

**COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION
FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING – 6 FEBRUARY 2006**

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

1. Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order – Update

Members will be aware that this Order, approved in June 2005, was scheduled to come into force in England and Wales on 1 April 2006. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced on 12 January 2006 that the coming into force of the Order has been put back. A new date has not been given, but it is anticipated that it will not be until the end of the year.

The reason for the delay is that the guidance documents that accompany the Order will not be published in time to allow the required 12 week gap between publication and the coming into force of the Order.

The ODPM have said that the coming into force date should, so far as practicable, be timed to coincide as closely as possible with reform of fire safety laws in Scotland. Recently, the Scottish Authorities announced that the new rules are not expected to come into force in Scotland until October 2006 at the earliest.

Whilst the delay will allow more time for business to familiarise themselves with the new regime and for fire authorities to introduce new systems, it will not assist the dovetailing of fire safety legislation, particularly in relation to the new licensing laws, housing and social care.

2. The Living in Wales Survey 2004 – Fire and Fire Safety

This is a new and continuous household survey for Wales commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government. The survey was completed in 7526 households between March and September 2004, with a minimum of 300 in each local authority area. The main findings are: -

Number and Type of Fires

- i) Domestic fire affected 12 out of every 1000 households during the year.
- ii) The most common types of domestic fire involved: -
 - Cooking – 25%
 - Vehicles – 23%
 - Arson – 22%
 - Electrical – 14%

Very few were reported to have been smoking or heating related.
- iii) Fire Service called to 51% of these fires, and members of the household dealt with the others.

- iv) Slightly over half take place in the rented sector and slightly under half in the owner occupied sector. Because of the much larger size of the latter, the risk of fire is 3 times higher in the rental sector.

Risk of Fire

- i) Higher risk factors for households having fires appeared to be: -
- Living in rented accommodation.
 - Having dependent children.
 - Made up from younger adults.
- ii) Looking at specific tenure groups, this meant that fires affected: -
- 8/1000 – owner occupied.
 - 21/1000 – private rented.
 - 25/1000 – local authority rented.
 - 36/1000 – housing association rented.
- iii) Type of household affected are:-
- 8/1000 – all-pensioner households.
 - 10/1000 – non-pensioner without dependent children.
 - 21/1000 – households with dependent children.

Smoke Alarms

- i) Smoke alarms are fitted in 86% of surveyed homes – an increase of 7% from 1997. This again varies by tenure:-
- 95% - local authority and housing association housing.
 - 85% - owner occupied.
 - 80% - private rented.
- ii) The number of smoke alarms fitted in homes are:-
- 14% - no smoke alarms fitted.
 - 33% - only one.
 - 41% – two.
 - 12% - three or more.

27% of homes have mains powered alarms – highest in social housing sector.

3. Road Casualties in Wales

Statistics for 2004 were released on 14 December 2005. Comparison is made against the average for 1994/98, which is the baseline for UK. Among the points from the data published are: -

- 13,687 casualties – 349 fewer than 2003.
- Killed or seriously injured – 23% lower than 1994/98.
- 74% of all casualties were car, taxi or minibus users; 11% pedestrians; 6% two wheeled motor vehicles and 4% pedal cyclists.

- 10,082 car, taxi or minibus casualties – 3% fewer than 2003 and 3% lower than 1994/98 baseline average.