

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 24 April 2023

Fire Protection Report

Contact for further information: Assistant Chief Fire Officer Jon Charters

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Executive Summary

This report summarises Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) prosecutions pertaining to fire safety offences, in addition to convictions resulting from arson incidents which have been progressed via the criminal justice process.

Given the rapidly evolving regulatory change in building fire safety, an update on Fire Protection and Business Support is also provided, detailing how the Service is adapting delivery whilst developing our workforce, to ensure that we keep pace with the changes and improve public and firefighter safety within the built environment.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note the report.

FIRE SAFETY CONVICTIONS

Prosecutions

There is currently one case within the court system for offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005; a provisional trial date is set for 8th September 2023.

Fire Safety teams continue to investigate and build files in relation to ten further cases wherein offences are believed to have been committed under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005, involving the following types of premises:

- Specialised Housing / Supported Living Scheme
- Care & Nursing Home
- House in Multiple Occupation used as Student Accommodation
- Mixed commercial and Residential (Takeaway with sleeping above) x2
- Residential Flats x3
- Commercial car repair garage
- Mixed commercial and Residential (in-dining restaurant with sleeping above)

FIRE PROTECTION & BUSINESS SUPPORT INFORMATION

Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSC)

BFSC continue to support responsible persons along with improving fire safety across Lancashire. To date (end of March 2023) Operational crews have undertaken c2.5k BFSC with 462 identifying significant fire safety concerns resulting in follow up action by Fire Safety teams. This follow-up action has resulted in both enforcement and prohibition activity highlighting the significant value of this service.

Legislation Changes Update

To support the recent Fire Safety England Regulations 2022 which were introduced under Article 24 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, LFRS Built Environment Team wrote to all affected building owners and hosted engagement sessions with tall building owners, housing authorities and managing agents to discuss the changes and outline how LFRS would approach these changes from an enforcement perspective.

To support new duties placed upon responsible persons the LFRS website was updated to allow critical fire safety defects to be reported digitally, 24hours a day. This information is then acted upon from both a regulatory perspective and to ensure operational risk information is accurate for crews.

From April 2023 all residential buildings at least 18m or 7 storeys and above will legally need to register their premises with the newly created Building Safety Regulator (BSR). Registration is now open and will close in November 2023. The Built Environment Team are currently working across the region in supporting the BSR by engaging with accountable persons to raise awareness of the need to register.

ARSON RISK REDUCTION

R v Joseph NOLAN

Moorhead Street, Colne

Date and Time of call – 06/10/2022, 09:15

This incident involved the deliberate ignition of various combustible items, including cushions, which were placed on an ignited gas hob. The fire caused severe damage to the kitchen and contents. The remainder of the property, comprising of a two storey mid terraced house, suffered severe smoke damage.

The defendant, who was the partner of the occupier of the house, pleaded guilty to Arson reckless as to whether life was endangered and was sentenced to 3 years 6 months in prison.

R v Callum SOUTHWORTH

7 incidents in Audley area, Blackburn

Date – 22/04/2022

These incidents involved deliberate fires at various properties including a Pizza Hut and three houses. The most serious blaze was set at a house in Cambridge Street when an occupant woke at around 11pm to her smoke detector sounding. They were subsequently rescued by Firefighters who forced entry into the property.

The defendant pleaded guilty to Arson reckless as to whether life was endangered, and other counts, and was sentenced to 4 years 6 months in prison plus 2 further years on licence.

R v Restricted (due to age)

Salam Street (Car Park), Haslingden

Date – 22/01/2023, 13:44

This incident involved a Mercedes camper van which was totally destroyed by fire whilst parked on the car park. Three youths were captured on CCTV, in and around the vehicle at the time of the fire. The youths were subsequently identified and one of them confessed to starting the fire.

One youth aged 12 received a youth conditional caution and was ordered to complete activities with the Youth Offending Team.

Business Risk

Moderate – Members are made aware of prosecutions related to fire safety activity and/or arson within Lancashire 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 2 if appropriate: N/A