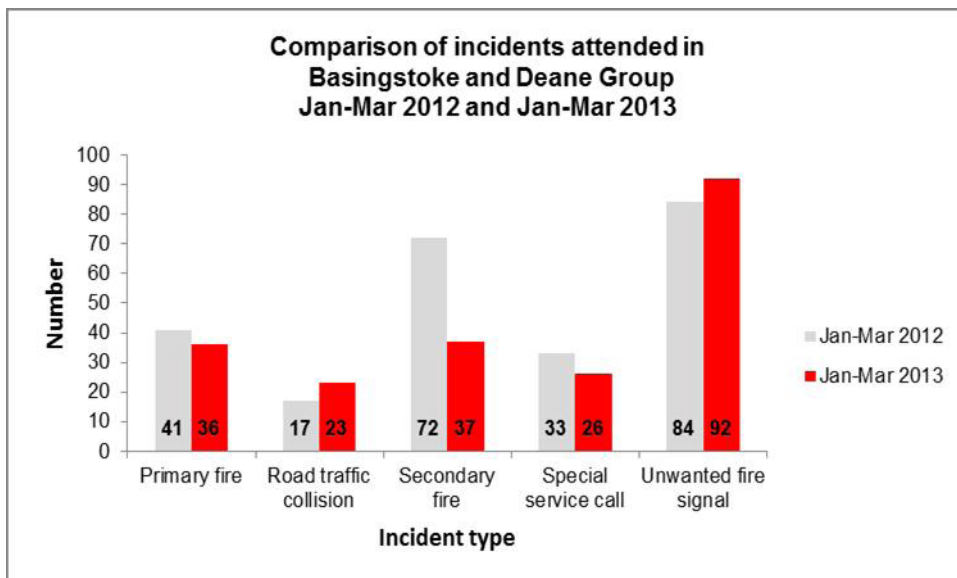
No enforcement notices were issued during this reporting period.

Prohibitions

No prohibition notices were issued during this reporting period.

Community Response

On 13 February five pumps were mobilised at 16:28 to a chimney fire at a two-storey private dwelling consisting of brick and tile at Burghclere. Upon arrival crews called for an ambulance to attend a 59-year-old male casualty with severe concussion, who had slipped over and banged his head. The fire was situated within the wall cavity to the rear of the wood burner, and spread from the ground floor to the first floor of the property. Crews in attendance from Kingsclere, Whitchurch, Overton, Tadley, Basingstoke and Rushmoor used eight sets of breathing apparatus, three hose reels, two compressed air foam systems, 15 litres of compressed air foam solution and one jet. The cause was accidental and most likely down to either a poorly fitted wood burner or heat transfer through the metal work. The stop message was received at 20:42.



3.2 Group activity - Rushmoor and Hart Group

Community Safety

The table below shows the number of home safety visits carried out in the group area between January and March 2013 and the number of smoke alarms fitted.

	Number
HSVs undertaken	246
Smoke detectors fitted	238

Fire investigations

Rushmoor and Hart Group have had two investigations in the reporting period, involving a flat and wheelie bins.

Arson and risk reduction

There were no search dog deployments and no statements were taken.

Mosaic risk groups

D, F and E

Business Fire Safety

Officers from Rushmoor conducted a number of Fire Safety Audits under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 during this period.

These included themed audits (sleeping risks), alleged fire risks, unwanted automatic fire alarms and post-incident inspections. A post-incident inspection at a hotel in Farnborough resulted in enforcement action being taken, due to inadequate provision of smoke detectors in the bedrooms of the hotel. Working with the management of the hotel to prevent a Prohibition Notice being served, we advised the owner to install single point detectors in every room (29 rooms) by the end of the working day. This was only allowed because the corridors were covered by a fire alarm system and the agreement of three month timeline to upgrade the fire alarm. We continue to work with the hotel to bring the issues to a satisfactory conclusion.

We continue to investigate complaints from members of the public on fire safety issues. Our investigation will decide whether the complaint is founded and if an inspection is required. Information can also come from Rushmoor or Hart councils and our response crews.

In addition to the above, officers from the Rushmoor office have been working with Wimpey Development at the Wellington Centre, Aldershot. We are working with the Wellington Centre Management, representatives from Wimpey, building contractors, Rushmoor Planning and building control to resolve any issues relating to the new development of a Wimpey Restaurant in the Wellington Centre. This venture is supporting business and the local economy in Aldershot and is an example of the level that Hampshire's fire safety inspectors are working at.

3.2 Group activity - Rushmoor and Hart Group

The officers have also been working with the Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) Buddhist Temple development in Aldershot. Joint meetings with RBC licensing, planning and the Environment Health departments are helping the local Nepalese community in providing a Buddhist Temple and/or community centre in Aldershot at the Old British Telecom Social Club in Aldershot. We will continue to support this venture to a successful conclusion. We have also assisted Aldershot Town Football Club (ATFC) with testing the evacuation procedures on a match day. Joint working with the officials of ATFC, the Police and HCC Emergency Planning identified some issues, however overall the exercise was considered a success. We continue to support the Club through the Safety Advisory Group.

