

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

Date: 24th July 2024

Subject: GMFRS Atlas Project update

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on GMFRS Atlas Project and associated work completed within GMFRS.

2. CONTACT OFFICERS

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3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended the Police, Fire and Crime Panel note the content of this report, provide feedback and offer support on the approach.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Initially, the Atlas Project was a collaborative pilot between GMFRS and Greater Manchester Probation Service (GMPS). With a set of shared aims and objectives, GMFRS and GMPS have worked in collaboration to develop a response to an

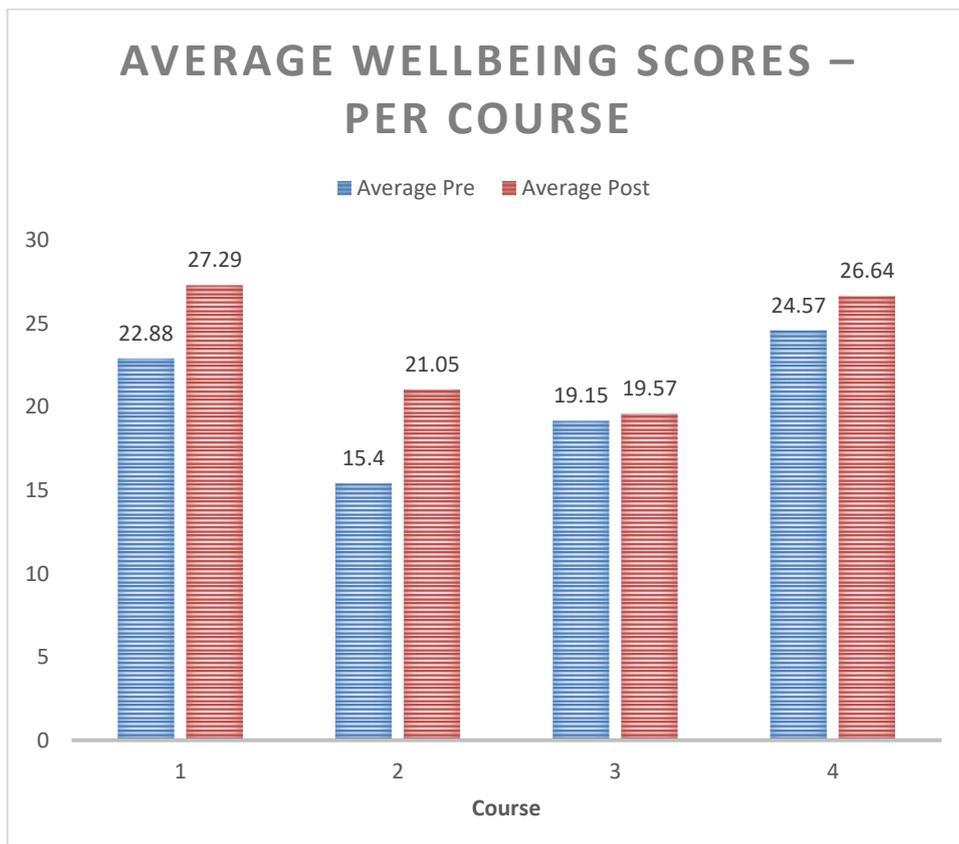
identified need to provide a tailored intervention to adults who set or use fire to harm themselves, others, or property, threaten to use fire or use of incendiary devices.

4.2 The projected outcomes of the Atlas Project are to:

- Protect the public
- Prevent victims
- Reduce re-offending and
- Respond efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of our communities, consequently reducing risk and the demand on blue light service

4.3 The Atlas Project has now delivered a total of four courses since, February 2023. There have been 34 referrals from Greater Manchester Probation Service with 23 individuals meeting the criteria for the course and 11 others being deferred to our 1:1 Atlas course, which will be referred to within this paper. Of the 23 individuals, prior to the course commencing, two were recalled to prison, one was successful in gaining a place in rehab and one was unwell.

4.4 The course continues to provide support to adults convicted of firesetting behaviours and help them positively reintegrate back into the community, developing purpose, resilience and interpersonal skills. To date, there has been no reoffending by participants and follow up psychological assessments have shown an increase in wellbeing and motivation towards achieving personal goals and overcoming adversity. Please see breakdown below:



4.5 Work is currently being developed to provide a “step down” approach to transition participants from the Atlas Project back to Probation through end of course reports and individual development plans. GMFRS are also signposting to commissioned services available to probationers through external providers.

5. THE ATLAS PROJECT – EVENING COURSES

5.1 Greater Manchester Probation Service have over 30 individuals with an arson conviction across Greater Manchester who are eligible for the Atlas Project course.

5.2 The course has now been adapted to allow learners who are in full time work to attend the GMFRS course. In July 2024, two evening courses will commence running once a week for a total of ten weeks.

6. THE ATLAS PROJECT – 1:1 DELIVERY

6.1 The Atlas Project has now been further adapted to allow learners with individual complex needs to have access to the course.

6.2 The programme has been refined to focus on four core elements:

- Identification with fire issues and serious fire interest
- Consequences and impact of firesetting
- Emotion regulation and self-esteem
- Understanding how mental health impacts learning

6.3 This delivery is to be piloted with three to four individuals to ensure it is achieving the intended aims, objectives and outcomes.

6.4 Further discussions will commence between GMFRS and GMPS to understand the individuals needs and if further support services need to be involved within the delivery to provide a multi-agency approach.

6.5 Once a learner has completed this course, a decision will be made as to whether the group Atlas delivery would be beneficial to them i.e. to increase their social skills.

7. POSITIVE OUTCOMES

7.1 Since The Atlas Project pilot course in February 2023, there have been a plethora of positive outcomes for both learners and agencies.

7.2 Several learners from the course have since secured accommodation, education opportunities and support services. Case studies are being developed to showcase

the positive outcomes some of the learners have achieved since completing the Atlas Project.

7.3 In December 2023, The Atlas Project won Project of the Year Award at the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards and has been highlighted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services as Positive Practice.

Please see below:

Promising practice

Behaviour change programme for adult fire setters helps them gain new skills

The [Atlas Programme](#)  is a tailored intervention that aims to rehabilitate adult fire setters.

The project is implemented in collaboration with the Greater Manchester Probation Service and provides support and education to change the behaviour of adults with a history or increased likelihood of deliberately starting fires. The project is the first of its kind and is supported by clinical psychologists to understand the root cause of behaviours and provide positive change.

The course aims to help adults with a history of deliberate fire setting to gain life and employability skills and to reduce their risk. One participant became eligible for long-term accommodation after completing the course. He reported back to the project that it had helped him regain his self-worth, confidence and motivation to continue with his long-term rehabilitation

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel are asked to note the contents of the paper and offer comment, challenge or support to the approach.

End of report