

# *Arson Control Forum*

Annual Report 2006



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# Foreword

Although we have had great success in reducing the number of deliberate fires, arson is still the cause of about half of the fires attended by the Fire and Rescue Service. Commercial buildings and vital community assets such as businesses and schools still fall victim to the arsonist. The human cost of deliberate firesetting, whether criminally reckless or with murderous intent, is appalling, with about 100 needless deaths and 2,500 injuries annually.

Reducing fire deaths and deliberate fires requires partnership at both a local and national level between government departments and agencies; between local authorities, local police and the fire and rescue services; between businesses, insurance companies and local and national government.

As this report demonstrates we have made a great deal of progress but more can still be done. We can achieve so much more by building on the strengths, knowledge and expertise of partners. This is central to the Government's overall approach to modernising public services so that people can see a genuine improvement to their lives. There is no doubt that fire and fire safety issues are of vital importance in delivering that improvement. Reducing the risk of fire is a major contributor to the confidence and well-being of people in our communities. We cannot build safer and stronger communities without significantly reducing the risk of devastating and demoralising incidents of arson and firesetting.

We must therefore see tackling arson as a mainstream activity – the figures speak for themselves and the impact of successful initiatives and new approaches has been considerable. Let us keep up that momentum.

I am confident we can and will make considerable progress in the months ahead and I believe that through the work of the Forum and with our partners, we can make that vital difference to our communities and the people who live in them.

**Angela Smith MP**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State**  
**Department for Communities and Local**  
**Government**



## Arson – the facts

Arson remains the largest single cause of fire in England and Wales. Research has estimated that the overall annual cost of arson to the economy in England and Wales is around £2.53billion. The human cost has also been high; in the last decade there have been around 2.3million deliberate fires resulting in over 25,000 injuries and over 900 deaths.

### Arson fact

- ⦿ In an average week in England, arson results in:
- ⦿ 1,600 deliberately set primary fires;
- ⦿ 50 injuries;
- ⦿ 2 deaths;
- ⦿ and a cost to society of at least £45 million.

The numbers of deliberate fires had generally been increasing throughout the 1990's to a peak in 2001, since when the trend has been downwards. In the year ending on 30 September 2005, the number of deliberate primary fires in England fell by 17% to 67,900. The main reasons for this include a 15% fall in deliberate fires in homes (down to 8,400) and an 18% fall in deliberate vehicle fires (down to 41,400).

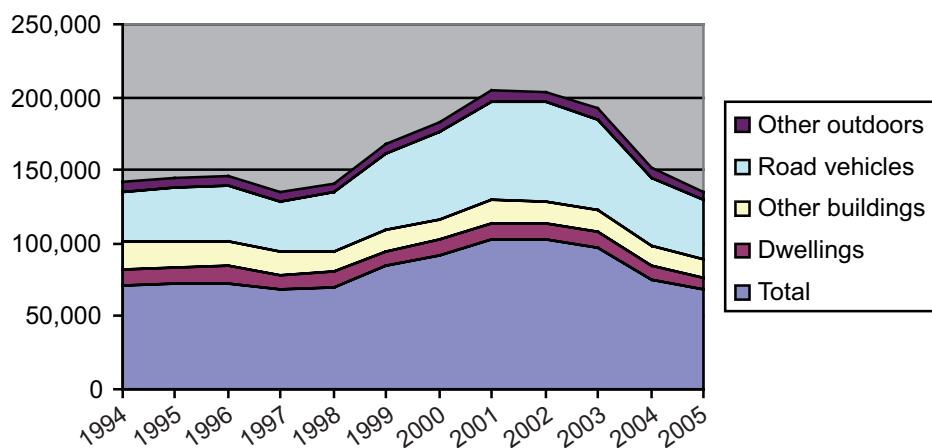
Arson attacks occur for a variety of reasons, for example:

- ⦿ vandalism;
- ⦿ to cover up a crime;
- ⦿ revenge;
- ⦿ fraud; and
- ⦿ mental illness;

Arson is also strongly linked to youth disorder and it is estimated that around 40% of all property and vehicle arson are linked to youth crime. Each year in England around 1,200 fires in schools are reported to the Fire and Rescue Service of which 60% are deliberate. Around a third of all deliberate school fires start during normal school hours which suggests that pupils set a significant number of school fires.