Enforcement

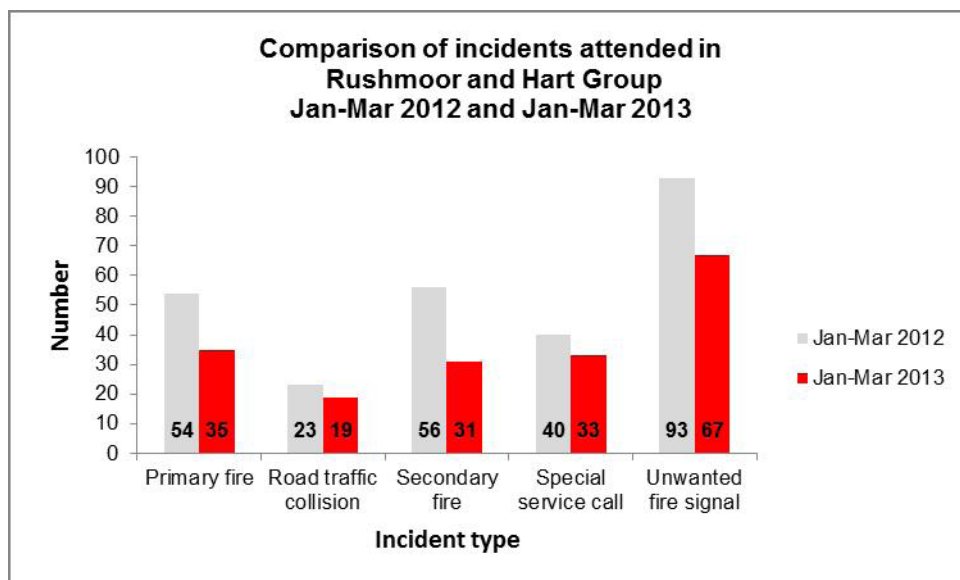
No enforcement notices were issued during this reporting period.

Prohibitions

No prohibition notices were issued during this reporting period.

Community Response

On the 15 March four crews were mobilised to the Virgin Active centre in Farnborough to attend a special service call involving chlorine gas. One female casualty was taken to hospital prior to the crew's attendance. Two sets of breathing apparatus and monitoring equipment were used and ventilation was carried out. The gas was thought to have been generated by cleaning chemicals mixing in the drains of the centre.



3.3 Group activity - Havant and East Hampshire Group

Community Safety

The table below shows the number of home safety visits carried out in the group area between January and March 2013 and the number of smoke alarms fitted.

	Number
HSVs undertaken	292
Smoke detectors fitted	323

Fire investigations

Havant and East Hampshire Group have had seven investigations in the reporting period, involving a shop, church, public house, domestic house, caravan, disused dwelling and a thatched cottage.

Arson and risk reduction

Two fire investigation search dog deployments were arranged during this reporting period.

Mosaic risk groups

D, B and M

Business Fire Safety

During this period the inspectors have been working hard to reduce the risk from fire to the public. Following a Fire Safety Audit of a Hayling Island residential care home the manager stated that the other three homes owned by the company had never received a visit from the fire service despite being there some years. On the owner's request we visited the premises.

At a care home in Waterlooville it was found that a wheelchair-bound client was occupying a bedroom with no ventilation or window. Also only one person was on duty at night despite a care plan that stated two persons were required to lift some of the residents. In addition to these concerns other fire safety issues were identified. The owner agreed to provide a second person at night and a re-assessment of the management processes and evacuation strategy. We are still working with the owner to resolve these issues.

Havant and East Group gave advice following a consultation with the local authority regarding building and issues of access. A back garden development of five new houses meant that access for fire appliances could not be met by the developers. The issue was discussed with the project management company and we suggested domestic sprinklers as an alternative option. Following further consultation it was agreed to install a sprinkler system in each property.

During an inspection of a public house that provided sleeping accommodation in the

3.3 Group activity - Havant and East Hampshire Group

Bordon area it was identified that the premises had a number of issues. These included obstructed means of escape, lack of fire separation to the kitchen, poor arson prevention management (bins and storage), general maintenance of fire safety and recording of fire safety training and testing. As a result of the audit and in consultation with the responsible persons, the issues are now being dealt with by informal enforcement.

A public house with sleeping provision was visited in the Upper Farringdon area. It was identified that there were issues with regard to the fire detection system, risk assessment, signage and emergency lighting. As a result of the inspection an agreed action plan was agreed and put into place.

Enforcement

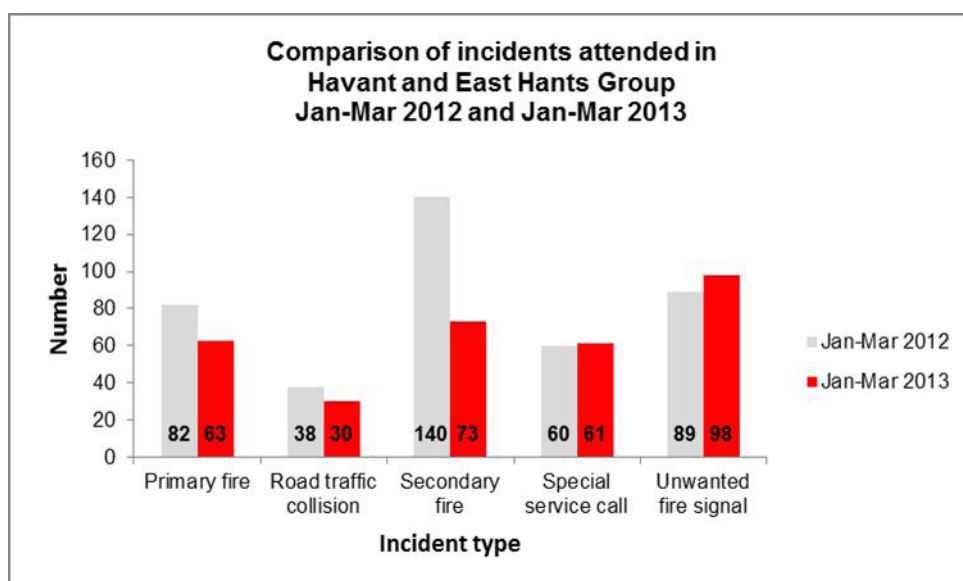
Two enforcement notices were issued during this reporting period.

