

Reducing wilful fires in Torry and Ferryhill: Targeted Engagement and Early Intervention



What are we trying to achieve?

We are aiming to reduce the number of wilful fires across the city by 10% by 2022, starting in Torry and Ferryhill initially as the area of the city where the most incidents occurred over the baseline period.

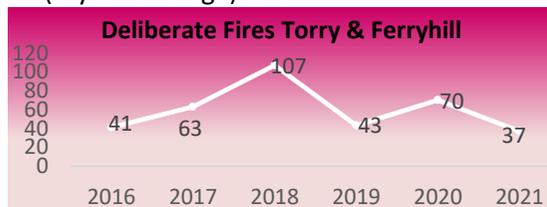
How are we doing this?

Through our multi agency project we are testing the following improvements:

- Early intervention and prevention through a “virtual” community fire safety programme provided to schools and youth community groups at a time when direct engagement activity such as ‘walk and talks’ was curtailed to equip them with the tools and knowledge to stay safe and provide insight into the potentially devastating consequences of deliberate fires.
- Raising awareness and changing behaviours through regular joint and targeted messaging and communication advising of the risk in leaving refuse and refuse containers for prolonged periods.
- Strengthened annual targeted Gramps engagement activity, working collaboratively with ACC park rangers and Police Scotland to deliver holistic community safety messaging. The main bulk of the work has been carried out in 2022 so we look forward to seeing results throughout the year.

What have we achieved?

- **36%** reduction in deliberate fires our initial area of testing, Torry & Ferryhill where deliberate fires were reduced from 57 (5-year average) to 37.



- **49%** reduction in secondary deliberate fires in Torry and Ferryhill reduced from the 5-year average of 54 to 28.
- A **72%** reduction in refuse fires within the Torry and Ferryhill areas over the last 5 years linking into the overall Aberdeen reduction of **31.5%**.
- **7** young offenders from the Aberdeen city area were referred to and completed a fire setters’ intervention and re-education scheme and to date no one has reoffended.
- Video presentation, along with leaflets and posters, delivered to **four** schools in Torry and Ferryhill in 2021
- **84** direct ‘walk and talks’ throughout Aberdeen by SFRS/Police/SAS and city rangers scheduled with 13 schools in 2022. **70** of these are already completed and 1,666 pupils engaged with.



What impact have we had?

We’ve had the following positive feedback from schools on our multi-agency virtual programme:

“Good at challenging the pupils on their understanding of wilful fire raising.”

“The follow up conversations the teachers had with the pupils showed the pupils had really been paying attention.”

“Overall, a really positive experience enjoyed by the pupils and teachers alike.”

What have we learnt?

Testing our changes in one area has shown the impact of our improvements with a reduction in fires in this area, whilst the city-wide figure increased. This has given us confidence to test these improvements in another area of the city and we hope to see the same success.

What are our next steps?

Following the successful testing of our improvements in the Torry and Ferryhill, the project will now scale up and test the existing improvements, as well as those below, in Kincorth area where an increase was seen in the last year to help us achieve the 10% reduction city wide.

With the easing of covid19 restrictions, the project will now establish and deliver Fire Skills courses targeting young people in areas of high deliberate fire activity to attend, supported through strong referral pathways with Police Scotland, local schools and Sport Aberdeen.