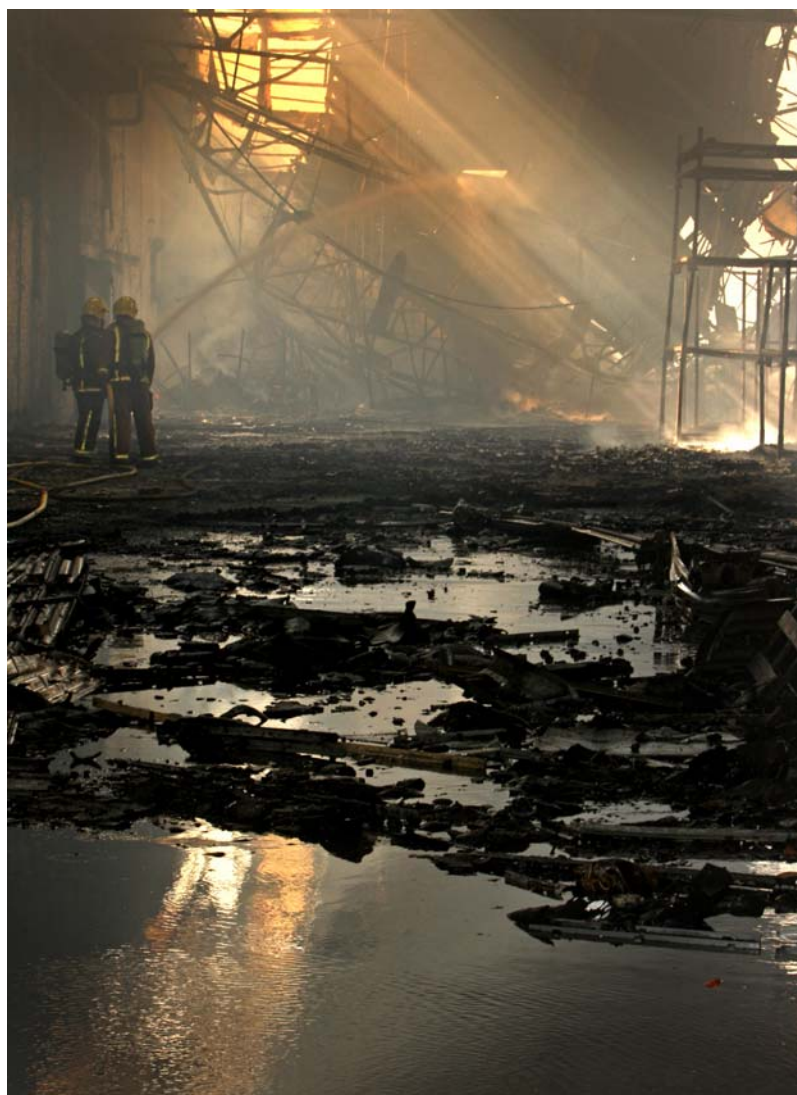


# WEST MIDLANDS ARSON TASK FORCE

[www.wmarsontaskforce.gov.uk](http://www.wmarsontaskforce.gov.uk)

June 2008 Report



WMFS - Photographic

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## **THE WMATF REDUCTION TARGETS**

The West Midlands Arson Task Force (WMATF) was initiated by the West Midlands Police (WMP) and the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) with a target to halt the escalation of arson and exceed the target set by the Arson Control Forum (ACF) that is:

To reduce by 10% the number of deliberate fires by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 from the 2001/02 baseline.

**To date the West Midlands has achieved a 64% reduction in property arson from the 2001/2 baseline.**

## **THE FINANCIAL COST OF ARSON**

The ACF has published its latest average costs of arson fires for 2007 in order to understand the financial cost of arson.

Domestic Building		£21,327
Commercial Building		£43,802
Public Sector		£43,487
Vehicle		£3,712
Incident Reductions Q1 2008/9 to 2001/2		
Arson in dwellings	146 x £21,327	£3,113,742
Arson in Buildings	87 x £43,487	£3,783,369
Arson vehicle	750 x £3,712	£2,784,000
Total West Midlands arson savings 2008/9 compared with 2001/2		£9,681,111

The continued reduction of arson can be expressed as a financial saving to society. If we compare Q1 2001/2 to 2008/9 an estimated saving of over £9 million has been made to date, however this is only this years financial saving and the true difference of less burnt out businesses, vehicles and less victims is invaluable.

The WMATF has only compared this year to 2001/2 in line with the ACF reduction target and clearly does not express the true year on year saving of arson reduction to our communities.