Prohibitions

No prohibition notices were issued during this reporting period.

Community Response

Twelve pumps, a special equipment unit, special equipment unit support pump, aerial ladder platform, four water carriers and a multi-role vehicle, attended a large fire on 29 March at 09:30 involving three buildings at East Meon. The private dwellings consisted of two storeys, constructed of thatch and brick. Crews used jets and hose reels to control the blaze. The cause of the blaze was found to be either a spark from the chimney or heat transfer through a defective chimney or liner.



3.4 Group activity - Fareham and Gosport Group

Community Safety

The table below shows the number of home safety visits carried out in the group area between January and March 2013 and the number of smoke alarms fitted.

	Number
HSVs undertaken	231
Smoke detectors fitted	222

Fire investigations

Fareham and Gosport Group have had seven investigations in the reporting period, involving four houses, a flat, bin shed and a derelict social club.

Arson and risk reduction

One fire investigation search dog was deployed during this quarter.

Mosaic risk groups

E, M and J

Business Fire Safety

A Fire Safety Audit was conducted at Eaton Aerospace Ltd in Titchfield. This is a large site with 15 large industrial buildings. The management of the premises was generally found to be of a good standard. Business continuity advice was given on upgrading of sprinkler system to cover all buildings on site. Further advice was given on the fire risk assessment, storage of gases and support and information for fire appliances. As a result of these discussions:

- Sprinkler systems and main tanks have been updated and are being extended to all buildings on site
- A review of the uses of acetylene is taking place on site also looking at storage of other gases
- A new fire pack is now being put in place, in a similar format to our Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI), for each building with plans so that crews attending will find the information easy to read using a format they already use

A Fire Safety Audit took place at the National Air Traffic control centre in Fareham. We are pleased to report that there are no issues in relation to this piece of national infrastructure. Visiting officers commented on the Gold Standard of compliance of the premises. We are now working with the responsible persons to update their Site Specific Risk Information.

3.4 Group activity - Fareham and Gosport Group

Following a complaint we made a visit to a community hall in the Gosport area. This is a heritage building of three storeys and includes a large function room. The complaint was unfounded but an opportunity was taken to give the following advice: using a lottery grant application to move the offices out as an opportunity to bring the second floor into use - restoring the building and converting it into a museum. In addition a new fire risk assessment was completed after business support advice on compartmentation and the building's current use and users. The responsible persons now have their own action plan in place to complete the improvements.

Enforcement

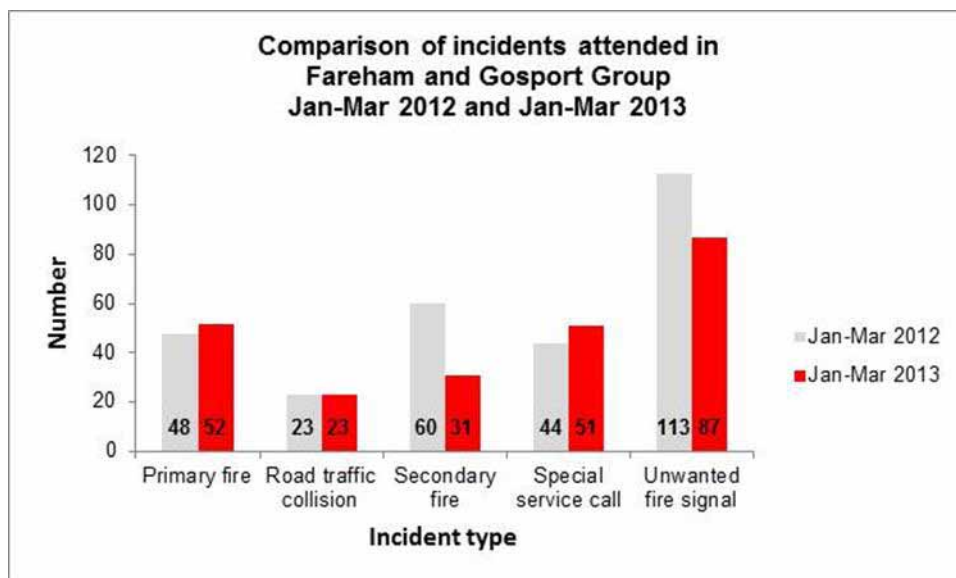
One enforcement notice has been served during this reporting period

Prohibitions

No prohibition notices have been served during this reporting period

Community Response

Control operators received a call at 19:02 on February 24 and mobilised four pumps to attend a fire at the Sailors Rest, a derelict building in Gosport. The building consisted of brick and a flat roof construction with two floors. The first floor was severely damaged by fire with crews using four sets of breathing apparatus, three jets, and one high pressure hose reel to tackle the blaze. The first floor was severely damaged by the fire. The most likely cause was found to be the application of a naked flame to combustible materials.



