



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Combined Fire Authority**

**9 December 2022**

### **Bonfire Report 2022**

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## **Report of the Director Community Risk Management**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide members with a summary of the outcomes of the Joint Bonfire Delivery Plan (2022) and give an overview of the activities conducted by County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) and their partners as part of a deliberate fire reduction strategy over the Bonfire Period 25 October to the 7 November 2022.

### **Background**

2. The latest version of the Joint Bonfire Delivery Plan was developed in 2021 with the aim of providing a formal process to follow for Emergency Response, the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team, Communications Team together with key partners, with specified activities, designated outcomes, and target dates for completion of tasks and data returns.
3. The original Joint Delivery Plan was reviewed and recirculated for consultation in July this year with partners asked to provide feedback and comment on their experiences of the 2021 Delivery Plan.
4. Much of the original plan was found to be valid and operable, with some minor changes made to aid better interoperability amongst a diverse range of partners, such as Tesco.com, Housing Associations, Schools, Trading

Standards and Environmental Service teams in Durham County Council (DCC) and Darlington Borough Council (DBC) and Durham University.

5. One of the key benefits of working in collaboration is the opportunity for partners to spread the various bonfire safety messages with the wider community, and into specific sections of the community, (such as young people and families), focusing on the benefits of attending organised displays and the potential danger of bonfires.

### **Key Points from the 2022 Bonfire Period**

6. **Calls over the Bonfire Period:**  
There were 25.5% fewer calls made, (659), over the bonfire period in 2022 compared to 2021, (and 15.5% reduction in calls compared to 2020), which demonstrates a downward trend given the change in Bonfire Delivery Strategy and rise in educational provision.
7. **Calls on Bonfire night:**  
CDDFRS Control Room received a total of 115 calls on Bonfire Night in 2022, a reduction of 130 calls compared to the 245 calls received on Bonfire Night of 2021. This equates to a 53% fall in the number of emergency calls in 2022.
8. **Incidents Attended on Bonfire Night:**  
Emergency Response crews attended 50 incidents on Bonfire Night, which is a 67% reduction, down by 103, on incidents in 2021.
9. **Deliberate and Not Known Fires on Bonfire Night:**  
The downward trend in deliberate and not known fires on bonfire night has continued into 2022 with a 21% reduction this year compared to 2021 and is a substantial 63% difference to 2020.
10. Whilst it is hard to be absolute on the cause of the downturn, it is felt that a combination of education delivered across the year to specific age groups and greater interaction with young people at secondary schools has played a part. In addition, the collaborative work between agencies to remove flammable waste materials rapidly, removes the availability of fuel in the community.
11. **Emergency Response Planning**  
In preparation for the expected peak on bonfire weekend additional resources were utilised. An additional Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) was staffed in Darlington to protect appliances for life risk incidents and a joint police and fire vehicle was deployed in the Easington area focussed on community engagement to keep people safe and reduce anti-social behaviour.

12. Police operators attended CDDFRS's Control Room to coordinate response effectively across police and fire. Additionally, one of our trained National Incident Liaison Officers attended police Silver Command at Aykley Heads to further assist effective coordination at incidents.
13. **Violence Against Staff**  
During the bonfire period there was one incident of violence against our staff. This was in the Easington area on 6 November, and a group of youths who had made a bonfire using a wheelie bin and wood, threw objects at the appliance and crew as well as giving the staff verbal abuse. The Police were requested and attended the incident promptly.
14. **Environmental Visual Audits (EVA):**  
The Emergency Response crews committed a significant workload to local area EVA's in partnership with Environmental Services from DCC and DBC, in total 257 EVA's were conducted.
15. **Blue Route Patrols:**  
Blue route patrols increase visibility in high-risk areas, provide an opportunity to assess areas for fly tipping or fire setting indicators and utilise known intelligence as a deterrent to prospective fire setters, in total 218 blue route patrols were conducted.
16. **Leaflet Drops (Targeted Areas):**  
As part of analysis of activity in station areas, Watch Managers and Divisional Managers will review Power Bi and other intelligence sources and target specific areas to conduct leaflet drops. In addition, Emergency Response crews may utilise a visit to a high-footfall area, (supermarket entrance), or react to an incident with a warm strike leaflet drop, following a fire. In total 45 targeted leaflet drops were conducted.
17. In addition, Tesco.com delivered 5000+ CDDFRS fireworks safety leaflets across the bonfire period and DCC Trading Standards Team delivered 2000+ CDDFRS fireworks safety leaflets to retailers officially registered to sell fireworks.
18. **Joint Arson Initiatives:**  
In partnership with other agencies, Emergency Response crews conduct targeted arson prevention initiatives to mitigate the potential for fire setting, target hardening and site assessments of insecure / at risk premises and high-profile joint patrols with local authority staff and Police Officers. In total 13 Arson Initiatives were undertaken.

19. **Education (Prevention Activities):**

Over the bonfire period, Emergency Response crews undertook 88 school educational sessions at Key Stage 2, to approximately 2,600 children. The Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team conducted inputs to approximately 600 Key Stage 3 students at schools that allowed time for the educational input.

20. When these figures are combined with the education provided by the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team from early 2022 up to the last week of term in July, CDDFRS provided targeted arson reduction education, over and above Emergency Response routine school visits at Key Stage 2, to 13,600 young people across County Durham and Darlington.

21. **Social Media campaign:**

Our social media campaign is divided between the formal media provision by the Communications Team and volunteer Emergency Response crews who disseminate social media content 'as live' on platforms such as TikTok. Views for the different platforms were:

- TikTok = 6,582 views
- Twitter = 5,261 views
- Facebook = 30,914 views

**Summary**

22. The 2022 Joint Bonfire Delivery Plan has brought together a diverse range of partners, agencies, and delivery methods to seek to drive down the effect of arson and deliberate fires on County Durham and Darlington. The delivery plan built on the success of the 2021 plan, to further reduced incidents.

23. Emergency Response crews worked diligently within their station areas to seek out flammable materials and reported this through various pathways to Environmental Service teams to remove the materials before it could be set alight. Joint patrols and targeted activities, similarly highlighted materials for recovery.

24. The number of young people educated continues to be a positive investment in the safety of our communities and education will remain an ongoing priority for Key Stage 2 and 3, to aim to reduce deliberate fire setting in the community.

25. Planning for the 2022 Bonfire Period began in late July 2022, which indicates how complex the coordination of the various agencies, specialist teams and preparation of initiatives can be. The Community Safety and Arson Reduction Manager will conduct a review of the Joint Bonfire Delivery Plan, across the

various agencies and partners, to understand what worked well and what could be improved upon for future campaigns.

### **Recommendations**

26. Members are requested to **note** the contents of the report.

Director Community Risk Management Keith Carruthers, Ext. 5564