Despite advances in detection techniques, only 9% of arson cases recorded by the police result in a suspect being identified and either cautioned or charged with an offence.

### Deliberate Primary fires in England from 1994 to 2005



## Opening remarks by Mike Hagen CEng FIFireE MCGI – Deputy Chief Fire Officer Merseyside and Chairman of the Arson Control Forum



I am pleased to present the fifth annual report of the Arson Control Forum which highlights the work we have carried out during the past year, and outlines our priorities for the future.

I would firstly like to thank the members of the Forum for their commitment to the work of the ACF and particularly for their contribution and support during my first year as Chairman. I would also like to pay tribute to the contribution made by my predecessor, Andy Baker during the development of the Forum's new work programme with its added emphasis on reducing the involvement of children and young people in deliberate firesetting and associated anti-social behaviour. His well-deserved appointment to the Serious and Organised Crime Agency means that he is not entirely lost to the world of crime prevention and I wish him well in his new post.

The Forum can point to many recent achievements in the past year including the publication of some excellent research material looking at various aspects of the arson problem. Further details of these are set out in the Appendices to this report. Previous Annual Reports have also highlighted the success of the local projects run with support from the ACF Implementation Fund and further evaluation of these projects has confirmed our view that this is the way forward. Evidence of the success of the dedicated multi-agency approach to arson reduction can also be found from the latest fire statistics which are again very encouraging with an overall fall in deliberate fires of 17%. But further analysis suggests that we can and must do better.

A great deal of the fall in the arson figures relates to high-volume/low-value incidents such as vehicle fires. The Fire and Rescue Service and the other agencies involved are to be commended for their efforts to address this problem but in congratulating ourselves we should not lose sight of the fact that the figures for deliberate fires in domestic and commercial buildings remain relatively static. It is now time to address these relatively low-volume incidents that can have a high impact – fires that damage property can also destroy lives and businesses. To build on the encouraging work already undertaken to address vehicle fires we therefore intend to re-affirm the partnership with the business community and insurance sectors which can influence a wide range of people from the self-employed to national corporations. Closer ties with these sectors are vital if we are to make further progress.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and its subsequent amendments formalised partnership working. One key to successful partnerships is sharing information; this can be a process that will require something of a culture change within organisations that have hitherto been cautious of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. The recent review of the 1998 Act recommended that a duty be placed on responsible authorities to share depersonalised data that is relevant for community safety purposes and which is already held in a depersonalised format. This will materially assist Arson Task Forces in their work and is to be welcomed

The Review also recommended that Crime and Disorder Partnerships adopt the National Intelligence Model (NIM) for partnerships and require its use in the strategic and operational functions of community safety. Many local authority organisations are already using the framework of the Model as a means of sharing a common language and procedure when sharing information with partners. We have encouraged Arson Task Forces to have regard to it when developing their local arson reduction strategies. We have seen the effectiveness of partnership working in reducing anti-social behaviour in our communities even when information exchange between partners is basic. There are clear benefits in applying the Model to arson reduction work. Effective information sharing between stakeholders in fire crime is a great resource that is mainly neglected; there is great potential for development in this area.

While formal protocols for information sharing between organisations are steadily progressing, a shortcut to achieving results is possible by the exchange of seconded officers. The right people working directly in a partner organisation can provide the data exchange and additionally become a prime motivating influence in driving the common vision. Some Fire and Rescue Services, including my own in Merseyside, have pioneered the placement of personnel in Local Authority Departments; these seconded officers have achieved remarkable results in reducing arson and distress to the community caused by secondary fires and other anti-social behaviour.

Through the Fire Prevention Grant Programme sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government all Fire and Rescue Services are now allocated funds to implement arson reduction initiatives; the time-consuming formulation of individual bids is no longer necessary. It is however, not unreasonable to expect recipients of money from the centre to report on what they are doing with it and on the progress of their projects and the outcome. In this way Services will be accountable and their examples of good practice can be identified and shared.

We will also be looking at the country's record in detecting arson cases and the (relatively low) rate of successful prosecutions. An arson offence is said to have been 'detected' when an individual is charged, summoned or cautioned. Typically, fewer than one in ten arson incidents are detected. The systematic approach to fire investigation followed by the United States has much to recommend it. So too does its specialist, integrated training for Fire, Police, Insurance personnel and Prosecution lawyers. If legal sanctions are to be a real disincentive to potential offenders then development of sufficient expertise by appropriate people to enable offenders to be identified and prosecuted is vital.

