

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

THE E-ZINE OF Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service



Lothian and Borders

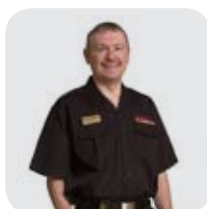
Fire and Rescue Service

visit www.lbfire.org.uk
contact enquiries@lbfire.org.uk
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OUR PURPOSE

Through the provision of a quality service, it is our purpose to reduce the impact upon the community and the environment of fires and other emergencies and by doing so, improve community safety and engender a sense of well being within the population living within its boundary.



WELCOME TO THE NEW E-ZINE

Chief Fire Officer Brian Allaway welcomes you to the first of a series of e-zines giving key stakeholders an insight into the initiatives we are carrying out, and information on their outcomes



OVER 210,000 HOMES VISITED AND OFFERED SAFETY CHECK

Families across the Lothians and Borders are now safer in their homes because of the outcomes of this service - by far the best-performing fire service in Scotland in delivering Home Safety Checks



SHOWING THE WAY TO HEALTHIER LIVES

The Service has gone to great lengths to offer employees the opportunity to evaluate, improve and maintain physical and mental fitness



Brian Allaway, Chief Fire Officer, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service

WELCOME from Chief Fire Officer Brian Allaway

Welcome to the new e-zine from Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, we hope that you will be able to spare some time to read about the ways we are moving towards our purpose of reducing the impact upon the community and the environment of fires and other emergencies. This e-zine and the others to follow will give key stakeholders an insight into the initiatives we are carrying out and information on their outcomes. We hope that you will find it interesting and if you have any questions or feedback, please get in touch.

Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service (LBFRS), as the first municipal fire service in the world, has been at the forefront of delivering enhanced public safety since 1824. The UK Fire Service as a whole has been going through a time of significant change as we alter the whole focus of our service from intervention, putting fires out, to prevention, preventing them happening in the first place. Three key performance strands reflect these aspirations and our work within LBFRS:

Our community - we continue to work closely with partners to make communities safer places to live, work and enjoy. Firefighters have now visited over 210,000 homes, carried out over 55,000 full home safety checks and have fitted over 60,000 free smoke detectors. Our comprehensive youth programmes, Cooldown Crew and the Phoenix Project, are at the forefront of partnership working with other organisations in the fight to reduce anti-social behaviour across the community.

Efficient operational service delivery - the second edition of the unique Operational Risk Assessment Model [ORAM] has been approved and authorised, delivering new standards in the management of safety in the operational environment. ORAM is LBFRS's safe system of work for dealing with emergency incidents and consists mainly of generic procedures for incidents containing common features and also details methods of recording, reviewing and disseminating information on specific risks in the form of Tactical Information and Operational Plans. ORAM has been in operation for a number of years now within LBFRS and has proved to be a robust and successful tool for helping to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff. In the three years since the revitalisation of ORAM, we have achieved a 61% reduction in reportable injuries to Firefighters.

Our employees' physical and mental wellbeing is also being addressed through Scotland's Healthy Working Lives programme. Success in these areas has resulted in achieving the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards and the prestigious Mental Health and Wellbeing Commendation.



Cooldown Crew in action



Towards safer operations

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Cholesterol testing at a recent Health Promotion event at LBFRS Headquarters



High-Volume Pump, based at Hawick Fire Station

We have gone to great lengths to offer workers the chance to evaluate, improve and maintain physical fitness. All staff are eligible for medical checkups, and are provided with advice and support for any issues highlighted by screening. Tailored fitness programmes and information on diet are on offer, and employees are referred to their GP for consultation if required.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commendation recognises the Service's efforts in reducing the stigma attached to stress and encouraging a more inclusive and supportive environment. This investment from the Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Board has delivered a 20% reduction in sickness absence over the last three years.

These three strands are supported by many aspects which provide a solid foundation on which we can build and improve our service.

As an organisation changes and improves it is vitally important to aid its employees to move with the organisation, and training plays a big part in the success to date of LBFRS. The move in emphasis from intervention to prevention, the change in statutory responsibility whereby we have a duty to provide a wider rescue capability, such as that found in a flooding, firefighting at sea, or even terrorist incident, and the ongoing changes in society all contribute to keeping our service and our employees in continual development. This development now demands effective training facilities, and one our current challenges is to determine how this can be provided.

