



AGENDA ITEM: 8

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

16 March 2015

HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKS

Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Officer

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise members of the impact of the reduction in Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Grant funding on home fire safety checks (HFSC) and to seek approval for a reduction in the annual target for HFSCs.

Background

2. Members will be aware that, following the Chief Fire Officer's Task Group Report in 2007 (reviewed 2009), North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority resolved to have an annual target of delivering 30,000 HFSCs per year. The intention was that each home in North Wales should have a HFSC within a ten year period.
3. Since 2007, NWFRS has successfully delivered 218,151 HFSCs. This initiative has been supported through CRR grant funding (capital) from the Welsh Government (WG) which has been used to procure interventions for delivery of home safety. In 2014-15 NWFRS's share of this grant totalled £460,000.
4. This grant has funded the provision of specialist interventions such as portable sprinkler units, smoke detectors and alerting systems especially for the hard of hearing. It has also paid for equipment to protect identified homes from the threat of an arson attack, along with single point smoke alarms.

5. Additionally, along with colleague FRSs in Wales, NWFRS has benefited from revenue grant funding from WG for the Phoenix project, Revolution project, Arson Reduction Team and third sector and voluntary agency support.
6. In October 2014 WG announced that it was proposing to reduce the amount of funding for the CRR grant in 2015 -16 by 50% for capital and by 52% for revenue. This was confirmed in the publication of the WG budget for 2015-16 in December 2014.

Information

7. Work has been on going across the three FRSs in Wales to develop plans for dealing with the reductions in both capital and revenue funding.
8. Members will recall that when they were first made aware of the CRR grant funding reductions, they requested that priority should be given, in the first instance, to maintaining youth interventions through the Phoenix project.
9. One of the changes that will have to be made as a result of the reduction in CRR grant funding will be that we will no longer be able to pay voluntary sector and other agencies to deliver HFSCs on NWFRS's behalf. This includes a contract to provide HFSC to all users of oxygen in the home. This will result in a reduction in the number of HFSCs that can be delivered across North Wales in any one year.
10. In 2014-15, over 30% of the capital funding was used on the provision of specialist interventions for the most vulnerable people in our communities. On this basis, and to prevent a reduction in the provision for these people, it is expected that over 60% of the reduced capital will be required to provide specialist interventions. The balance remaining will only be sufficient to procure in the region of 18,000 single point smoke alarms. Given these factors it is unrealistic to expect NWFRS to deliver any more than 20,000 HFSCs per year.

11. Although the quantity of HFSCs will be reduced, Members can be reassured that the focus will continue to be on providing HFSCs to those people at highest risk of dying in an accidental dwelling fire. This will include those people identified as part of the revisit programme who have characteristics that make them at particular risk.

Recommendations

12. Members are asked to:

- (i) note the identified impacts of the reduction in both capital and revenue CRR grant funding;
- (ii) agree to a revised target of 20,000 HFSCs per year.