We have achieved much but we must not be complacent. There is much more to do. With the help of our key stakeholders we can do it.

**Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mike Hagen**

# The Forum's Aims, Objectives and Achievements

The Arson Control Forum was launched in April 2001 to bring together the various public and private agencies to develop and introduce a programme of work to prevent arson.

## Our aim

We aim to reduce arson attacks by 10% by 31st March 2010.

## Our objectives

Within our aim, we have six broad objectives which we reviewed in 2005. These are set out below, with a brief note of the progress we have made towards achieving them.

**Objective 1** – To work towards a reduction in the number of deliberate fires and related deaths, injuries and property damage.

- ⊙ Local Investment – local projects to reduce arson have received grants through our Implementation Fund Initiative. Over the three year period to March 2006 we funded or part-funded 66 such schemes. This represents a total investment of about £1 million in 2003/04, rising to just over £4.3 million in 2004/05 and £4.1 million in 2005/06
- ⊙ Local initiatives – the projects supported by the Implementation Fund have been independently evaluated and examples of good practice, focussing on the key building processes associated with implementation have been disseminated. This research is now available on the Forum's Web-site.<sup>1</sup>

**Objective 2** – To develop, monitor and support interventions aimed at children and young people involved in firesetting and associated anti-social behaviour.

- ⊙ We had a key role in the development of the Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service Working with Children and Young People which was published for public consultation in November 2005.
- ⊙ The ACF Good Practice conference held in June 2005 focused on working with children and young people and we used this occasion to inform of guidance for those working in this field (see below).
- ⊙ We have published research looking at the range of youth training and diversion schemes and interventions available within the Fire and Rescue Service and other agencies for working with young firesetters. We have subsequently published good practice guidance for those working in this complex area. Both documents are available on the Forum's Web site.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.arsoncontrolforum.gov.uk](http://www.arsoncontrolforum.gov.uk)

**Objective 3** – To develop, monitor and support interventions aimed at tackling vehicle arson.

- ⊙ We have contributed to the guidance issued by DEFRA in relation to the End of Life Vehicle Directive legislation.
- ⊙ We continue to monitor the Nuisance Vehicle Strategy which aims to reduce the numbers of abandoned vehicles by 25% by 2008, and the Forum also contributes through the Implementation Fund's car clear schemes.

**Objective 4** – To promote partnership and co-ordination of effort so that all stakeholders can contribute effectively to the development of arson prevention/investigation

- ⊙ The Arson Task Forces supported by the ACF Implementation Fund have seen effective partnership working between the Fire and Rescue Service, the Police and other agencies such as local authorities and DVLA.
- ⊙ We continue to hold annual good practice conferences and participate in similar regional events.
- ⊙ We have published research looking at the recording practices and resultant levels of firesetting that are recorded by the Police and Fire and Rescue Services and the specific problems raised by the current terminology.

**Objective 5** – To develop, monitor and support initiatives aimed at improving standards in the investigation, recording and detection of arson.

- ⊙ We have helped in the development of Fire Service Circular No 1/2006 issued on 18th January 2006 which gives guidance on the procedures to be followed in the investigation of suspicious fires.
- ⊙ New National Occupational Standards for fire investigation for the fire and rescue service, the Police and the Forensic Science Service were accredited for use in April 2005.
- ⊙ We have helped in the development of Fire Service Circular No 11/2006 issued on 21st March 2006 which gives advice on how the National Intelligence Model can assist in arson reduction work.

**Objective 6** – Raising public awareness of arson prevention/investigation issues.

- ⊙ We continue to sponsor an annual good practice conference at which issues of specific concern can be explored;
- ⊙ We have contributed articles to publications in the specialist fire press;
- ⊙ The Forum has its own dedicated area on the Department's Website and an Arson mini-site, located on the Home Office's Crime Reduction Website has been developed in liaison with them.

### **Example 1 – Strategic Arson Task Force**

In Cambridgeshire the Arson Task Force provides a strategic hub for a large county with very different districts (some being rural and others containing relatively large conurbations). In this way the Arson Task Force is able to provide support, information, data and a central link to the fire and rescue service and police service for on-the-ground practitioners. This central hub structure allows individual districts to have a greater capacity for, and time to, undertake arson interventions specific to their needs.

