

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 21 September 2026

Fire Protection Report

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Executive Summary

This report covers the period from 15 June 2026 to 21 August 2026 and provides a summary of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions relating to fire safety offences, alongside convictions arising from arson incidents progressed through the criminal justice process.

Given the pace of regulatory change in building fire safety, this report also provides an update on Fire Protection and Business Support. It outlines how the Service is adapting its delivery model and developing its workforce to keep pace with these changes, while continuing to improve public and firefighter safety within the built environment.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note the report.

This report is provided to inform Members of current fire safety prosecution activity, arson-related convictions, and the wider Protection and Business Support context. It highlights live cases, emerging demand, and the regulatory environment in which LFRS is continuing to develop its capability and maintain a robust approach to public and firefighter safety.

The report is structured in three parts: fire safety convictions, prosecution cases currently in progress or development, and arson-related convictions and current cases. This structure is intended to give Members a clear view of enforcement activity, case progression, and the wider risk context for Protection and Business Support.

Fire safety convictions

Prosecutions

There have been no sentencings since the previous Combined Fire Authority report dated the 15 of June 2026.

Prosecutions in the Court system

Five cases currently sit within the court system, and one awaits summons being issued.

The responsible person and company for two HMO (House of multiple occupation) premises in Bacup and Darwen, both owned by the same responsible person, pleaded guilty to breaches of the Fire Safety Order at Preston Magistrates Court on 13 August 2025. The sentencing hearing, originally listed for 7 January 2026, was adjourned and subsequently listed for 16 April 2026 at Preston Crown Court. A further adjournment was then granted due to personal circumstances. The hearing, which was later listed for 19 May 2026, has now been rescheduled to 28 September 2026.

An NHS Trust and a maintenance company appeared at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 1 October 2025 in relation to a fatal fire and alleged breaches of the Fire Safety Order at a mental health unit in Blackburn in late 2023. The hearing was adjourned until 18 November 2025 at Preston Magistrates Court and was subsequently transferred to Preston Crown Court.

The initial plea and case management hearing took place on 15 December 2025, at which no pleas were entered. A further plea and case management hearing was listed at Preston Crown Court for 22 April 2026. Pleas have now been entered by the Trust. The maintenance company has indicated its pleas and is awaiting a plea hearing date at Preston Crown Court. Once both parties have formally entered pleas, a sentencing date will be allocated.

The responsible persons and company were due to appear at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 18 February 2026 in relation to breaches of the Fire Safety Order at a nightclub in Burnley. The defendants did not attend court on that date but subsequently appeared at Lancaster Magistrates Court on 26 March 2026. At that hearing, one responsible person pleaded guilty to all charges, while the second responsible person and the company pleaded not guilty.

The case was then transferred to Preston Crown Court, with a hearing listed for 23 April 2026. A further hearing was listed for 5 June 2026 due to the absence of legal representation at the previous hearing. Both responsible persons have now pleaded guilty, and sentencing is scheduled for 12 October 2026 at Preston Crown Court.

Two companies and a charity were due to appear at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 28 January 2026 in relation to breaches of the Fire Safety Order at mixed commercial and residential student accommodation in Preston. The case was subsequently transferred to Preston Crown Court after no pleas were entered in the Magistrates Court.

A hearing was held at Preston Crown Court on 6 March 2026, at which no plea indications were given. A further hearing was listed for 3 July 2026. On 11 May 2026, offers were accepted under several articles on a full facts basis, which resulted in the charity no longer being subject to prosecution. At present, no plea has been received from the second company.

As LFRS has not received acceptable pleas from all parties, a trial date has now been set for 7 June 2027 at Preston Crown Court.

The responsible person for a mixed commercial and residential building in Morecambe was issued with a summons on 20 April 2026, with the matter listed for hearing at Blackburn Magistrates Court on 10 June 2026. The case proceeded to Crown Court on 15 July 2026. At that hearing, defence counsel requested further time to instruct their client. A new hearing date has been set for 13 October 2026.