The WMATF presently has a joint posts only funding agreement to March 2009.

## **BVPI**

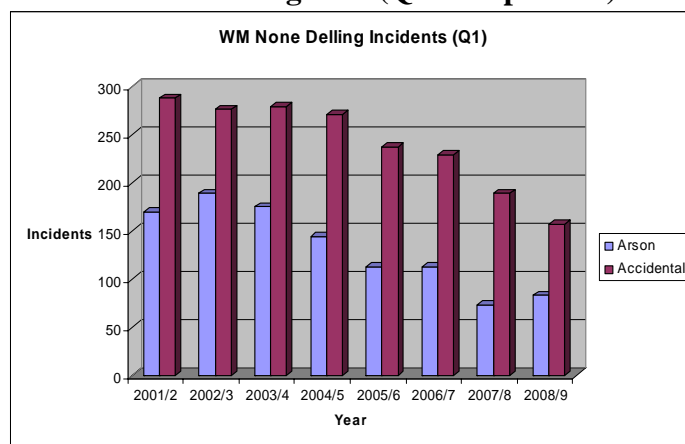
The WMATF also seeks to achieve 2008/09 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) set by the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority.

Indicator number	Performance Indicator	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	Target for 2008/9	% change
PI 4	The number of arson fires in dwellings	789	670	611	558	525	6%
PI 5	The number of accidental fires in non-domestic premises	1,024	890	788	689	650	6%
PI 6	The number of arson fires in non-domestic premises	475	403	390	293	300	-2%
PI 7	The number of arson vehicle fires	3,156	2,517	1,883	1,578	1,518	4%
PI 8	The number of arson rubbish fires	6,481	6,214	5,742	5,645	5,480	3%

**All the WMATF BVPI targets for 2007/8 were exceeded.**

## **'KEEP YOUR BUSINESS IN BUSINESS' (KYBIB)**

### **WMFS none dwelling fires (Q1 Comparison)**



KYBIB is aimed at the reduction of arson and accidental fires in none dwelling property by promoting risk reduction and crime prevention advice to small/ medium businesses.

WMATF has now taken delivery of 8,000 hard copies, 4,000 CD's and 60,000 fliers of the revised forth version with flooding, increased crime and terrorism prevention information which is now being distributed.

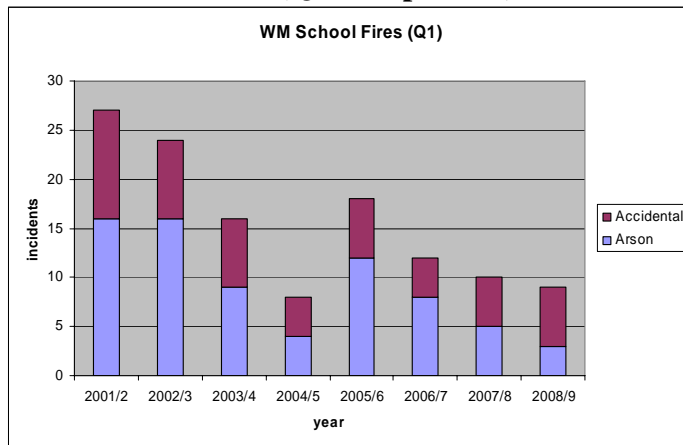
For the first time since the formation of the WMATF partnership a rise in none dwelling arson has been recorded by WMFS.

Initial analysis has provided five key property types for detailed analysis in order to formulate an appropriate reduction response, the types being:

- Hospital (psychiatric)
- Prisons
- Single shops
- Working Restaurants
- Unoccupied pubs

### **'KEEP YOUR SCHOOL IN BUSINESS' (KYSIB)**

#### **WMFS School fires (Q1 Comparison)**

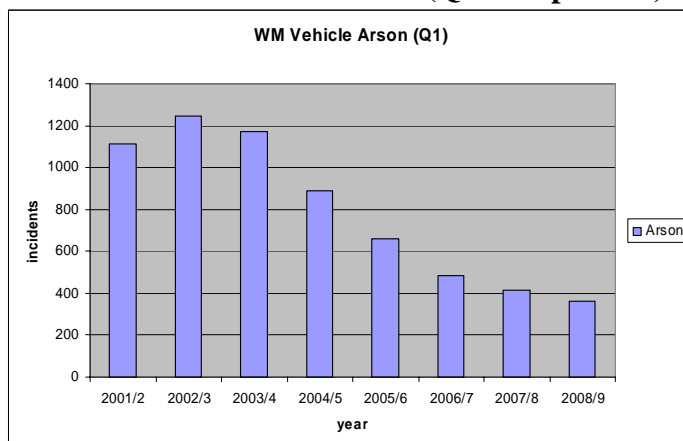


WMATF is delighted to note the maintained reduction of school fires since the release of KYSIB to all our regional schools in January 2007.