The Cambridgeshire fire data software allows instant access to a range of statistics and performance indicator achievements and permits a 'drilling down' by fire type and by area, so the team are constantly in touch with arson activity. Preliminary independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme has shown a 23% reduction in deliberate primary fires in Cambridgeshire.

## Good Practice Conference



On 20th June 2005 we held our second good practice conference at the Royal Institute of Civil Engineering in London. The purpose of the conference on this occasion was to promote good practice in working with children and young people, drawing particularly on the experience gained in running local arson reduction projects.

The event attracted over 250 delegates from the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, the insurance industry, central and local government and academia. Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with responsibility for fire safety, gave the keynote address and set the theme of the conference within the context of the Government's fire prevention policy. The Minister explained that effective and early intervention is the key to tackling juvenile firesetting behaviour and to do that we need a genuine dialogue with children and young people. Hazel Blears MP, Minister of State at the Home Office sent a message strongly supporting the work of the Fire and Rescue Service and the Forum in this area.

The morning session was split into two distinctive parts. Firstly, we heard from representatives of the Youth Justice Board and NACRO who explored the reasons why young people became offenders and considered the ways in which youth interventions could be improved. This analysis was then supported by an evaluation of current youth training programmes by the Research organisation Ecotec.

The later morning session included a series of case study presentations which illustrated youth work in Staffordshire and Cheshire as well as a fire safety education programme developed by the insurance industry. The individual projects which formed the basis of the presentations were also included in an exhibition that we sponsored as part of the conference and which gave delegates the opportunity to meet and discuss matters of common concern in greater depth.

After lunch, delegates attended a number of workshop sessions which addressed various aspects of working with children. This workshop allowed delegates to discuss more practical and tactical matters in some detail and to share their experiences.

We received very positive feedback about the conference and its success has not only contributed to effective partnership working but has helped to ensure that the arson problem remains a key issue for the organisations which attended. A more in-depth report of the conference can be seen on our Website:  
[www.arsoncontrolforum.gov](http://www.arsoncontrolforum.gov).



## Example 2 – Regional Arson Task Force

In London, the Arson Task Force (ATF) comprises one manager and six practitioners who are engaged in a number of activities. The *Safer Neighbourhood Initiative* helps new Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) to identify potential arson targets and fuel sources. Increased awareness has improved partnership working and improved data exchanges which inform PCSO patrolling routines.

A series of *Arson Reduction Presentations for secondary schools* has been developed. These are delivered by the ATF with support from local fire stations at schools within an arson hotspot area or areas that have come to the attention of London Fire Brigade following an incident. Linking in closely with the Fire Investigation Dog Team a visit is conducted within 24 hours of an incident to keep the profile high. The ATF has also developed presentations for the business community, housing associations and councillors. An interactive fire education package has been developed in conjunction with the staff at Feltham Young Offenders Institute to reduce the number of deliberate cell fires. The package is being delivered by an ATF practitioner and the Borough Arson Liaison Officer.

The value of the task force has been attested to by a number of external agencies such as safer neighbourhood teams, housing associations, schools, park wardens and individuals affected by arson incidents. The reduction in deliberate fires has led to a greater capacity to deal with real emergencies; an improvement of the environment in affected areas and a greater understanding of arson issues in London and improved partnership working with other agencies.

## Future work

Membership of the Forum includes representatives from all the key stakeholders including the Fire and Rescue Service, the Police, the insurance sector, those involved in the administration of justice, industry and staff representative bodies. Due to the nature of arson, the work of the Forum feeds into, and derives benefit from other Government-led crime reduction initiatives and representatives from the departments that sponsor these initiatives sit on the Forum. Membership is at a senior level so that members are able to commit their organisations to the delivery of the Forum's objectives. The Chair and two Vice Chairs are drawn from the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service and the insurance industry – this reflects the multi-agency nature of the fight against arson.

### Role of the Forum

The funding of local arson initiatives was one of the key levers in the Forum's strategy to drive down arson and one of its key areas of activity in its formative years. The Forum's role was to assess bids, evaluate the effectiveness local projects and identify and disseminate good practice. Grant payments made under the Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund ended in March 2006 and it is therefore appropriate to review the role of the Forum.