3.5 Group activity - Portsmouth Group

Community Safety

The table below shows the number of home safety visits carried out in the group area between January and March 2013 and the number of smoke alarms fitted.

	Number
HSVs undertaken	529
Smoke detectors fitted	464

Fire investigations

Portsmouth Group have had nine investigations in the reporting period, involving a public house, health care unit, office block, house, bin shed, vehicle and three flats.

Arson and risk reduction

There were four fire investigation search dog deployments and two statements were taken.

Mosaic risk groups

G, N and I

Business Fire Safety

Following information received from our partners at Portsmouth City Council Private Sector Housing, a visit was made to a block of flats in the North End area of Portsmouth. During the visit it was found that the means of escape from the first and second floors was not adequate. In addition there was no fire alarm or any other means of detecting or raising the alarm, the travel distance from the upper floors was excessive and the electrics were supplied by a chain of extension leads from the ground floor. As a result of these failures a Prohibition Notice was served preventing sleeping on the first and second floors, and the council arranged emergency accommodation for the occupants. We are now working with Portsmouth City Council and the enforcement team to look at the next steps.

Following a fire in a large pub restaurant under refurbishment in Portsmouth a meeting was arranged between the owners, Greene King, and the construction company. During the fire the incident commander was a fire safety specialist and noted problems with the compartmentation and the fire alarm. During the meeting these issues were discussed and it was agreed to rectify the matters during the refurbishment. This is an excellent example of consulting and working with the responsible persons to overcome compliance issues rather than through enforcement.

The incident commander mentioned to the site manager that individuals who commit arson will in general return to the scene within a short period of time. There is excellent CCTV footage of the individuals starting the fire and this was shown to site workers. Consequently the individuals did return to the scene and were arrested - a good result and example of our successful partnership working with police.

3.5 Group activity - Portsmouth Group

As part of our service objectives we are looking at premises that could benefit from the installation of sprinklers. Open discussions have taken place with the Chief Executive of Portsmouth City Council regarding the fitting of sprinklers in higher risk premises in Portsmouth. Initial discussions have led to an agreement in principle to look at the viability. This is an exciting new project for Portsmouth and we will keep you updated as to how it progresses. Management from the Portsmouth Fire Safety office have also met with new Chair of the Portsmouth Chinese Association, Mr Albert Choi. At Mr Choi's request we discussed the impending works at his restaurant and associated premises, and he also took the opportunity to officially introduce himself. Mr Choi wished to continue the association with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service from his retired predecessor. We have agreed to sponsor the Portsmouth Chinese Association magazine, and as part of the deal we will be placing fire safety advice articles and advertise for additional advocates, to help push the fire safety message.

Enforcement

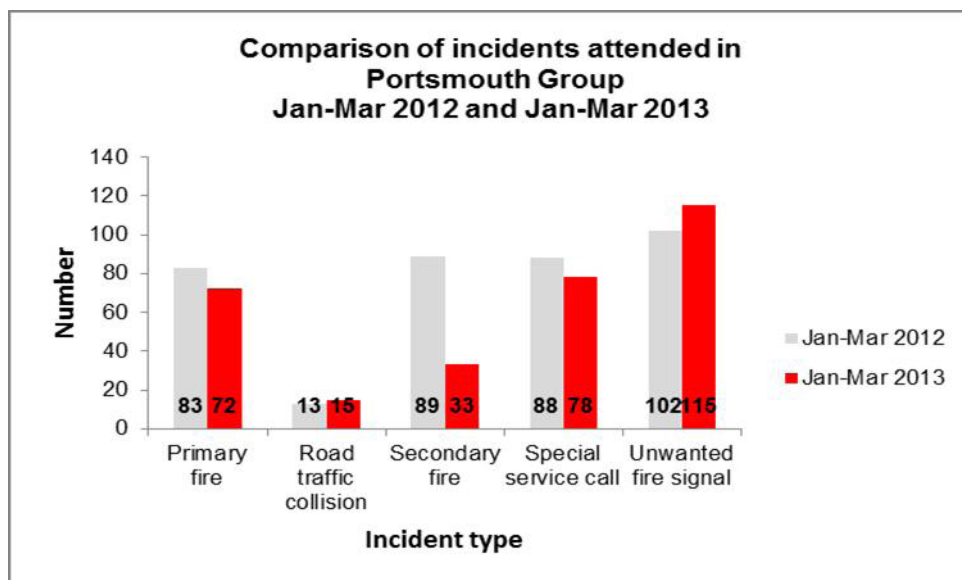
One enforcement notice has been served during this reporting period

Prohibitions

This quarter has seen one prohibition in the Portsmouth area.

