



Arson Reduction Strategy 2021-2025

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Foreword

Reducing deliberate fire setting, arson and associated Anti-Social Behaviour which often accompanies this crime type sits within the priorities of Northamptonshire Police (NP), and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and the expectations set by the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in Northamptonshire to both services.

Northants Police and NFRS have worked together on tackling Arson through the establishment of the joint Arson Task Force since 2004.

This document sets out our Arson Reduction Strategy for 2021-25 and provides structure around this continued joint working. This strategy reflects the National Fire Chief Council's (NFCC) arson reduction strategy¹ and embraces the efficiency in working together in partnership and with other key statutory and community partners. This partnership approach identifies additional partnership goals and objectives leading to effective problem solving.

Local context and key issues

Whilst the County has shown reductions in both arson and deliberate fires since 2018, it is important to ensure continued and improved focus is retained across the services.

There remain some key issues that have influenced this strategy:

- The threat of arson is seen to be used as a method of violence towards victims of different crime types such as domestic abuse, hate crime and honour-based violence. Working together to prevent harm and to protect vulnerable people, the Arson Task Force act as a link to enable high risk referrals from Police teams to be actioned quickly and effectively so that fire prevention interventions can be put in place to safeguard high risk victims.
- Where arson and fire setting occur in a local area there are often other issues such as ASB or other crime types. In addition, arson has been seen to be used as a weapon by criminal gangs, targeting premises, vehicles, and homes.

¹ https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/NFCC_Arson_Reduction_Strategy_Final_070619.pdf

- As our understanding of ACES (adverse childhood experiences) continues, we recognise that fire setting can be a symptom of those experiences, therefore it will be important to work alongside partners to both safeguard and educate young people as they are identified, and to provide appropriate fire setter interventions.
- The identification, risk assessment and effective management of high-risk derelict buildings is essential to the protection of life and property.
- Where it is evident to the community that arson or deliberate fires have taken place, this can impact on the community confidence in services, and negatively impact on perceptions of crime and ASB
- Because we know that arson and deliberate fire setting can be associated with ASB, Hate Crime, Domestic Abuse and Serious Organised Crime we want to ensure we work with Community safety partners within the county. This strategy is therefore set to compliment other partnership strategies designed to address each of those themes.



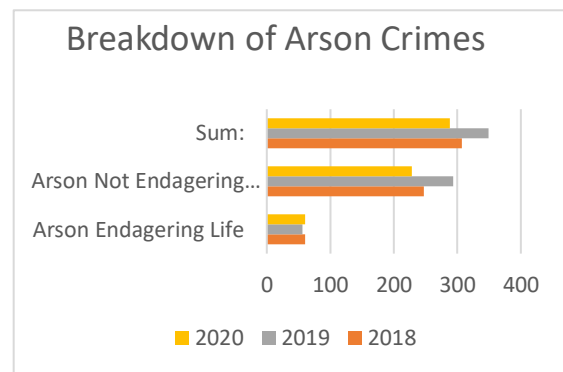
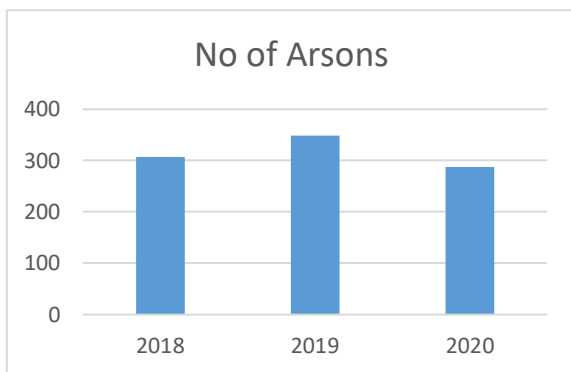
Police recorded Arson 2018 – 2020

