



East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Behavioural Insights accidental house fires project – scope

Accidental dwelling fires (known as ADFs or fires in the home) are a key area of focus for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. While progress has been made in the past in reducing the number of these fires in the home, we are now experiencing a plateau (2012/13 there were 558, in 2013/14 526, 2014/15 544, 2015/16 549 and 2016/17 there were 540). This means the Service needs to try something new.

The current Home Safety Visit programme has traditionally targeted vulnerable people (e.g. people with reduced mobility, vision or hearing) to provide face to face advice in their own home. While invaluable, home visits are resource-heavy and the Service wants to reach a larger audience across the whole of East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove (approx. 837,000 in the whole of our Service area, including 289,000 in Brighton and Hove) that goes beyond the focus for its traditional interventions.

In early 2018 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service secured funding from the LGA for a behavioural insights project aimed at reducing incidents of accidental house fires and 'near misses' within the city of Brighton and Hove. The Service has commissioned specialist behaviour change agency, [Social Engine](#), to provide support to design, test and evaluate interventions intended to reduce the instances of accidental kitchen fires by using behavioural insights.

Young people (aged 18-35) living in privately rented accommodation in urban neighbourhoods are a significant group within the local area, accounting for approximately 15% of the County's population – 125,500 people. However they are responsible for almost a quarter of all incidents of accidental kitchen fires in the area. An opportunity has therefore been identified to develop and test interventions aimed at reducing the number of kitchen fires and encouraging safer behaviours among this target group.

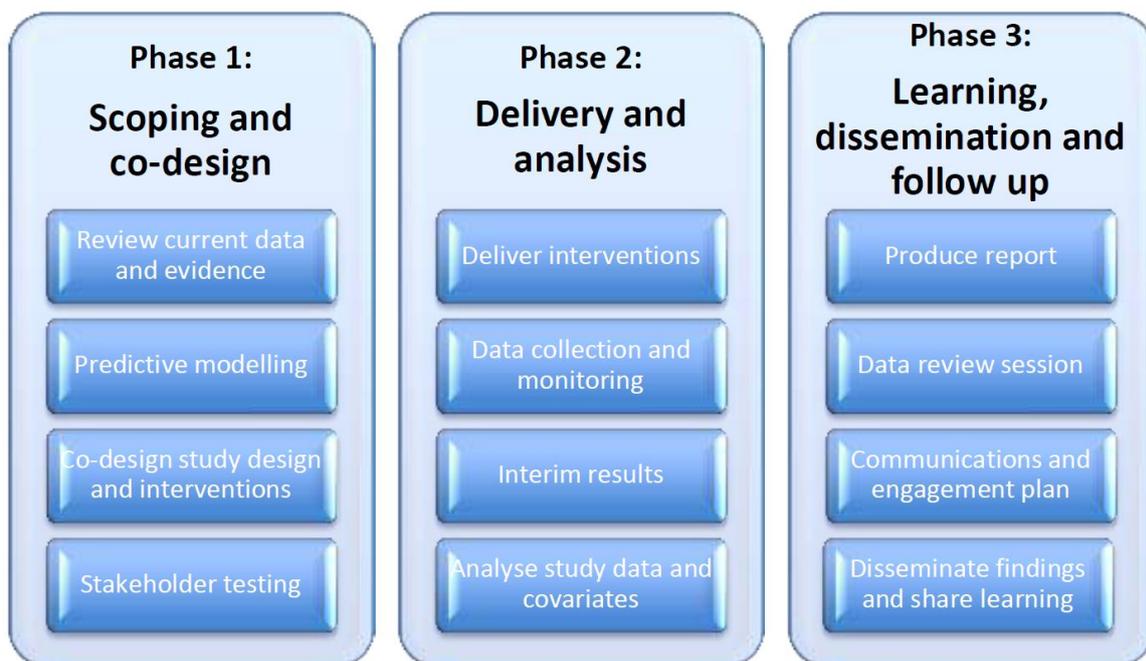
Social Engine will design and deliver a randomised controlled trial to test the effectiveness of interventions on the behaviour of this 'at risk group' in order to reduce instances of accidental house fires. The trial will commence in May 2018 and run for up to 12 months, in order to ensure a sufficient sample size to determine a statistically significant result.

Available evidence on accidental kitchen fires and the literature on behavioural insights relevant to this target audience has been reviewed. One social marketing campaign by County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service found fire safety was not a priority, there were widely-held assumptions that fires were not going to happen to them, and a lack

of awareness of the unpredictability of fires, and a lack of clarity on what fire safety advice to follow. Research by ESFRS found that distraction is a key issue and that a significant number of people have experienced a “near miss” with burnt food, where no subsequent fire developed.

While interventions have yet to be designed, we anticipate they will be focused on affecting how people view the risks of cooking, putting fire safety in the forefront of someone’s mind and addressing the problem of the “not me” attitudes.

A co-design process is being used to combine the Service’s own insight and experience with evidence from behavioural science and social marketing to design targeted interventions and test them. This includes working with firefighters, fire officers and community safety staff to hear of their own experiences and interactions with members of the public. The views of stakeholders will also be sought.



Measurements of success are expected to include a reduction in false alarms/near misses, fires and an increase in awareness of fire safety. This will be carried out over a number of years following the interventions as the immediate impact may not be obvious.

Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Research/data collection	March/April 2018
Trial design	April 2018
Fieldwork commences	May 2018
Interim results collected/reported	Feb 2019
Fieldwork concludes	May 2019

Report due	July 2019
Share learning and dissemination	July 2019
Project completion	July 2019

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