

# SECTION 41 MEMBER BRIEFING



**OCTOBER 2016**

Please find below information from your  
Section 41 Member representative on South  
Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
Cllr Pat Haith



## Fire safety campaign leads to big drop in electrical blazes

Electrical blazes in South Yorkshire have dropped by a quarter, thanks to a fire service safety campaign.

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue says it attended 33 electrical related house fires between May and July- 27 per cent fewer than the same months over the last three years.

The fall in incidents comes after a major safety campaign was launched by fire officers to warn the public about the dangers of everything from e-cigs to tumble dryers.

The campaign saw advertising vans carry safety messages to areas of South Yorkshire known to experience high numbers of house fires and radio advertisements warn people about the most common causes of electrical blazes.

Officers also encourage visitors to check the safety of their home electrics by completing a short, online checklist.

Head of Community Safety Trevor Bernard, said: "We'd like to thank the public for listening to our safety messages, but we'd urge people not to become complacent when it comes to house fires.

"The simple truth is that homes have more small electrical devices in them than probably any time in our history- from tablets and mobile phones, to e-cigarettes and games consoles. Unfortunately, we can't get round everyone's home to check the safety of their electrics for them. But by raising awareness of the biggest safety issues. we hope we can give people the knowledge to check their own electrics and hopefully prevent a serious fire."

Electricity is involved in about two thirds of all accidental house fires, with household appliances the most common culprits.

Sometimes fires are caused by faulty goods, which could be small items like mobile chargers, or big things like washing machines and dryers.

Fires are also caused by people misusing electrical appliances, for example by leaving them plugged in for too long or covering them up allowing them to overheat.

The fire service has issued the following advice to stop electrical fires:

- Don't buy cheap, unbranded chargers and make sure chargers are compatible to the device you are using
- Don't leave things to charge overnight or beyond the recommended charging time. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions
- Keep electrical items away from flammable materials when charging
- Don't overload sockets— long, strip adaptors are safest, but can only take a total of 13 amps.

People can still check the safety of their home electrics by visiting [13orbust.co.uk](http://13orbust.co.uk)

### **Fire service volunteer lands full-time job**



A former volunteer turned fire service employee has hailed the strength of the organisation's volunteering scheme after it helped build his skills and experience to land a full time role.

In 2013, Ben Williamson became an Assistant Fire Cadet Instructor after being a Fire Cadet for a number of years. Wanting to work further with the fire service he became a Fire Support Volunteer within the Community Safety department, assisting and supporting the fire service safety teams by helping out at events, carrying out Home Safety Checks and fitting smoke alarms for members of the public

Ben soon became a valued member of the team, and it was here that he gained the skills and experience required to further his career within the fire service.

A full time vacancy became available and his drive and determination spurred him on to apply for the permanent post of Maintenance Operative Driver. Ben was successful and became a paid member of staff in September 2016.

Ben said; "Without volunteering I would never have developed the skills and confidence that secured me this role. Volunteering has changed my life and has benefited me in many ways and I would recommend it to anyone."

Sue Butler, Volunteering Co-Ordinator at South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue said; "Ben is a shining example of how volunteering helps out the local community and the individual themselves. Ben has gone from strength to strength and the knowledge and skills he acquired during his time as a volunteer was a large factor in his gaining full time employment within the service. We are all really proud of him and wish him all the best in his career."

If you are interested in volunteering for South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue call 0114 253 2413.

**Cooking Related Fires—video to be launched**

Last month Fire Authority members helped to launch a new project to tackle cooking related fires in South Yorkshire.

The initiative won funding from the Stronger Safer Communities Reserve and has been led by Doncaster Council Public Health. The project involved the production of a video called 'How To Save A Life' to highlight the role we can all play in identifying people who may be at risk of fire due to a range of issues, including substance misuse and dependency.

The video will be used as part of a wider fire service cooking safety campaign which will be launched in South Yorkshire later this month. You can preview this video here—<http://www.tosavealife.uk/>

**Did you know you can watch all Authority meetings LIVE?**

All Fire Authority meetings are open to the public and are broadcast live on the internet. Visit [www.southyorks.gov.uk](http://www.southyorks.gov.uk). You can also view previous meetings.

Whilst viewing the meeting you can contribute comments and debate proceedings with other viewers via CoverItLive or Twitter.

**Follow the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority on Twitter**

@syFireAuth

**St Wilfred's Centre Sprinkler Project**

St Wilfrid's Centre in Sheffield has built a new residential unit to work in conjunction with the day centre. The new unit benefits from a full fire sprinkler system funded by a grant from South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority's Stronger Safer Communities Reserve Fund.

The aim of the new project is to improve the quality of life of vulnerable people and help relieve the homelessness situation within the city of Sheffield

The 20 apartment block which will help homeless and vulnerable persons learn life skills in a safe secure environment which will promote their well being and self confidence. Tenancies will be offered for up to 2 years, after this tenants will be helped to find permanent accommodation and live independently with the ongoing support of St Wilfrid's Centre.



Roger Brason from South Yorkshire Business Fire Safety handing over the cheque to Josie Brooks of St Wilfrid's.