KYSIB is designed to raise the schools knowledge of crime and arson/ fire prevention and supply the necessary information for the school to complete their Fire Risk Assessment, a legal requirement under the new Fire Safety Order legislation.

### **VEHICLE ARSON**

#### **WMFS deliberate vehicle fires (Q1 Comparison)**



The WMATF are delighted to note the continuing reduction in vehicle arson throughout the West Midlands and will continue to work with partners to further manage down these incidents by the rapid removal of abandoned vehicles, target hardening of hot spot areas and using Tow Away Zones (TAZ) when required. The WMATF are working with local partners in Wolverhampton to curb an increase in vehicle arson in Low Hill and Scotlands.

## **FIRE FIGHTING METHODS PROJECT “CODE RED”**

The WMATF in conjunction with officers from the West Midlands Fire Research and Investigation Section, are undertaking a project which looks at the methods used to fight fires so that the end results allow more evidence to be recovered enabling Police forces to identify and prosecute offenders. WMATF continuing with pilot schemes and have requested changes to current methods of dealing with arson vehicles to enable the police to identify the vehicles and allow more evidence to be secured.

## **VOID/ DERELICT PREMISES**

The WMATF is working to create empty property referral systems from the WMP and WMFS to the Local Authority in order to reduce incidents of arson, metal thefts and ASB. The project encourages empty premises owners to be held responsible and assists in interventions by the Local Authorities including prosecutions.

Walsall, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Sandwell have already initiated their referral systems, WMATF and partners are in the process of presenting the project under best practice to Coventry and Solihull, and are reviewing the situation.

The WMATF has reviewed the WMFS 2007/8 derelict property fires, the overall reduction of 21% from the previous year implies the various empty property referral systems are making an impact however closer analysis also shows a large disparity between the best and worst performing local authority areas. There are two clear best practice areas Dudley and Walsall which have got year on year success with a further reduction of over 33% however the worst performing areas are Solihull with a 60% increase and Sandwell with a small increase, a further review will be required in order to close that disparity gap.

## **WMP HFSC REFERRAL SCHEME**

WMATF introduced a one month pilot where WMP refer victims of crime for a Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC). The scheme will simply offer all victims of domestic burglary a FREE HFSC in order to provide reassurance to victims and ensure the home owner reduces accident and fire risks.

The pilot on the Dudley North and South OCU's (J1 & J2) is an excellent example of partnership is being evaluated; a copy of the scheme report is available on request.

## **FORENSIC SCENE INVESTIGATION**

Following the recent change from Scene of Crime Officers to Forensic Scene Investigators (FSI) in the WMP, the WMATF had cause to recognise that on some occasions FSI were not being called to the scenes of arsons for out of hours incidents, following a meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June the out of hours FSI guidance will be changed to ensure FSI will attend the arson scene when appropriate.

## **ARSON ABOUT SCHOOL ARSON PRODUCTION**

The WMATF are working with its regional partners are carrying out the six week tour by two touring teams to our year 8 students. The presentation includes a 45minute play followed by 30 minutes workshop where the consequences of arson are discussed. The tours will be performed at 10 schools per week with am and pm performances and will include lesson packs for teachers. The tour is being performed by Stopwatch Theatre Company and full details will be made available from the WMATF web site. The WMATF will review this project in September with the WMFS education team manager to consider future tours.

Unsolicited school Emails to date include:

*Just seen the performance. Excellent, students very appreciative and message certainly received. Thanks! Hope to hear from you again. You have certainly added to our students learning experiences.*

Sheldon Heath, Birmingham

*Just a note to say many thanks for a great performance for year 8 students. I was impressed with the workshop at the end and the two ladies ability to control our students; they did a great job well done.*

*Any chance of something next year?*

Four Dwellings, Birmingham

## **YOUR CHOICE ARSON DVD**

The WMATF has recently commissioned a DVD project following the introduction of Key Stage 3/4 Educators to deliver the 'Your Choice' programme in secondary schools. The WMFS Education Advisor and Station Officer Rawlings scoured the country to find a more suitable DVD resource than the one currently in use. After much searching it was decided that none were of the quality or highlighted the consequential messages we are trying to deliver to that particular age group of young people. We were trying to move away from acted out scenarios and move more to real life situations involving real people affected by arson including victims, their families, hospital staff and fire crews.