### *Fire Prevention Grants*

Although payments under the Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund ended in March 2006, the Department for Communities and Local Government announced in January 2006, £11.4million of grant funding for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England to support fire prevention work, including community fire safety, arson reduction and work with children and young people. This single grant<sup>2</sup> to all Fire and Rescue Authorities in England replaces the grants paid previously to some authorities under the Arson Control Forum's Implementation Fund and the Department's Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund. The grants are specifically about reducing fire death and injuries. The amount allocated for each Fire and Research Authority is therefore based on a formula which uses an estimate of the likely number of at-risk households within each Fire and Rescue Authority, based on social-deprivation and recent accidental dwelling fire deaths rates. There is therefore no future bid evaluation role for the Forum.

### *PSA target for reduction in deliberate fires*

The Government's new fire Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for England came into effect on 1st April 2005. The target in relation to deliberate fires is to achieve a 10% reduction in deliberate primary (property) fires by 2009/10 from the 2001/02 baseline; in effect to achieve a reduction from 104,500 to 94,000 such fires.

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<sup>2</sup> The Grant is made under s31 of the Local Government Act 2003, which means that there are no conditions attached to it. However, it is expected that Fire and Rescue Authorities will focus on projects delivering effective risk reduction through working with vulnerable groups including children and young people.

In fact to date we have achieved a reduction much greater than the target. In the twelve months to 30 September 2005, there were 67,900 deliberate fires. This is a reduction of 17% compared with the previous twelve months and it is 28% below our target level.

However, the fall in deliberate fires has been largely due to a 18% fall, in the year to September 2005 in deliberate road vehicle fires (down to 41,400). A number of factors are behind the decrease – the improved vehicle licensing regime has made it more difficult for owners to abandon unwanted vehicles with impunity; the success of vehicle removal schemes, many of which have been funded by the Forum; and increases in the price of scrap metal which has increased the value of end-of-life vehicles making them less likely to be abandoned.

As discussed above, whilst there has been significant progress in some areas of arson reduction, notably low value/high volume arson such as vehicle fires, in other areas such as commercial buildings/dwelling fires (high value/low volume fires) there has been much less progress with a moderate rise in such fires from 1998 to 2001, followed by an equally moderate fall.

### **Example 3 – Youth Offending Programmes**

In Staffordshire, two offending behaviour programmes have been developed, building on earlier work pioneered in Derbyshire – Xtinguish and Nightrider. These programmes bring together the Fire and Rescue Service, Youth Offending Service and the Courts to address firesetting and the wider anti-social behaviour of children and young people involved in such activity. Xtinguish is targeted at young people aged 11-17 years who have been convicted of firesetting. The programme is a condition of a Court Order for young people and is supervised by the Youth Offending Service. Nightrider addresses vehicle theft in recognition of the link between vehicle crime and vehicle arson. The programmes deal with the cognitive deficit skills of offenders (their inability to think consequentially, their impulsiveness and inability to learn from their mistakes). The programmes have had a positive impact on the general pro-criminal attitudes of those referred to them.

Preliminary independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme has shown a 22% reduction in deliberate primary fires in Staffordshire. The course was piloted in April 2005. It was then promoted to the YOS and Courts as a viable option for sentencing vehicle crime offenders. There are plans to extend the remit of both programmes to include young people who were not subject to a Supervision Order but who are deemed to be at risk of offending.

## Future direction

With the changing funding arrangement to support arson reduction initiatives and the underlying significant problems that still exist around arson, it is appropriate that the role of the Arson Control Forum be reviewed.

The number of deliberate primary fires, which had previously risen year on year, fell by 17% in the year ending June 2005. Despite these encouraging results, and the successful research sponsored by the Forum, the Forum could still do more to engage with the business community and insurance industry. Also, the fall in deliberate fires is largely due to the fall in deliberate vehicle fires and the pattern of firesetting in other areas such as commercial buildings and dwellings remains largely unaltered. In addition, the Forum will focus more on promoting good practice and raising the profile of arson as a serious crime. We will emphasise that arson has serious financial implications in terms of insured property loss and societal loss; it is not just the Fire and Rescue Service's problem.

Towards the end of last year, and following consultation, the Arson Control Forum Council considered a series of revised objectives for the Forum which included the development of the Strategy for Children and Young People and Fire Investigation methodology and techniques. These are outlined at the beginning of this report.

