

MEETING:	Bath & Northeast Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board
MEETING DATE:	7 th November 2024
REPORT OF:	Steve Quinton Area Manager Avon Fire and Rescue Service
SUBJECT:	Avon Fire and Rescue and the Health and Wellbeing Boards

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides members of the Health and Wellbeing board with information concerning the role of Avon Fire and Rescue Service (AF&RS) within the Health and Wellbeing agenda.
- 1.2 The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) holds a trusted position within society allowing access and interaction with broad and diverse communities. Through our long standing experience of prevention work, early intervention is at the heart of our service delivery and one of AF&RS strategic objectives of making our communities safer.
- 1.3 Our service does not discriminate and our targeting focuses on those most vulnerable and at risk in our communities. We know that addressing root cause health inequalities leads to a reduction in demand for the responsive element of fire and rescue services.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board is asked to:

- a) 'To note' the report

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In 2023/24 nationally the FRS attended over 600,000 operational incidents. The Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) placed a statutory duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales to promote fire safety, placing the prevention of fires at the heart of their activity. The role of the Fire and Rescue Service has changed over the last thirty years. The interventions employed by FRS to execute this duty have dramatically reduced the incidence of accidental

fires in the home and a range of other incidents by over 40 percent in the last 10 years. This decrease has been the result of changes to the services which has shifted from responding to demand to focussing on prevention.

- 3.2 The decrease in the demand for the service has resulted in changes in the way that the workforce is utilised, with staff spending less time responding to incidents with more capacity to support prevention and improving community wellbeing.
- 3.3 The fire service is a trusted profession which has respect across all age groups and in a diverse range of communities. This has been an important aspect of the prevention work undertaken by the service.
- 3.4 The operational priority of the service remains the need to respond to fire and rescue incidents. In order to retain capacity to respond to these incidents staffing levels need to be maintained. Minimising staff turnover is also essential in order to retain skilled and experienced staff which requires remuneration to be upheld.
- 3.5 In order to continue to deliver effective services and the downward trend in demand for a responsive Fire and Rescue Service whilst at the same time support our own and partners plans, AF&RS recognises the opportunity of even greater collaboration and support for partners. AF&RS welcome opportunities to work collaboratively with other public services, utilising skills around prevention and early intervention to improve all aspects of health and wellbeing.
- 3.6 AF&RS would also welcome opportunities to work with wider partners to improve health and wellbeing. Nationally in 2023/24 the FRS delivered over 564,000 home safety checks with a focus on vulnerable groups such as the over 65's or disabled people. Visits in other areas already include some health interventions like hearing tests to check fire alarms can be heard, to assessing risks of falls and trips and fitting equipment if necessary.
- 3.7 The Person Centred Framework provides guidance for all FRSs to further develop a consistent and evidence-based approach to conducting person-centred Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV). The aim of the framework is to support and extend FRSs work to prevent fire, fire fatalities and serious injuries in the home setting. The home (or dwelling in the incident statistics) is where the majority of fire-related fatalities occur. The Framework encourages FRSs to work in partnership with others, to address the underlying causes of fire fatalities and injuries.
- 3.8 Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is a behavioural change programme, which encourages people to use the day-to-day interactions they have with others to help promote positive behaviour change. The programme gives people the confidence to engage with those who may be looking to make a lifestyle change, such as stopping smoking, drinking less, eating more healthily or being more physically active

- 3.9 The MECC principles have given the FRS opportunities to extend its work to identify wider health and care support needs that the FRS can provide or through referral on to wider public services. Particularly areas such as mental health, childhood obesity, smoking cessation, isolation, fuel poverty and health inequalities associated winter pressures.
- 3.10 AF&RS already works closely with partners due to our role in Community safety. We have statutory role in community safety partnerships due to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. We work closely with colleagues from Banes to exercise this duty. This is as a statutory member of the BCSSP.
- 3.11 Our community work over the last few years has extended to the following activities to name a few:
- Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme
 - Childhood obesity Programme
 - Summer Holiday camps
 - Water Safety Programmes
 - Road Safety Programmes
 - Social Isolation programmes
 - Kings Trust (formally the Prince's trust)
 - Work around smoking cessation.
 - Friends Against Scams
 - Dementia Bands programme
 - Serious Violence Duty
- 3.10 AF&RS welcomes the opportunity to develop a plan to work collaboratively with wider public services in Banes and across the Avon area to make the most efficient use of the available workforce and to utilise the experience and success of the service in prevention.

4. REPORT CONTACT

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