Following a Regional CFS Practitioners Meeting Nottingham FRS expressed an interest in the project and have agreed to fund one third of the project, our Education Team and The Fire Service Research and Training Trust the other two thirds. The DVD will be launched on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at the new WMFS HQ. WMATF and WMFS Education Team are in the process of inviting our national partners to its launch.

## THE PERCENTAGE OF DELIBERATLY IGNITED PROPERTY FIRES

The latest WMFS statistics clearly show that the number of deliberately ignited property fires has been reduced by 14% from its peak in 2002/3, and accidental ignition is now the most prevalent cause of property fires.

	% Dwellings that were arson	% Non-Domestic that were arson	% Vehicles that were arson	% Other FDRs that were arson	Number of FDR1s that were arson	Total number of FDR1s	% of FDRs that were arson
1998/9	22.40%	30.90%	76.80%	75.30%	5,815	11,746	<b>49.50%</b>
1999/0	22.10%	32.10%	80.60%	79.80%	6,880	12,881	<b>53.40%</b>
2000/1	24.00%	33.60%	82.90%	80.40%	6,836	12,166	<b>56.20%</b>
2001/2	26.70%	34.90%	85.50%	78.90%	7,623	12,846	<b>59.30%</b>
2002/3	25.80%	33.50%	85.90%	80.20%	7,137	11,901	<b>60.00%</b>
2003/4	26.40%	34.20%	85.00%	80.20%	6,521	11,163	<b>58.40%</b>
2004/5	24.40%	31.70%	83.70%	78.90%	5,107	9,387	<b>54.40%</b>
2005/6	22.10%	31.20%	78.80%	77.20%	4,229	8,351	<b>50.60%</b>
2006/7	22.30%	33.00%	74.90%	78.40%	3,553	7,286	<b>48.80%</b>
2007/8	22.10%	30.00%	73.20%	73.40%	2,958	6,384	<b>46.30%</b>

## WM POLICE CRIME STATISTICS Q1 APRIL - JUNE

	April-June 2001/2	April-June 2002/3	April-June 2003/4	April-June 2004/5	April-June 2005/6	April-June 2006/7	April-June 2007/8	April-June 2008/9	Difference 2001/2 to 2006/7	% Difference 2001/2 to 2006/7
<b>Arson</b>	1,185	1,145	880	654	654	491	470	401	784	66%
<b>Vehicle Crime</b>	6,128	5,731	6,246	4,633	3,686	2,944	2,699	2,623	3505	57%
Business Crime	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	14,141	13,023	12,675	N/A	N/A

NC – New Category

The WMP have continued to show a reduction in arson, the present sanctioned detection rate for arson for 2008/9 is **9.2%**. The 2001/2 sanctioned detection rate was 5.9% clearly substantial improvements have been made but further improvements are required.

The WMP recorded a total of 60,926 (-5.7% on 2007/8) crimes for Q1 2008/9 and a total crime sanctioned detection rate of 26.2%.

**WMFS FIRE STATISTICS Q1 APRIL – JUNE**

	<b>Apr - Jun '01</b>	<b>Apr - Jun'02</b>	<b>Apr - Jun'03</b>	<b>Apr - Jun'04</b>	<b>Apr - Jun'05</b>	<b>Apr - Jun'06</b>	<b>Apr - Jun'07</b>	<b>Apr - Jun'08</b>	<b>Difference 2001/2 to 2008/9</b>	<b>% Difference 2001/2 to 2008/9</b>
<b>PI 4 Arson fires in dwellings</b>	266	245	238	197	182	141	144	120	-146	-54.9%
<b>PI 6 The number of arson fires in non-domestic premises</b>	170	189	175	144	113	113	73	83	-87	-51.2%
<b>PI 5 The number of accidental fires in non-domestic premises</b>	288	276	279	271	237	229	189	157	-131	-45.5%
<b>PI 7 Arson vehicle fires</b>	1,110	1,244	1,169	890	660	485	415	360	-750	-67.6%
<b>Outdoor (secondary) arson fires</b>	3,957	4,504	5,241	3,568	3,554	2,946	3,144	2,328	-1,629	-41.2%
<b>PI 10 The number of malicious false alarm calls received</b>	2,435	2,119	2,018	1,828	1,916	1,607	1,570	1,403	-1,032	-42.4%
<b>PI 11 The number of malicious false alarm calls attended</b>	1,415	1,215	1,043	923	836	656	699	558	-857	-60.6%
<b>The number of injuries from fires</b>	101	98	93	81	90	59	52	46	-55	-54.5%