Community Response

Fire crews were alerted at 13:17 on 21 January to attend a fire at Tyseley Road, Southsea. A small fire occurred in the roof void of a ground floor flat, causing crews to use specialist tools to cut away the ceiling and tackle the fire. One hose reel and one jet were used to bring the fire under control. The fire was found to have originated in an internal electrical motor.



3.6 Group activity - Winchester Group

Community Safety

The table below shows the number of home safety visits carried out in the group area between January and March 2013 and the number of smoke alarms fitted.

	Number
HSVs undertaken	127
Smoke detectors fitted	163

Fire investigations

Winchester Group have had five investigations in the reporting period, involving a thatched property, two houses and two bins.

Arson and risk reduction

Three fire investigation search dog deployments. The Winchester protection officers have also responded to two alleged fire risks.

Mosaic risk groups

D, A and M

Business Fire Safety

A total of 14 Fire Safety Audits were carried out in the Winchester Group in this reporting period and we responded to two Alleged Fire Risks. In addition, we also carried out 36 Building Regulations consultations and 13 Licensing Act consultations.

We continue to provide support and advice to the many Safety Advisory Groups (SAG) in our area, including Winchester.

The office is actively providing ongoing fire safety and business continuity support to all businesses that we visit. Inspectors will work with the responsible person by way of an action plan wherever possible to assist the business to continue functioning fully. Action plans have been developed in this quarter for the Falcon Lodge care home in Botley and the Bakers Arms pub in Droxford.

Joint working and inspections with the Winchester City Council housing team continues to provide advice and guidance in shared housing and the high risk sleeping accommodation above commercial premises.

The Winchester Group is also actively reducing unwanted fire signal calls by inspecting the premises of persistent offenders that reach a total of six calls in a rolling 12-month period.

3.6 Group activity - Winchester Group

Enforcement

There were two enforcement notices issued in the Winchester Group during this period, at the following premises:

- Waltham Tandoori Restaurant
- Alresford Indian and Bangladeshi Restaurant

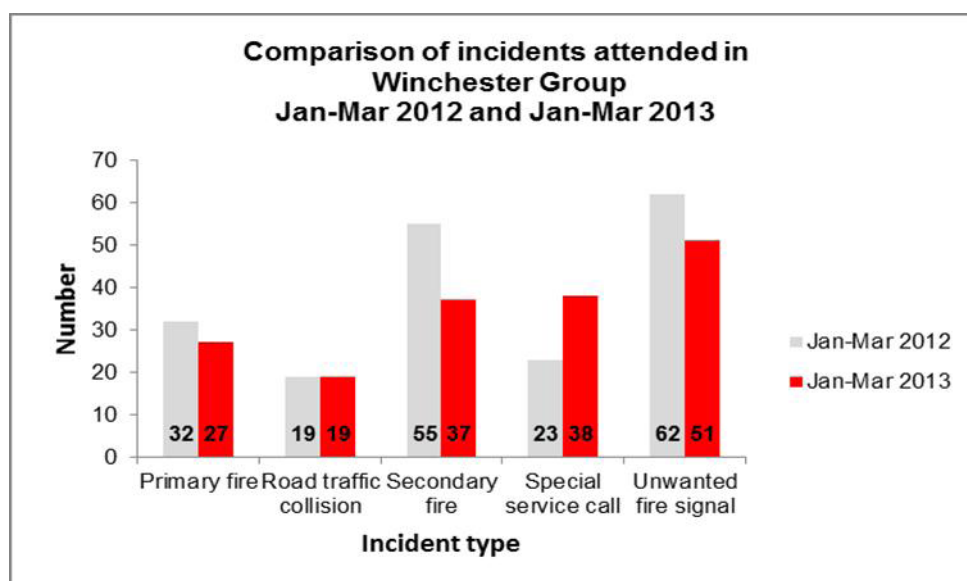
Both buildings had employees sleeping in accommodation above the commercial premises and were audited for this reason.

Prohibitions

No prohibition were issued during this reporting period

Community Response

On 18 February three appliances and a special equipment unit were mobilised to attend a road traffic collision at Bullington Cross. The incident involved one private vehicle, which had flipped onto its roof off the highway. Crews from Sutton Scotney, Whitchurch, Andover and Winchester, extricated one male casualty from the vehicle and passed him to the care of South Central Ambulance Service.



3.7 Group activity - Test Valley and Eastleigh Group

Community Safety

The table below shows the number of home safety visits carried out in the group area between January and March 2013 and the number of smoke alarms fitted.

	Number
HSVs undertaken	142
Smoke detectors fitted	171

Fire investigations

Test Valley and Eastleigh Group have had 12 investigations in the reporting period, involving a fatal vehicle fire, four houses, two flats, four thatched properties and an explosion at a petrol station.

Arson and risk reduction

One fire investigation search dog deployment and two statements were taken.

Mosaic risk groups

D, M and A

Business Fire Safety

A total of 18 Fire Safety Audits were completed in this reporting period and responded to four Alleged Fire Risks. In addition we also carried out 31 Building Regulations consultations and 11 Licensing Act consultations.

We continue to provide support and advice to the many Safety Advisory Groups (SAG) in our area including Test Valley and Eastleigh, Ageas Bowl, Eastleigh Football Club and Thruxton.