The Criminal Damage Act 1971 created a statutory offence of Arson. ²

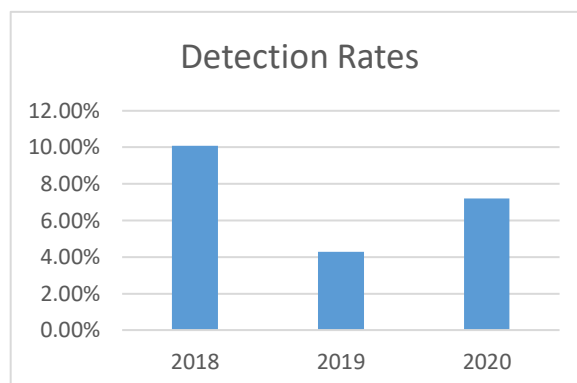
Police data shows a reduction in recorded Arson since 2017 in both Arson endangering life and arson not endangering life.

- Arson endangering life encompasses a clear intent to endanger life or where there is a reckless element as to whether life is endangered or not. For example, a wheelie bin has been set on fire next to a dwelling.
- Arson not endangering life would consist of any other arson which does not impact on life. For example, a haystack situated in a remote field or an abandoned motor vehicle.

The charts below represent the crime figures per calendar year from the 1 January – 31 December.



The chart provides the detection rates based on the % of the total number of arsons detected within that year.

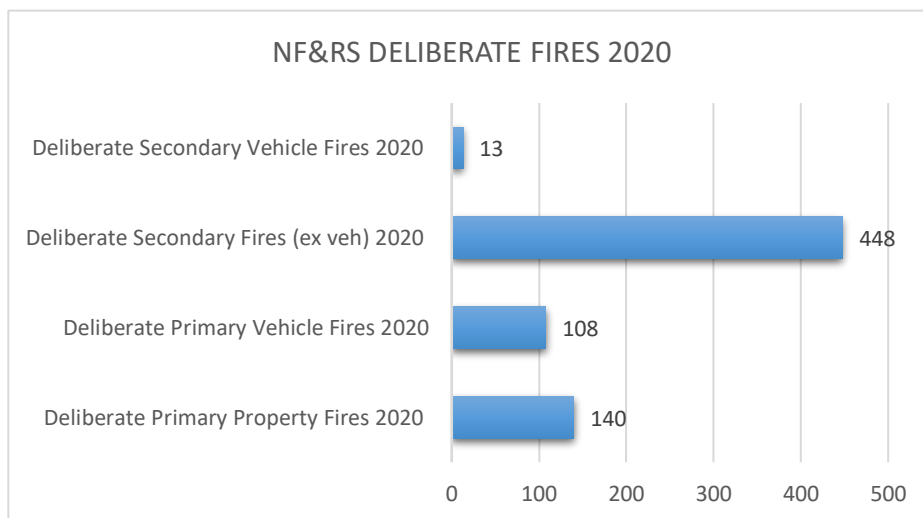
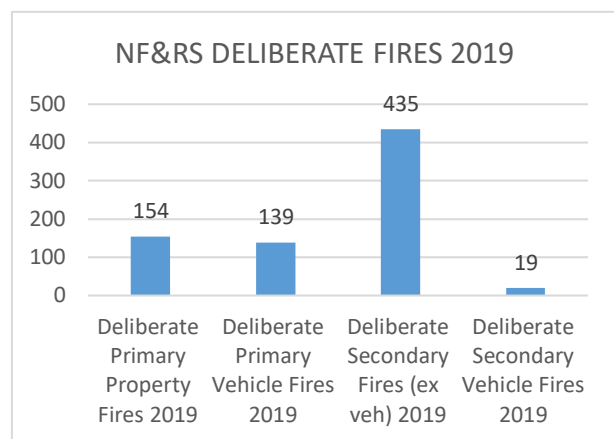
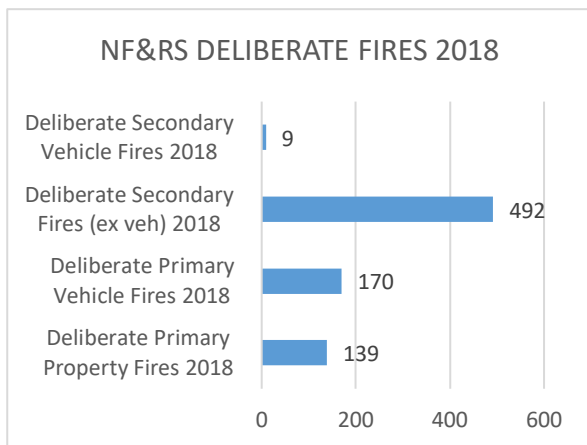


² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1971/48/contents>

Fire service recorded deliberate fires 2018-2020

The table below shows the number of deliberate fire incidents reported to Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue service.

- Deliberate primary fires are those which are more serious, causing harm to people, or damage to property and or involve a higher level of attendance by the fire service.
- Deliberate secondary fires are generally smaller outdoors fires not involving people or property, such as grass fires or refuge fires³.



Strategic Aims, Outcomes and Measures

The overall strategic aim is to **reduce arson, reduce deliberate fire setting**, and the consequential impact (harm caused) by both.

The outcomes will be the preservation of life and property through:

- Safer homes
- Safer neighbourhoods
- Safer buildings and businesses

The measures will include:

1. Reduction in police recorded arson
2. Reduction in fire recorded Deliberate Primary fires
3. Reduction in fire recorded Deliberate Secondary fires
4. Increased police detection/resolution rates
5. Where fires have occurred, the impact of those fires will be measured to assess a reduction in harm because of interventions made.

Both services are committed to establish a joint mechanism of overlaying data to better understand the problem of arson and deliberate fires, and to make best use of resources to enable targeted activity. The data will enable monitoring of performance and outcomes in line with the strategic aims and measures.

Safer homes

Focusing on preservation of life through the mitigation of risk of arson and deliberate fire setting, we will:



- strengthen processes and referral mechanisms to identify those most vulnerable and at risk, including a referral route for other partners and individuals direct.
- continuously review the products used, and advice given to ensure it is up to date and effective.
- ensure fire setter intervention work addresses the home environment

Safer neighbourhoods



Contributing to the improvement of our local neighbourhoods and environments is a key component of empowering communities and making safer places to live and work.

In the main, fires which have the biggest impact on local communities are deliberate vehicle and deliberate secondary fires, which can be linked to ASB or other crime related matters⁴.

In line with Northamptonshire Police local policing strategy, and through local engagement with NFRS crews we will:

- Focus on identifying those neighbourhoods where higher incidents of arson and deliberate fire occur.
- Identify areas which require joint targeted activity
- Focus engagement with specific schools and youth groups

Safer buildings and businesses

Arson presents a risk to many businesses. Void and derelict buildings can be very problematic for the police and fire service. These buildings are often used as sleeping places for the homeless especially during the winter months. They can become honeypots for ASB, arson, drug and alcohol misuse, we will:



- Review how potential problem void buildings are identified, and how partnership working is utilised to best affect in addressing those most at risk of arson and deliberate fire.
- Utilise existing business partnerships within the County to raise the profile of Arson, and preventative measures.
- Ensure Fire Risk Assessments include the minimising the potential for an arson attack to a building or business.
- Seek best practice through national toolkits and adopt what is relevant to local risks and issues.

Delivery tools and tactics can be found in **Appendix A**.