In order to support these objectives, the Forum proposes several courses of action:

- (a) *To gather and analyse information about arson reduction activity by the Fire and Rescue Service through a structured reporting process and to make these reports available for local and national use.*
- (b) *To scope the development of a Knowledge Portal that will aim to bring together the different data sets currently collected, recorded and reported to central government department and other agencies/bodies. It is intended that by mapping these existing processes, the Forum will be able to identify examples of good practice, areas of high rates of arson, be an information knowledge source for all relevant bodies and provide a comprehensive picture of arson.*
- (c) *To promote arson reduction in Local Area Agreements which set out the priorities agreed between central government and a local area.*

Together with oversight of the Strategy for Children and Young People, these three actions will underpin the work of the Forum. We propose to establish two "task and finish" groups to support this work:

- ⊙ Knowledge Portal Group: to scope the different data sets collected by government departments and other bodies.
- ⊙ Low Volume/High Cost Group: to investigate the particular problems of commercial/ school/dwelling fires and suggest ways, including good practice guidance, of reducing these.

## Research

The Forum has sponsored a number of research projects throughout 2005/06, the results of which are available on our Website: [www.arsoncontrolforum.gov.uk](http://www.arsoncontrolforum.gov.uk)

Research has been conducted into the following areas:

**Arson Terminology:** Historically there has been a disparity between the Police and Fire and Rescue Service measures of arson. Each year, the Police record between 50,000 & 60,000 arsons compared to around 100,000 deliberate primary fires attended by local authority Fire and Rescue Services. The confusion about the true extent of arson has been compounded by the different terminologies used to describe arson, terms that are not commonly understood by all stakeholders. The Fire Data Report (FDR1) form used to record primary fires attended by UK Fire and Rescue Services, had three categories which, when combined, made up the arson measure – deliberate, doubtful and malicious. The lack of a commonly understood terminology meant that local agencies with which the Fire and Rescue Service could potentially work in partnership did not always fully appreciate the extent of illegal firesetting and thus did not dedicate sufficient resources to address the problem.

We therefore commissioned research to investigate the extent of problems caused by the current terminology and to propose alternatives. The research was based on a telephone survey of Fire and Rescue Services, Police Forces, legal representatives, insurers and the Fire Protection Association, followed by case-studies of a sample of coterminous Fire and Rescue Services and Police Forces, to explore whether local data sharing arrangements had improved partnership working. A final contractor's report has been received and a Summary Report is now available on our Website.

Guidance was issued as part of Fire Service Circular No 21/2000 relating to the coding of the FDR1, recommending that the terms 'malicious' and 'doubtful' should not be used. However, the research showed that these terms were still in common currency, suggesting that the guidance needed to be updated and targeted to ensure it reached the appropriate audience. The legal representatives interviewed confirmed that the term 'malicious' is problematic since it presupposes the 'state of mind' of the individual – and cited various legal precedents. The lawyers also confirmed that the term 'deliberate' was not problematic in the same way and therefore could be used. From April 2007 the revised FDR1 will reflect this important finding of the research.

The legal representatives also said that Fire Service Circular No 21/2000 had caused some problems by implying that Fire and Rescue Service officers should not be regarded as expert witnesses. This was certainly not the intention and whilst this reported comment might be an oversimplification of what the Circular actually said on the subject, we are pleased to note that the Department has now clarified the wording and re-issued the Circular as No 1/2006.

**Interventions with Arsonists and Young Firesetters:** Many organisations have the opportunity to intervene with arsonists and young firesetters, including Fire and Rescue Services, Youth Offending Teams, Mental Health Services, and the Prison and Probation Services. Fire and Rescue Service personnel involved in this

demanding work have shown tremendous commitment but there is little information on the effectiveness of this work or whether the approaches being used are the most appropriate. We therefore commissioned research to explore the range of intervention schemes run by the Fire and Rescue Service and, using surveys and case studies, to compare current practice with the 'good practice' models described in the literature,. We have published a summary of the findings as Research Bulletin No 6 with a particular focus on good practice messages. A more detailed technical report of the research findings has been published on our Website.

