Evaluating Fire Safety Initiatives

Home Safety Visits and Life Skills for Young People at Risk

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Background and Foundations

• **Community Safety** Agenda (in Criminology)
• Social Crime Prevention
• But **Crime and Disorder** Reduction Partnerships: later **Anti-Social Behaviour**
• 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act ... etc....
• Familiar “*What works*” and “*evidence led*” questions
• Culture shifts, partnerships and change [issues]
Accidental fires in dwellings in the UK (in ‘000s)

A positive story   24.7% reduction

Source: FDR1, Fire Incident Data collection forms
Accidental fires in dwellings in Wales

Another positive story 24.7% reduction

Source: FDR1, Fire Incident Data collection forms
Casualties (fatal and non-fatal) in accidental fires in dwellings in Wales

29.7% reduction

Source: FDR1, Fire Incident Data collection forms
Casualties (fatal and non-fatal) in accidental fires in dwellings in Wales:  Total (all ages) vs. those aged 60+

Source: FDR1, Fire Incident Data collection forms
• Reducing overall numbers of risks

• Identifying highest risks => appropriate targeting of interventions

• Reducing the impact of incidents
  => targeting and support
The need for research

• Report conducted on behalf of CLG in 2008 included review of recent studies into how fire risk varies.

• Concluded that following socio-demographic issues and factors associated with higher fire risk:
  
  — Being single
  — Deprivation
  — Mental and / or physical impairment
  — Careless use of smokers’ materials
  — Alcohol
The need for research

• UK study of 535 fatal Fire Investigation reports found that 80% of all fires involved victims that were impaired in some way.

• Study found that alongside immediate causes of fire (e.g. carelessly discarded cigarettes) biggest single influences on fire starting / fatal consequences were:
  
  — Alcohol
  — Mobility
  — Mental illness

• Firebrake recognise the need to work with partner organisations to reach and influence these vulnerable groups

How would this work in practice?
Gun Crime Project: Modelling

Social Exclusion, Lack of Opportunities, Racism, Crime context

Gang culture, Violence potential

Conflict

Choices: Carry / Use

Conditions and Policies

Social Milieu, Peer Groups

Drug markets, Turf wars

Weapon Supply

Injuries & Deaths

10%
Community Fire Safety Project: Home Safety Visits

- Risk related conditions
- Risk related Behaviours
- Fire Incidents
- Fire Injuries & Deaths

Proactive Interventions
Sustainability and message ‘decay’ issues
Figure 2: Research Plan over 3 years

ISSUES:

Socio-economic differences & targeting

Non-specialist visits

Repeat victimisation/’Fire Prone-ness’ or ‘wake-up calls’

Resistance

Recall or message decay

Message impact

STAGE 1

100 interviews (A) East Brighton
New home safety Visits
Social housing estates/ families

100 Interviews (B) Saltdean
Older families (?) older people living alone

Interim Report

STAGE 2

100 interviews
Previously visited at some time

100 Interviews
Households having had fires

Interim Report 2

STAGE 3

100 interviews
Group A East Brighton
Previously visited

100 Interviews
Group B Saltdean
Previously visited

FINAL Report
Socio-Economic Difference: Fire problems

(Phase 1)
Socio-Economic Difference: Fire problems

(Phase 1)
Socio-Economic Difference: Fire problems

(Phase 1)
Comparative Rates of Smoke Alarm failure

(Phase 2)

- Phase 2 prev fire (alarm not working)
- Phase 2 prev visit (alarm not working)
- Phase 2 Overall (alarms not working)
- Phase 1 Owner-Occ (alarms not working)
- Phase 1 Social housing (alarms not working)
- Phase 1 (alarms not working)

AFTER the VISITS
Did the previously installed smoke detectors actually work?  (Percentages)

(Phase 1)
Summary Data outcomes on observed ‘risk-per-household’ (Phase 2)

- Phase 2 risks (prev fire)
- Phase 2 risks (prev visit)
- Phase one risks (owner-occ.)
- Phase one risks (social housing)
- Phase one risks (overall)

Observed Average risks per household

AFTER the VISITS
Mismatch (?) between fire risks and fire visits

Households/families with young children

Households with older people

Mismatches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>ALL (visits)</th>
<th>All (Fires)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U 10</td>
<td>10 to 19</td>
<td>20 to 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39</td>
<td>40 to 49</td>
<td>50 to 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 69</td>
<td>70 to 79</td>
<td>80 plus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second Area of Evaluation Work with East Sussex F&RS

- **LIFE** Skills: [Local Intervention, Fire Education]
- Intensive ‘fire education’ programme for young people ‘at risk’
- Similar to other ‘fire-setting’ & prevention projects
- **First phase**: Initial cohorts - process
- **Second phase**: records follow up after 4 years
Progress of first 2 LIFE cohorts
30 young people (Tyne & Wear Diagram Model)

First 2 cohorts – 7 months after the intervention

11 not offending
18 offending before

11 after
15 after
3 offending after
4

Not offending
Offending

1 = Did not complete course
LIFE COURSE: Phase 2: Follow-Up

- 4 years: 20 cohorts approx 300 young people
- Data problems: despite agreement, YOT tracking data on only 98

- **ABSTAINERS**: No offences recorded by the YOT following participation in the LIFE Course

- **IMPROVERS**: Lower rate of offending/Arrests, Lower overall Gravity Score following participation in the LIFE Course

- **WORSE/NO CHANGE**: Increase in or no apparent change in offending profile/arrests or Gravity Score following participation in the LIFE Course.
4 Years of LIFE

- 36% abstainers;
- 16% improvers;
- 48% no change or worse
Conclusions

• Evaluation: Impacts and effectiveness
• Assumptions - testing
• Performance indicators
• Evaluation Process
• Partnership
• Conditions, contexts and behaviour
• Organisational Culture and change
• Commissioning (and key priorities)