Having now delivered on the Service reform agenda, our intention is to continuously improve our essential emergency service, driven by the views of our staff and underpinned by our managers. The intention is to do this through a public service improvement framework, through the outcome of our Firefighter Seminars and our re-invigoration of our Operational Risk Assessment model. More information on these will follow in due course.

With 1,250 personnel and 35 Fire Stations, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service strives to provide an ever improving service to the 890,000 residents of the Lothian and Borders area. This is underpinned by our shared values of excellence in service delivery, the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff and the provision of equality of opportunity, respecting the dignity of all people.

Brian Allaway, Chief Fire Officer, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service



The figures represent a huge amount of commitment and effort by all our Firefighters

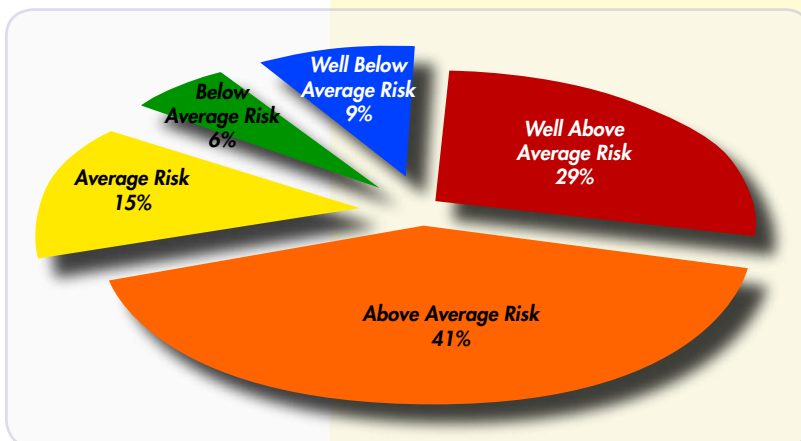
NUMBER OF HOME SAFETY CHECKS EXCEEDS 55,000

It's hard to believe that it is three years since the introduction of the Home Safety Check (HSC) programme across the Service area. Over that period we have visited almost half the 425,000 households in the Lothian and Borders area, 55,000 HSCs have been completed and over 60,000 free smoke detectors have been fitted.

It is worth remembering that these aren't simply numbers. Impressive though they are, they represent something far more significant. They represent a huge amount of commitment and effort by all our Firefighters, and they represent 55,000 families who are safer in their homes because of the work of this service, which is by far the best performing service in Scotland in delivering Home Safety Checks.

The aim of the HSC programme is to reduce the level of risk from fire across the communities we serve. Clearly, the biggest impact comes from visits to homes which are above, and well above average risk from fire.

The diagram below shows that since the start of the programme 70% of all visits have been to these areas.



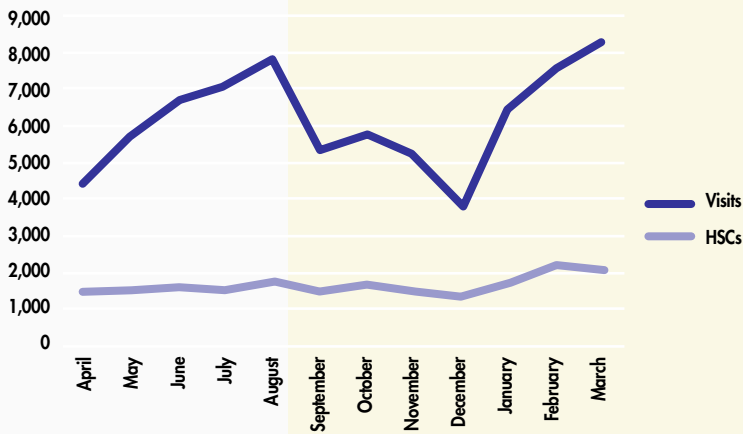
Home Safety Checks carried out according to risk from fire

The diagram on the next page shows the number of visits and checks being completed each month. This again illustrates a consistent delivery of service throughout the year and maintains the progress towards our aim of visiting every household in our area to offer a HSC and provide life saving advice to as many of those residents as possible.

