



LEICESTERSHIRE

FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

NEWS RELEASE

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INVESTIGATION CONCLUDED AFTER SERIOUS EXPLOSION IN BIRSTALL

Following an explosion at a residential property in Allington Drive, Birstall in the early hours of Monday 11 December, the joint on-scene investigation between Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service and Leicestershire Police has now concluded.

The joint investigation has determined that there will be no criminal investigation. As a result, the scene was lifted yesterday afternoon, although police officers have remained in Allington Drive to reassure local residents who have been affected by the incident.

The cause has been categorized as accidental and the seat of the explosion has now been identified. The explosion is attributed to a catastrophic failure of an internal gas pipe joint, in the floor of the property, and the escaping gas being ignited by a cooker spark generator switch. A forensic investigation is now underway by the Health and Safety Executive to identify what caused the failure of the internal gas pipe.

As a result of the explosion, the semi-detached property where the seat of explosion has been identified, was a total collapse and the adjoining property a partial collapse with a significant number of other properties in the vicinity damaged by the blast.

Three casualties were taken to hospital, one of whom has subsequently died. Identification of the deceased is a matter for HM Coroner. Leicestershire Police are now preparing a file for the Coroner's Office.

This is an isolated incident and thankfully a rare occurrence. However, we would like to take this opportunity to remind all of our communities what to do if you smell gas:

- Call free on **0800 111 999***
- Get fresh air immediately - open all doors and windows to ventilate the area.

- Switch off the appliance and gas pipework by turning off the gas supply at the emergency control valve at the gas meter. Do not turn the gas supply on again until it has been checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- Do not operate electrical switches, operating electrical equipment can ignite escaping gas.
- Extinguish all naked flames.
- If you are feeling unwell visit your GP or hospital immediately and inform them that you may have been exposed to carbon monoxide.
- Contact a Gas Safe registered engineer to check and fix the appliance.

** All calls to the National Gas Emergency Service and National Enquiry lines may be recorded and monitored.*

END

Notes to editors: Interviews are available at request via Corporate Communications using the details shown below.

About the Service

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides emergency response, prevention and protection services from 20 stations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Its headquarters is based in Birstall, Leicester.

The Service's prevention, education, enforcement and inspection programmes have resulted in significant reductions in the number of incidents. In the last ten years, fire related incidents have reduced by 46 percent.

During 2015/16, the Service attended 666 road traffic collisions, of which 174 were extrications freeing 208 people trapped inside their vehicles and completed 5086 home fire safety checks, fitting almost 4481 smoke alarms. Staff organised or supported almost 1431 events aimed at promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, whilst also visiting 332 schools to deliver fire and road safety education to pupils.

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