The office is actively providing ongoing fire safety and business continuity support to all businesses that we visit. Inspectors will work with the responsible person by way of an action plan wherever possible to assist the business to continue functioning fully. Plans this quarter have been developed for The Cromwell Arms pub in Romsey, Mencap in Eastleigh, Dragon Garden restaurant in Andover, The Star pub in Romsey, the Welcome Stranger pub in Andover and Ashdale Engineering in Andover.

The joint working and inspections with Eastleigh Borough Council housing team continues to ensure safer shared domestic accommodation for all identified high risk sleeping premises. The main areas of concern are around domestic/sleeping accommodation which is situated above commercial premises.

We have also been active in reducing non-emergency lift calls by inspecting the premises of persistent offenders.

3.7 Group activity - Test Valley and Eastleigh Group

Enforcement

Two enforcement notices were issued during this reporting period.

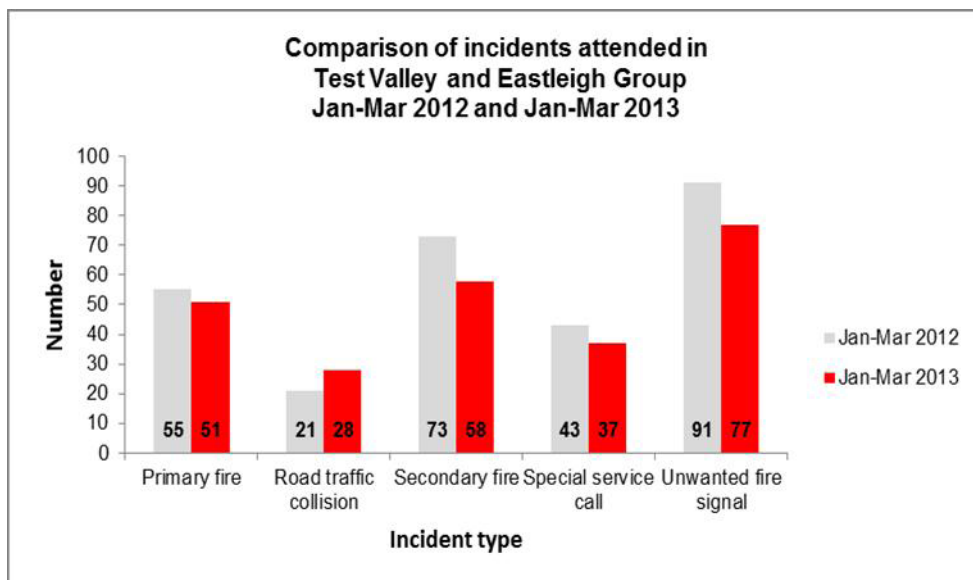
Prohibitions

No prohibition notices were issued during this reporting period.

Community Response

Incident of note

We were called to a fire in the thatched roofs of two adjacent properties in Church Street, Wherwell on Good Friday (March 29). Ten appliances, a water carrier and a multi-role vehicle attended the incident. The fire destroyed 90 per cent of the roofs of the two-storey cottages. Crews used 30 sets of breathing apparatus, four jets, three hose reel jets and two foam jets to extinguish the fire. The 999 call came in at 16:29 and the stop message was sent at 00:35 the following morning. The most likely cause was found to be a spark or heat transfer from a defective chimney or liner.



3.8 Group activity - Southampton Group

Community Safety

The table below shows the number of home safety visits carried out in the group area between January and March 2013 and the number of smoke alarms fitted.

	Number
HSVs undertaken	427
Smoke detectors fitted	339

Fire investigations

Southampton Group have had 16 investigations in the reporting period, involving a fatal vehicle fire, six flats, six houses, a vehicle, hall of residences and a boarding house.

Arson and risk reduction

There were six fire investigation search dog deployments and four statements were taken.

Mosaic risk groups

G, N and M

Business Fire Safety

A restriction on staff sleeping on the first floor above the kitchen was served on Junnes Indian Cuisine, High Street, Southampton.

Building activity has increased within the Southampton area and as such we have consulted on 48 separate consultations in these past two months. We have also reviewed 24 license applications.

We continue to work closely with our police partners to establish a monthly meeting of all the parties interested in licensing, in particular the night-time economy within Southampton, with a view to sharing information so that we can better target high risk premises. The Licensing Action Group meets once a month at Redbridge Fire Station.

We continue to promote sprinklers in the city, with some success, for example Mayflower Plaza and The Parkhouse redevelopment.