Prosecution cases currently being developed and reviewed

Protection teams continue to investigate and develop case files relating to sixteen other premises and one fire risk assessor where offences are believed to have been committed under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. These include:

- Care and Nursing Home x 4
- Supported Living premises x 1
- House of Multiple Occupation x 2

- Residential Flats (Student Accommodation) x 1
- Commercial premises (shop) x 1
- Mixed Commercial and residential (Takeaway & Flat) x 1
- Large Nightclub x 1
- Large theatre & after show bar x 1
- Hotel x 3
- Fire risk assessor x 1

Arson risk reduction

R v Kian King and Locklan Marsden-Price

Address

Hacketts York House Hotel, 14-18 Queens Promenade, Blackpool, FY29SQ.

Date and Time of Call

24/04/2023 14:46

This incident involved a fire on the ground floor of a derelict hotel on Blackpool's seafront. The building had previously been subject to multiple deliberate fires linked to anti-social behaviour. The fire spread rapidly through the building due to voids created by previous smaller fires and the general condition of the premises. A witness reported seeing two children enter the building but not leave, resulting in the incident being upgraded to a persons reported incident. Following searches by crews, the building was confirmed to be empty.

This was a protracted incident and investigation involving LFRS and partner agencies. The incident required the attendance of a significant number of appliances over the following four days and was notable for the high use of breathing apparatus, with 20 breathing apparatus wears completed by crews during the emergency phase. There was significant disruption to neighbouring residents. The incident resulted in the destruction of the derelict hotel and its subsequent controlled demolition.

The defendants were charged with arson in relation to the Hacketts Hotel fire, as well as a further arson offence relating to a smaller fire near Seaside Way. They were also charged with burglary for stealing the hand sanitiser used in the Hacketts Hotel arson. Both defendants pleaded guilty before the hearing. Sentencing took place in February 2026. Kian King received a Community Order, as he was a youth at the time of the offence, and Locklan Marsden-Price received a two-year prison sentence.

R v Darren Davies

Address

16 Carr Lane, Hambleton, FY6 9AZ

Date and Time of Call

27/03/2026 09:50

This incident involved an explosion at an occupied domestic bungalow. LFRS mobilised four fire engines, one aerial ladder platform and the drone, and the incident was initially categorised as a persons reported fire. On arrival of the first fire engine, the missing occupant was found outside the property suffering from minor burns. During the investigation, the occupant became the suspect after confessing to starting the fire.

Darren Davies had poured ignitable liquid inside the property and placed domestic gas cylinders around the building. His intent was to destroy the property following a misunderstanding about its future ownership in a recent will. Fire investigation concluded that the fire was caused by the deliberate ignition of ignitable liquid rather than by the cylinders.

The building sustained total damage, resulting in the controlled demolition of the remaining structure. Several nearby properties were also damaged, and local residents were affected by the incident. The response and investigation involved LFRS, Cadent Gas, United Utilities and Lancashire County Council.

Darren Davies was charged with arson reckless as to whether life would be endangered. He pleaded guilty at the plea and trial preparation hearing and was sentenced on 30 July 2026 to four years and four months' imprisonment.

Current cases

There are still currently 11 outstanding cases going through the criminal justice process that LFRS are involved with.

Arson Sentencing Guidelines

The maximum sentence for arson in the UK is life imprisonment, as it's considered an exceptionally dangerous offense under the Criminal Damage Act 1971. While life imprisonment is the potential maximum, actual sentences vary significantly based on intent, harm caused (like endangering life), and specific circumstances, with ranges from discharges or fines for minor incidents to many years in custody for severe cases.

Business risk

Moderate – Members are made aware of prosecutions related to fire safety activity and arson within Lancashire, to satisfy themselves that the required robust approach is being pursued.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None.

Data Protection (GDPR)

Will the proposal(s) involve the processing of personal data?
No.

HR implications

None.

Financial implications

None.

Legal implications

Failure of Responsible Persons to meet new legislative requirements placed upon them, may result in LFRS undertaking additional prosecution cases in future.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Glossary

LFRS – Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service

HMO – House of multiple occupation

NHS – National Health Service