⁴ https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/NFCC_Arson_Reduction_Strategy_Final_070619.pdf

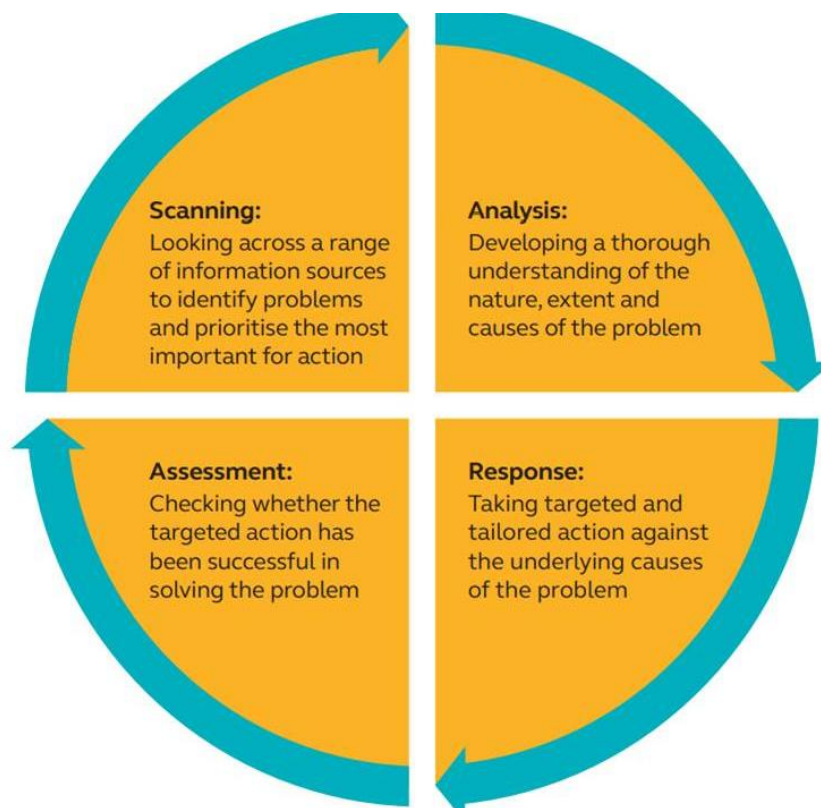
Partnership working and problem solving

The Arson Task Force will lead and coordinate work in partnership with Neighbourhood Policing Teams, local fire crews, and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) within the County.

Through the Arson Task Force, we will seek to identify national and regional best practice and identify regional and national trends in order to prevent those trends national. Again, through the work of the Arson Task Force we will identify key times of the year (Halloween, and bonfire night, end of school term etc.) which may present greater risk and put tactical plans in place.

Across the services we will adopt a structure problem solving approach using O'SARA (Objective, Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment).

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Strategy Review

An annual review of the strategy will take place identifying incident trends and best practice.

Appendix A – Arson Reduction Tactical Options Strategy 2021-25

⁵ [NPG supporting material frontline \(1\).pdf \(paas-s3-broker-prod-lon-6453d964-1d1a-432a-9260-5e0ba7d2fc51.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#)

1. ASB closure orders
2. Fire setter interventions
3. Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
4. Covert operations
5. Community engagement
6. Schools engagement
7. Partnership and CSP engagement including tasking through Community One
8. Designing out arson through environmental improvements (regeneration and new planning applications)
9. End of Life Vehicle Impound Scheme (ELVIS)
10. Influence removal of combustible materials and refuse collection
11. Red routing and visibility in high arson/deliberate fire areas
12. Use of Community Protection Warning Notices (as appropriate)
13. Promotion of diversionary options (such as NESC)
14. Promote Firestoppers/Crimestoppers/Fearless

NB: This list is not exhaustive

A black and white poster for the FireStoppers campaign. The background is a photograph of a large fire at night. In the top right corner, there is a white Maltese cross logo with a red circle in the center and the letters 'F S' on either side. The main text is in large, bold, white font: 'Be a FireStopper.' Below this, in smaller white font, is the slogan 'Don't let fire setters get away with destroying your community.' In the bottom right corner, there is contact information: 'Tell us what you know FireStoppers. 0800 169 5558 firestoppersreport.co.uk 100% anonymous. Always.'

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