

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting to be held on 18th February 2019

FIRE PROTECTION REPORTS

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

This report deals with prosecutions in respect of fire safety management failures and arson incidents within the period 1st December 2018 to 1st February 2019.

In addition, Fire Protection and Business Support Information is included in the report.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note and endorse the report.

FIRE SAFETY CONVICTIONS

Prosecutions under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

- The owner of Mama Mia takeaway Lancaster has been given until March 2019 to complete an extensive list of fire safety works. If this is not completed in its entirety the judge has warned the owner that he will receive a prison sentence.
- The owner of Derby Court Hotel in Preston has pleaded not guilty to 11 offences of the Fire Safety Order and will begin a full trial at Preston Crown Court week commencing the 20/05/19.
- The owner and employer of staff at the Crown Hotel Burnley have had their case sent to Burnley Crown Court to be heard on the 13/02/19.
- The prosecution case file for Plaza Beach Hotel Blackpool is completed and will be forwarded to LFRS Fire Safety Solicitor on the week commencing the 04/02/19 for summonses to be issued.

There are a number of prosecution case files being prepared currently:

- Hotel in Blackpool (summonses being issued 04/02/19)
- Multi Occupied Dwelling in Lancaster
- Hotel in Blackpool
- Multi Occupied Dwelling in Blackpool
- Mixed Commercial premises in Blackburn

FIRE PROTECTION & BUSINESS SUPPORT INFORMATION

Risk Based Inspection Programme

The Risk Based Inspection Programme has been modified for improved targeting of higher risk shops (shops with residential accommodation above) these premises continue to result in enforcement action after inspection is undertaken.

Business Support Website

On-going

Business Safety

The Business Safety Advisers (BSA) continue to identify repeated cases of Unwanted Fire Signals within businesses and ensure that the responsible persons make improvements to reduce them. Two new BSA staff members started in January 2019 with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). The BSAs have made visits to premises operating as 'Escape Rooms' (following the tragic Poland fire) and they are looking at fire safety in self-storage type premises. Additionally, they are making use of the 'SHOUT' networking group that brings small and medium enterprise owners together to promote business fire safety.

Primary Authority Scheme (PAS)

LFRS now has 11 registered partnerships Barchester Healthcare, Four Seasons Healthcare, Amber Taverns, Torus 62 housing, Daniel Thwaites, Warwick Estates, EH Booths, Regenda Group, Progress Housing Group, PBSA Student Roost and St. Catherine's Hospice. Inclusion Housing is awaiting confirmation for a partnership with LFRS. New agreements have now been formalised with Torus 62, Barchester, Four Seasons, Regenda, Amber Taverns and Warwick Estates. There have also been discussions with 6 other interested companies.

ARSON RISK REDUCTION

R v John SCHOFIELD

FLAT 7 FERN LEA, NETHERFIELD ROAD, NELSON, BB9 9Q

This incident was a three fire engine; person's reported fire at the above address. On arrival of LFRS, the kitchen was smoke logged. LFRS gained entry via a kitchen window and extinguished a number of bin bags containing household waste. A message was sent stating "All person's accounted for". On further investigation it became apparent that the occupant had deliberately started the fire and the police were informed, who made enquires of their own as to his whereabouts. An Incident Intelligence Officer (IIO) attended the scene to carry out a full post fire investigation to gather evidence. A home-made petrol bomb, lighters and accelerants were discovered. The kitchen compartment was severely damaged by heat and smoke and the remainder of the flat had slight smoke damage due to the kitchen door being closed during the fire. Occupant charged with arson.

Outcome

Mr SCHOFIELD set fire to his kitchen and left the building. He lived in a converted block of flats. Mr SCHOFIELD was arrested and charged with Arson Reckless as to whether life endangered. Following evidence provided by LFRS investigators, he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 30 months imprisonment on 14/12/18.

R v Stephen JOSEPH
19A GARSTANG ROAD SOUTH, WESHAM, PR4 3BH.

This incident involved a fire in an upstairs flat of a converted terraced house. Upon arrival the fire was starting to break through the roof. LFRS gained entry via the front door by forcing the door, 2 fire fighters in Breathing Apparatus (BA) initially used a hose reel to tackle the fire, and this was exchanged for a 45mm jet when a hydrant feed was established. Further BA crews were deployed in to the adjoining properties to stop fire spread using hose reels. An Ariel Ladder (AL) was requested and used to fight the fire on the roof area. The rear bedroom of the flat was completely destroyed by the fire. The roof of the property was also completely destroyed by fire and the rest of the flat was moderate damage by smoke and flames. This Incident is believed to have been started deliberately by the occupier of the flat in which he has set fire to the attic.

Outcome.

Stephen JOSEPH set fire to refuse bags in his loft in the early hours of 15/05/18. He then left his 1st floor converted flat, while the fire developed. A fire involving the whole roof resulted and threatened the lives of a couple with young child living in the flat below. Staff at the factory across the road alerted the family in the flat below and they escaped unharmed but their flat was severely damaged. It was initially thought that Mr JOSEPH was inside the flat so a fatal fire multi agency team was convened involving the Police, Crime Scene Investigator, Forensic Investigator and IIO. Fifteen hours after the start of the incident and after an excavation of the site it was known that Mr JOSEPH was not in the remains of the fire. He was found in Preston. Four fire engines, an AL & Urban Search and Rescue were utilised at this incident. Mr JOSEPH received a sentence of 4 years and 8 months imprisonment on 18/12/18.

R v Joshua Marc SUTCLIFFE
11 Brighton Avenue, Blackpool, FY4 1HL.

This incident was a fire in the ground floor flat of a mid-terraced property. No casualties involved. Fire Investigation concluded that the fire was started deliberately with accelerants used to promote the growth of the fire. The cause of fire was flammable liquid deposited in the lounge and bedroom then ignited by the application of a naked flame. An IIO attended and confirmed accelerant deposits in the lounge and bedroom. Occupier admitted to starting the fire to the police on scene. Damage to the premises: structural damage to the whole house, the ground floor bedroom and lounge destroyed by fire, severe by smoke to the remainder of ground floor, including the kitchen, bathroom and hallway. In the first floor flat the lounge was severe by fire and smoke, with the remainder of the first floor flat severe by smoke.

Outcome

Mr SUTCLIFFE received 4 years 8 months imprisonment. The Judge reduced the sentence by one third (could have been 7 years) as an early guilty plea was made. Mr SUTCLIFFE can apply for parole once half of the sentence has been served and if granted, remainder will be on licence.

Business Risk

Moderate – Members need to be aware of prosecutions related to fire safety activity and/or arson within Lancashire in order to satisfy themselves that the required robust approach is being pursued.

Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

HR Implications

None

Financial Implications

None

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate:		