

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting to be held on Monday 24 April 2017

FIRE PROTECTION REPORTS

(Appendix 1 refers)

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 1 February 2017 to 1 April 2017.

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

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note the report.

FIRE SAFETY CONVICTIONS

Prosecutions under the regulatory reform (fire safety) order 2005

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) has had one case for sentencing since the last meeting and three further cases are being prepared, a Hotel in Morecambe, a Take Away in Lancaster and a Public House with flats in Rawtenstall.

HMO 143 Manchester Road, Burnley

Dr Muhammad Jehangir Khan Bhatti and the Embrace Cooperation Ltd appeared for sentencing at Burnley Magistrates Court on the 10th February 2017.

This Prosecution was a result of an inspection in 2014 at 143 Manchester Road, Burnley, BB11 4HT by Fire Safety Officers and Local Authority (LA) housing department officers, supported by Police and Community Support Officers. The premises consist of basement and three floors that were being used as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), sleeping accommodation with inadequate fire safety provision.

At the trial on the 27th January 2017 at Burnley Magistrates Court, the Leaseholders, Embrace Cooperation Ltd pleaded guilty to six charges and were fined a total of £10,620 and LFRS were awarded a further £3000 costs.

The Owner/Landlord of the premises, Dr Muhammad Jehangir Khan Bhatti was found guilty of four offences, by the District Judge and fined a total of £1,320 and LFRS were awarded a further £4000 costs.

Dr Bhatti has since lodged an appeal which will be heard at Burnley Crown Court on 25/5/17.

FIRE PROTECTION & BUSINESS SUPPORT INFORMATION

Primary Authority Scheme

LFRS has established a new permanent Watch Manager B post based at Service Headquarters dedicated to supporting Primary Authority Partnerships.

The Primary Authority Partnership Officer will further develop effective Primary Authority partnerships with businesses in order to achieve national consistency in delivering fire safety enforcement advice. The post will provide reliable and consistent regulatory advice that the business requires in relation to fire safety. (Briefing Note attached as Appendix 1).

Business Support Advisors (BSA) Activity

The Crew Manager Business Support Advisor role has now been in place for a year in the protection function, their primary role is to provide business owners and Responsible Persons with advice and guidance to enable them to meet their statutory obligations under fire safety legislation.

They are also working extensively with colleagues in both the operational and community fire safety functions of the organisation and as part of this diverse role they have undertaken a number of activities and initiatives in recent months, a number of which are highlighted below.

Business Support Plus Website

The Business Support Plus website is a LFRS site that is specifically designed to provide business owners and Responsible Persons with advice and guidance. The site has been updated extensively by BSA Kevin Birchall and now includes a welcome on the Home page by Deputy Chief Fire Officer Justin Johnston. The updates include Business Continuity, Access Enable (Get me in – Get me out), information on the Primary Authority Scheme, Event Safety and the appeals process for the new CFOA Fire Safety Order standard forms.

<http://www.lancsbusinessplus.org.uk/>

Stay Blackpool Event

BSA Mick Frankland along with Community Safety Advisor Farzana Patel attended the Stay Blackpool Event in the Empress ballroom at the Winter Gardens. This one day event brings together local businesses with an affordable way to present, meet and network with other local accommodation providers that service the tourism trade in Blackpool & the Fylde coast.

During the event advice and literature were provided to hoteliers in regard to fire risk assessments, firefighting equipment, fire safety training and the testing of fire safety equipment as well as addressing any concerns they had of the auditing process that we carry out.

As a result of this event a number of hoteliers have asked for the BSA to visit their hotels to provide advice on Fire Safety.

Lancaster Chamber of Commerce

BSA Tony Ford met with Vicky Lofthouse Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce in Lancaster and from this meeting a number of work streams have been generated.

BSA Tony Ford attended the Chamber of Commerce Business Expo on the 21st March 2017 at Lancaster House Hotel and provided a presentation to local businesses on BSA role within LFRS and the support and advice BSA can offer them.

BSA Tony Ford has also produced the first article on fire safety in the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce newsletter that goes out to their members with the intention of producing a monthly article for this newsletter.

<https://lancaster-chamber.org.uk/news/business-fire-safety-advisor-role-antony-ford>

The chamber has also invited to Tony to a number of events and meetings in the coming months.

North West Ambulance Service (NWS)

NWS met with all BSA's to launch the new recording system regarding AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) within the work place. The form is accessed via a portal on their site called NWS Tell Us about your Defib, link below.

<https://form.jotformeu.com/70293839367367>

Once filled in the form is automatically submitted to them and it also has a drop down box that registers which Fire Service has submitted the form, enabling them to provide LFRS with the numbers of AED we have informed them of.

NWS have also asked LFRS to register all AED we come across, not just new AED, as it enables them to ensure that the details they may already hold are correct for the location, model and maintenance of the AED. This is to assist NWS in mapping where the nearest AED is to any member of the public who may have someone suffering from a Cardiac episode. The information can then be readily available and relayed to any member of the public who has someone suffering a Cardiac episode while the Ambulance crew are dispatched. At present the BSA are submitting the forms, but this will be expanded in the future to all Fire Safety Staff.

ARSON CONVICTIONS

R V Akeel Sabel Mahmood Reedfield, Burnley

This incident involved a vehicle fire on the driveway of the premises. The vehicle had been set alight in 2 separate areas. A fire investigation was completed by LFRS staff and they were initially called to present evidence at Crown Court. However, due to the strength of the evidence, Mr Mahmood entered an early guilty plea and was sentenced to: 18 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years. To complete 150 hours of unpaid work. To be under curfew for 8 weeks between the hours of 10pm - 6 am, which is to be electronically monitored.

R V Gina Kathy King Stopford Court Sparth Rd Clayton Le Moors

This incident involved a flat in a sheltered housing scheme. Ms King had been staying periodically with the occupier and had started a fire in the kitchen whilst trying to light a cigarette from the toaster using paper. This fire spread to the kitchen units. Ms King then took the burning paper into the lounge and set fire to a table. Fortunately the fire alarm system activated and the live in scheme manager investigated the alarm and was able to evacuate Ms King and the flat occupier. A fire investigation was carried out by LFRS personnel. Ms King pleaded guilty at Magistrates Court to reckless arson. She was later sentenced at Crown Court to: 4 months in prison and 4 months for assault to run consecutively (8 months).

R V Robert Foy

Sandy Lane, Accrington

This incident involved the ground floor kitchen of large premises. An amount of clothing had been set alight on the kitchen worktop which spread to the kitchen units. Mr Foy was found in an upstairs bedroom, where he was arrested and led to safety by Police Officers. Mr Foy was charged with arson reckless as to whether life endangered. LFRS personnel carried out a thorough fire investigation and later submitted a lengthy statement regarding the fire and the cause. Mr Foy pleaded guilty after the submission of the statement and was later sentenced to: 6 months imprisonment for arson and 16 months for other offences – 22 months in total.

LFRS has another 7 cases pending hearings or sentencing at Crown Court. These should be available for the next report.

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:		