3.8 Group activity - Southampton Group

Enforcement

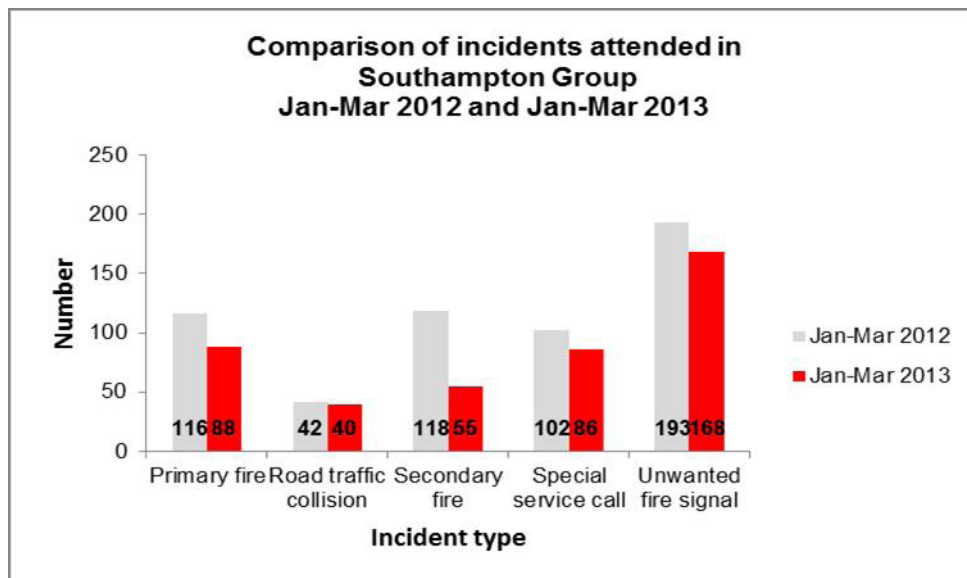
Two enforcement notices have been issued during this quarter on Junnes Indian cuisine and Providence Nightclub.

Prohibitions

No prohibitions notices were served in this period

Community Response

On the 19 January six crews were mobilised at 03:23 to attend a fire at Shirley Towers, Southampton. The fire was situated on the fifth floor in the living room of the flat. The stop message was received at 04:10, all persons were accounted for and three casualties were taken to hospital by ambulance. Crews used offensive firefighting with six sets of breathing apparatus and three jets. The cause of fire was found to be an electrical fault in the storage heater switch. The fire involved the internal and external ducting system and there was smoke logging throughout the building and neighbouring properties. Five people were led to safety by firefighters. They used 12 sets of breathing apparatus, three jets and an aerial ladder platform to bring the blaze under control.



3.9 Group activity - New Forest Group

Community Safety

The table below shows the number of home safety visits carried out in the group area between January and March 2013 and the number of smoke alarms fitted.

	Number
HSVs undertaken	207
Smoke detectors fitted	253

Fire investigations

New Forest Group has carried out five investigations in the reporting period, involving a bungalow, vehicle, shed, thatched dwelling and a flat.

Arson and risk reduction

Two statements were taken during this quarter.

Mosaic risk groups

A, D and B

Business Fire Safety

In this reporting period, the New Forest Group has carried out 23 Fire Safety Audits, consulted on 18 building control applications and reviewed six licence applications.

We have also reacted to five alleged fire risks referred by our newly trained response colleagues.

We continue to work with our partners within the New Forest authorities to better manage risk and to specifically drive down unwanted fire calls, by utilising better equipment and technology.

By providing a robust case and capturing evidence of offences, we have helped the Enforcement Support Team to successfully secure a prosecution of a local restaurateur. We have used our Business Support Officer out of hours to make contact and book audits with local takeaways known to have accommodation above.

3.9 Group activity - New Forest Group

Enforcement

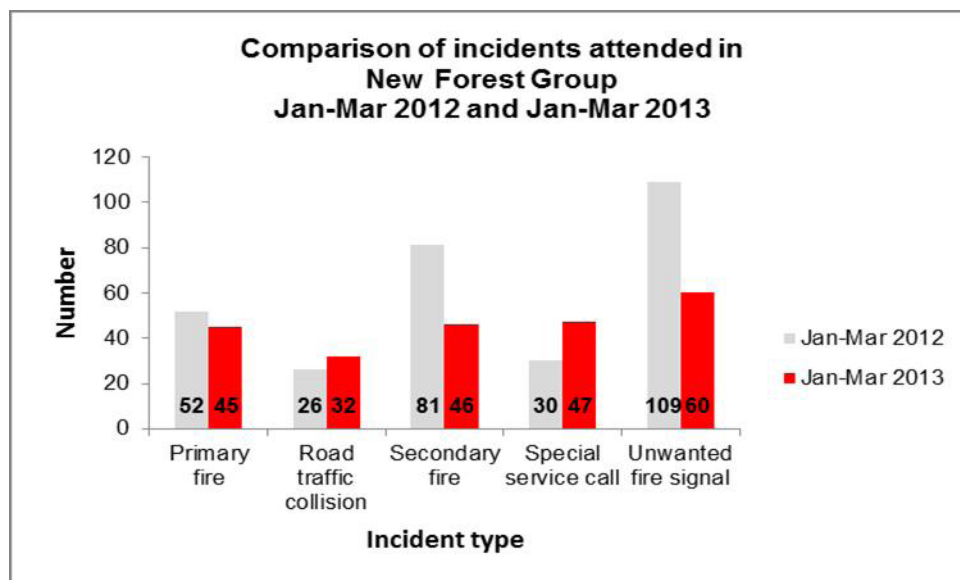
One enforcement notice has been served during this reporting period. A further four audits with an outcome of enforcement have been negotiated down to agreed action plans in order to better support business.

Prohibition

No prohibition notices have been served during this period.

Community Response

Nine pumps were mobilised on 29 March to attend a thatch fire in a cottage in Dibden, Hythe. The property consisted of two floors, 15m x 6m. The first floor was 100 per cent damaged by fire and the ground floor was 50 per cent damaged by water. Crews used 12 sets of breathing apparatus, three jets, three hose reels, a compressed air foam system and 72 litres of compressed air foam to bring the fire under control. The stop time was received at 16:16 after which crews progressed with a salvage operation. The cause of the fire was found to be heat transfer or a spark from the chimney.



