

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

## Performance Committee

Meeting to be held on Wednesday 04 September 2024

### Cooking Safety Campaign

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#### Executive Summary

Cooking-related incidents continue to be the largest cause of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) in Lancashire, with 317 reported incidents in 2023. A campaign was delivered in July 2023, aiming to reduce these incidents by educating the public on safe practices and encouraging behaviour change.

#### Recommendation(s)

The performance committee is asked to note the report.

#### Information

Cooking-related fires are a major contributor to home fire incidents. Of the 317 fires reported in 2023, distraction (152 cases), using the hob as a work surface (111 cases), and accumulation of fat or oil (32 cases) were significant causes. Casualties from kitchen-originated fires accounted for 38% of all fire-related injuries, with Blackpool seeing the highest number of incidents.

	2021	2022	2023	Total
Number of incidents	359	382	317	1058

Insight the Service was able to determine from incident data included:

- High-risk areas included Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, and Lancaster.
- Ribble Valley had the highest ratio of cooking fires at 52% of total ADFs.
- Key times for cooking related incidents was between 5 – 7pm.

The campaign was implemented in July after yearly incident data showed a peak in cooking fires.

#### Campaign objectives

- Reduce the number of overall cooking-related fires during the campaign period.
- Increase audience engagement with campaign materials.
- Change target audience behaviour, particularly reducing casualties from cooking-related fires.

## **Target audience**

- Adults aged 18+ living in the highest risk areas - Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancaster
- Busy adults with young families

## **Key messages**

- Fires won't wait for your attention
- Stay there and cook it!
- Never use your hob as an extension of the worktop
- Keep it clean, keep it clear – a build-up of dirt or grease and items stored on top of a hob creates a significant fire risk
- Get out, stay out and call the fire service out

## **Pre-campaign telephone survey**

A telephone survey was conducted in April, contacting 60 Lancashire residents who had a cooking related fire in the last three years. The survey aimed to gather more information about each incident such as:

- Household profile – presence of children or pets
- Individual profile – age, gender, disability
- Use of kitchen appliances
- Distractions at the time of the fire
- Influence of alcohol or drugs
- Presence of a working smoke alarm

Data from the survey found that 58% of respondents were not in sight of the fire when it started, and 59% admitted to watching tv, bathing or doing household chores when the fire ignited.

## **Radio campaign**

After looking at incident data from the past few years, a recurring cause of cooking fires was busy parents distracted with homework or chores whilst cooking a meal, causing a fire. A radio advertisement on local station Hits Lancashire (formerly Rock FM) was chosen for this campaign due to its captive audience during the school run and rush hour traffic, aiming to target those busy families whilst they were actively listening. The 30 second advert portrayed a tired, busy mum, juggling family demands whilst cooking dinner, her concentration had lapsed for a few seconds and a fire had ignited in the kitchen. The ad ended with the sound of flames and a fire alarm sounding. The scenario played out in real time showing it only takes 30 seconds of distraction to start a fire.

## **Competition to win an air fryer**

The first part of the campaign involved a competition to win a Ninja air fryer. To enter, members of the public had to answer three short questions about cooking practices. The entry process gave the participants the correct answers to the questions to highlight the safest practices. The three questions were written using the campaign's key messages, meaning the participants had to actively read and absorb the messaging to answer the questions.

The competition was well received and resulted in 5,635 entries and gave valuable insight into cooking habits and perceived acceptable behaviour across different age groups. This insight will be used in future campaigns to inform the key messages and target audiences.

## **Campaign activity**

The following channels were used to share the content and key messages:

- Social media platforms: Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and Nextdoor.
- Cooking safety page on the Service's website ([www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/cooking](http://www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/cooking))
- Media release to local news outlets.
- Radio advert
- Paid advertising on Facebook

## **Evaluation**

In total, the campaign reached 1,178,149 people and generated 110,545 engagements (comments, shares, website clicks etc). Social media posts about using the hob as a work surface sparked lots of engagement, with some people sharing their shock that people could “be so stupid”, and others sharing their own experiences of doing so and causing a fire.

5,635 people entered the competition and took part in the quiz allowing us to promote the key safety messages and highlight unsafe practices. 356 people visited the cooking safety page on the website during the campaign period. Two news articles appeared in the local media.

## **Next steps**

The next steps are to build on insight gained from this campaign to further develop the picture of who is most at risk and the behaviours that contribute to fires, alongside analysing incident data at the end of the year.

This new risk profile will decide the key messaging for the next campaign. New creative materials will be designed using the new messaging, including a new video focusing on distractions in the kitchen.

## **Business risk**

None.

## **Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

The campaign used exclusively digital communication channels; no printed materials were produced so the campaign had no impact on the environment.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

A full equality impact assessment was carried out for the campaign and the creative materials were produced following accessibility principles. All digital content was accessible, meaning it was easier for people with disabilities to access online.

**Data Protection (GDPR)**

Will the proposal(s) involve the processing of personal data? Y

Personal data was collected as part of the competition and processed in line with GDPR requirements.

**HR implications**

None.

**Financial implications**

The total cost of campaign was £3,210 which was funded through the corporate communications departmental budget.

**Legal implications**

None.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985****List of background papers**

None

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: None