An additional boost to this aim was the introduction of the day shift duty system staff to Duns, Penicuik and Whitburn stations. Although these Firefighters are spending a considerable

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Number of visits and checks being completed each month, 2007 - 2008

amount of time on Community Safety visits, their contribution has also been a real boost to retained colleagues in providing a flexible service that is available at any time the community requires it.

The table below shows the results from these stations over the first quarter of 2008.

		Visit Attempts	No-one Home	Refused Entry	Entries
Whitburn	Day Duty	124	67	29	28
Penicuik	Day Duty	210	110	36	64
Duns	Day Duty	361	233	0	128

Table of results from day-shift duty stations

As we look towards the next three years of the programme it is good to see such a consistent approach in the delivery of the service. The revised procedure for the programme will seek to continue this level of service to our communities. By concentrating the time available to focus our efforts on those people living in the highest risk areas of the community, we will be able to improve what is currently the best level of service in the country, with the additional benefit of the improvements in safety of life from fires.

There is no doubt that the programme is having a significant beneficial impact and it is being delivered in a thoroughly professional manner. This is reflected daily through the glowing comments received from grateful members of our communities, and that is something we should be genuinely very proud of.



Checking blood-pressure at a recent Health Promotion event at LBFRS Headquarters

SHOWING THE WAY TO HEALTHIER LIVES

We were pleased to receive a Gold Award and a Mental Health and Wellbeing Commendation in January from the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, for helping to support the 1,250 staff based at our Fire Stations and Headquarters in healthier lifestyle choices.

By making all staff eligible for full medical checkups, and providing advice and support for any issues highlighted by screening, the Service has gone to great lengths to offer employees the opportunity to evaluate, improve and maintain physical and mental fitness.

An example of this is the recent 'Spring Forward' event, held by Health and Safety, Occupational Health and the Fitness Advisory staff. The event, which took place within Headquarters on 30th April, offered all employees advice on diet and nutrition, health and hygiene, ergonomic desk setup, smoking cessation, samples of complementary therapies, and checks on blood pressure, cholesterol and body fat analysis.

Also, organised training sessions support and encourage staff who wish to participate in charity events such as Race for Life and station canteens offer a daily selection of healthy choices.

The Service's efforts to promote a range of health and safety initiatives were also a factor in our qualification for the Gold Award. As well as linking initiatives to national campaigns such as Prostate Cancer Awareness Week, focus has also centred on safe working practice.

In addition to the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award, the Service also gained the Mental Health and Well-being Commendation. This commendation recognised the Service's commitment to reducing the negative connotations attached to stress, and nurturing a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Brian Allaway said, *"The results we have seen in the approach to the health of Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service staff illustrate the excellent progress within the Service. After the hard work and dedication of members of staff, there has been a significant impact on the way people tackle Mental Health and Well-being issues resulting in a more understanding and better informed place to work ."*

An internal steering group established that training managers on work related stress was an important starting point. This challenged managers' perceptions of stress, and encouraged a new way of thinking at this level, which inevitably had a knock on effect amongst other members of staff.

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Massage was part of a recent
Health Promotion event at LBFRS
Headquarters



Councillor Michael Bridgman,
Convener of the Lothian and
Borders Fire and Rescue Board

Each manager was also provided with a comprehensive information pack with information on appropriate ways to deal with stress, and an e-learning programme on the topic was also made available to all.

All Service workers were also invited to respond to a survey on their attitudes to the issue and the factors which they felt affected their own stress levels. A number of focus groups, comprised of staff from all levels and departments of the service, were formed to discuss the survey's results and an action plan was formed from the groups' suggestions.

The plan is still being fully implemented, but already the introduction of new ideas has had an impact on the Service. Sickness absence rates have dropped, and the taboo around stress has been almost completely dispelled.

Councillor Michael Bridgman, Convener of the Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Board said: *"We recognise the health of our employees is crucial which is why we introduced a range of measures which have led us to achieving the Healthy Working Lives Award. We are proud that through a collective effort we have been able to introduce real changes which have gone some way in making our 35 fire stations and administrative headquarters a healthier place to work."*

**For more information on any of these topics, please contact
Nicole Carter on 0131 228 2401, or email nicole.carter@lbfire.org.uk**



**For a free Home Fire Safety Check,
freephone 0800 169 0320**