4 Stop press

4.1

The final straw - thatch fires prompt safety message

Owners of thatched properties are being urged to check the safety of their chimneys after a spate of fires on Good Friday.

At the peak of the fires, around 200 firefighters from across the country were engaged in battling the thatch blazes in Hythe, Wherwell near Andover and East Meon.

Preliminary investigations suggest all three fires were caused by sparks or heat transfer through the chimney or the liner.

Group Manager Dan Tasker said: "We dealt with around 260 chimney fires in 2011-12. Most of these were confined to the chimney but Good Friday showed how serious these fires can become.

"With regular maintenance most chimney fires are preventable and we can avoid the sort of destruction seen with the recent thatch fires."

The Service responded to a total of six fires involving thatch properties from 29 March to 19 April 2013. Three of these fires occurred in the Eastleigh and Test Valley Group, two in the Winchester Group and one in the New Forest Group. All the properties had wood burning stoves or log burners and the most likely cause in all the incidents were either sparks from the chimney landing on the thatch or heat transfer through the chimney due to poor insulation or structural integrity.

In 2010-11 HFRS compiled a database of all known thatch properties and issued Thatch Information Packs, containing fire prevention information, to all of these properties. The Thatch Information Packs are now available on the HFRS website. However, as a result of this recent spike in incidents involving thatch properties HFRS have carried out the following actions:

- Issued a press release using both traditional and social media.
- Conducted an interview for Breeze Radio.
- Community Safety Officer Paul Francis participated in a live interview on the issue of thatch property fire safety for the Jeremy Vine Show on Radio 2.
- Contact has been established with both the National Association of Master Thatchers and a local chimney sweep company, who also specialise in the installation of wood burners, to help inform our prevention campaign.

4 Stop press

- In the Test Valley area, HFRS has contacted parish councils with thatch properties in their areas, offering to deliver fire safety presentations at village halls and community centres. Operational crews are also visiting thatch properties in the parishes which have had a thatch property fire to provide reassurance and fire safety advice.
- In the Winchester area, HFRS intend to offer a series of presentations to thatch owners/occupiers in the coming year. A similar campaign has been conducted in the past, but was not conducted in 2012.
- In the New Forest, HFRS issue a letter every year reminding owner/occupiers of the Thatch Information Packs which were issued in 2010/2011 and offering further advice and support if required.

4 Stop press

4.2

Fire crews tackle school fire in Petersfield

Fire crews attended a severe fire in a workshop at a school in Church Road, Steep, Petersfield on March 12.

Control operators mobilised five fire appliances along with support crews, with approximately 38 firefighters attending the incident.

Appliances attended from Petersfield, Horndean, Liphook, Bordon, Cosham, and Havant. Effective use of a Thermal Imaging Cameras assisted in locating the seat of the fire.

The fire started in the wood store of the school's workshop and was thought to have started accidentally.

4.3

Elderly woman rescued from Stubbington fire

An elderly lady was rescued by fire crews from a serious house fire in Stubbington on March 26.

Crews on the scene quickly entered the house and carried the 86-year-old to safety from the ground floor of the semi-detached house.

The lady's 64-year-old son, who had called 999, had also escaped from the property. A smoke alarm fitted by Hampshire Fire and Rescue on a home safety visit in November 2011 had been activated by the blaze.

The room was completely destroyed by the fire and the rest of the first floor suffered smoke and soot damage.

Both occupants were taken to Queen Alexandra Hospital by ambulance for treatment for smoke inhalation.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation but is not thought to be suspicious.

4 Stop press

4.4

Student led to safety from Southampton tower block blaze

A female student was led to safety by Hampshire firefighters after a fire in a student accommodation block in Southampton on May 21.

Fire crews were called to the 16-floor Liberty Quays complex after the block's fire alarm was activated.

On arrival, the block had been evacuated but one person was found to be unaccounted.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus swiftly carried out a search operation and located the female in a 12th floor bedroom and led her to safety. She was handed into the care of paramedics and taken to hospital as a precaution.

The fire involved a sofa in the communal kitchen of a flat on the 12th floor and firefighters from St Mary's, Hightown, Redbridge, Winchester, Botley and Romsey worked quickly to extinguish the blaze.

A joint investigation carried out between HFRS and Hampshire Police deemed the most likely cause to be the careless disposal of a cigarette.

Key to mosaic groups

A

Residents of isolated rural communities

B

Residents of small and mid-sized towns with strong local roots

C

Wealthy people living in the most sought-after neighbourhoods

D

Successful professionals living in suburban or semi-rural homes

E

Middle income families living in moderate suburban semis

F

Couples with young children in comfortable modern housing

G

Young, well-educated city dwellers

H

Couples and young singles in small modern starter homes

I

Lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas

J

Owner occupiers in older-style housing, typically in ex-industrial areas

K

Residents with sufficient incomes in right-to-buy social housing

L

Active elderly people living in pleasant retirement locations

M

Elderly people reliant on state support

N

Young people renting flats in high density social housing

O

Families in low-rise social housing with high levels of benefit need



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