**Evaluation of the Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund: Emerging**

**Findings:** Between January 2004 and March 2006, over £9.6 million was invested in local arson reduction initiatives as part of the Implementation fund. Following on from the earlier evaluation of our New Projects Initiative, further work was required to ensure that the projects, many of which were led by organisations new to arson reduction work (e.g. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships), are continuing to have an impact on arson. An interim report on this evaluation work has been received and we have published the emerging findings as Research Bulletin No 7. The report highlighted how the context within which arson reduction projects were undertaken had changed since our original New Projects Initiative. In particular, the ramifications of effective partnership working can be widely seen and this has been a very positive development. Working together more closely has enabled a greater degree of strategic working and assisted in increasing the overall amount of effective arson prevention work that has been carried out. We intend to publish the final evaluation report of the Implementation Fund Initiative in October 2006.

**Youth Training and Diversion Schemes:** The Fire and Rescue Service has a track record of strong commitment to working with young people and has devoted considerable time and resource to this task. Although guidance on working with young firesetters and child protection, as well as youth training and development is available, good quality evaluation of these schemes has been largely overlooked. This project was aimed at providing information about the targeting of interventions, the benefits to disadvantaged young people and young offenders, and identifying good practice in engaging with these groups. Using a combination of interviews, a survey and case studies our researchers concluded that whilst the current range of universal and targeted schemes were an asset to the Fire and Rescue Service, they lacked coherence.

Key recommendations included greater co-ordination and sharing of good practice to benefit the schemes and the young people taking part. In particular, the researchers gave priority to addressing the relationship between different types of scheme, which would help to identify how the benefits experienced by young people might be sustained through greater cross-referral and networking between schemes. The researchers also suggested that there was a need to identify more clearly the core competencies expected of personnel working on such schemes in line with other agencies that work with young people, and that more emphasis should be placed on equality and diversity issues. Overall, successful schemes had clear criteria for recruiting staff; line management in accordance with Fire and Rescue Service protocols; partnerships with other local services/projects who could provide expertise and links to more difficult to reach groups and opportunities for staff to progress. We have published a summary of the research findings as Research Bulletin No 8. We have subsequently also developed and published a Good Practice Guide embodying the findings of this research.

**Fire Investigation: Learning Lessons from Real Fires: Findings from Fatal Fire Investigation Reports:** Understanding how fires are caused and how they evolve is essential to developing strategies to prevent similar fires occurring and minimising fire losses. The identification and elimination of hazardous products or careless behaviour can help to prevent accidental fires and also help us devise better building regulations and codes of practice. This means that fire safety advice can be developed to meet particular risks. In the case of deliberate firesetting, effective fire investigation enables those responsible for deliberate fires to be identified and prosecuted. We therefore commissioned research to look at a cross-section of fatal Fire Investigation Reports and to identify those common factors that are associated with fire deaths, such as alcohol, the absence of smoke alarms, the careless use of smoking materials and the age and mobility of the victim. Such information will help us to target those most at risk in our communities and provide effective fire safety messages to vulnerable groups. The final contractors report has been received and we have published an overview of the findings as Research Bulletin No 9. We intend to make the final research report available during November 2006.

# Appendix A:

## Published Reports

The Arson Control Forum has published the following guidance documents and research reports:

## Annual Reports and Conferences

- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Annual Report* (London: DTLR, January 2002).
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Second Annual Report* (London: ODPM, June 2003). [product code:03FPD01121]
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Third Annual Report* (London: ODPM, August 2004). [product code: 04LRGG02172]
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Fourth Annual Report* (London: ODPM, October 2005). [product code:05LRGG03341]
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum: *A special report from the ACF Good Practice Conference 2004*
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum: *Working with Young People: ACF Good Practice Conference 2005*

## Research Bulletins

- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Research Bulletin No.1: Arson: From Reporting to Conviction* (London: ODPM, March 2003). [product code: 02FPD00879]
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Research Bulletin No.2: Implementing Arson Reduction projects: Findings from the Arson Control Forum's New Projects Initiative* (London: ODPM, April 2004). [product code: 04LRGG02164/2]
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Research Bulletin No.3: Tackling Vehicle Arson: Vehicle Removal Schemes* (London: ODPM, April 2004). [product code: 04LRGG02164/3]
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Research Bulletin No.4: Social Exclusion and the Risk of Fire* (London: ODPM, April 2004). [product code: 04LRGG02164/4]
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Research Bulletin No.5: Arson Terminology: Research Findings* (London: ODPM, October 2005). [product code: 04LRGG02881 RB5]
- ⦿ Arson Control Forum. *Research Bulletin No.6: Interventions with Arsonists and Young Firesetters* (London: ODPM, May 2005). [product code: 04LRGG02881 RB6]
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