



SAFETY PLEDGE FOR THE FUTURE

Fire chiefs in Cheshire have pledged that the safety of local communities will not be compromised, despite facing budget cuts of around 25% over the next few years.

Cheshire Fire Authority - the body which manages Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of local communities - is expecting to have to save up to £6million from its current £43 million budget over the next four years.

Now a draft four-year strategy has been developed setting out how the Authority aims to ensure it can respond effectively to the changing risks facing local communities while also making the necessary savings.

Efficiencies already made over the last 12 months include a restructure of the organisation's most senior management, which saved more than £150,000 a year and the launch of new crewing arrangements at Wilmslow, the quietest wholtime fire station, with savings of £470,000.

Fire Authority Chair Cllr David Topping, said: "Efficiencies like these have put us in a good position to respond to the tough times ahead. Protecting our communities and our staff will remain our top priority and our aim is to develop new ways of working to help us meet these challenges, without the need for any compulsory redundancies."

Chief Fire Officer, Paul Hancock, added: "We have reduced house fires and injuries dramatically, with just one fire death last year - the lowest figure ever recorded. I am determined to continue these improvements in public safety even though we are obviously going to have to make some very difficult decisions about how we provide services in the future."

Key proposals include:

- A fundamental review of all community fire stations with a view to selling off some larger sites to fund the development of some new ones, better placed to tackle local risks and capable of being shared with partners
- Developing new ways of crewing some stations which will maintain 24/7 emergency cover for local communities but need fewer but more highly-paid staff
- A value for money review over the next three years of every area of the organisation which supports frontline services
- Exploring options to generate income and to deliver services on behalf of others.

Residents are urged to give their views on the draft strategy which is on the Service's website - www.cheshirefire.gov.uk - or call 01606 868700. Specific proposals for 2011/12 will be in an annual action plan which will be the subject of detailed local consultation later in the year.



Halton rises to joint challenge

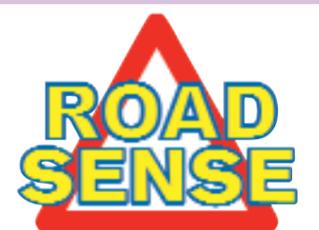


Staff, partners and volunteers from across Halton Borough joined forces to help smash a key safety target - see page 3 for more details.

Youth project takes off - p8



INSIDE



New campaign - p2



New fire kit - p3



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On-call to protect your community

Residents who want to play a key role in making their local communities safer are being urged to consider a career as a part-time or 'on-call' firefighter.

As well as employing around 500 full-time frontline firefighters, the Service also has nearly 200 part-time staff who respond to emergencies, often in more rural areas.

"Our on-call staff attend exactly the same kind of emergency incidents as their full time colleagues and are a vital part of our frontline service," said Chief Fire Officer Paul Hancock.

"People need to have a good level of fitness and live or work close to the fire station. They can put themselves forward to provide cover at certain periods - so it can be ideal for those with free time during the day such as mums with young children at school."

Qualified on-call firefighters get at least £4,000 a year, as well



as extra fees when they respond to emergencies. There are vacancies at several of the on-call stations - for a full list and details of how to apply visit www.cheshirefire.gov.uk or call 01606 868457.

Making sense of road safety

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has launched a new 'Road Sense' campaign to promote safety on the roads.

The project has been developed to complement the Service's successful 6 Sense home safety campaign and recognises the increasingly important role staff play in trying to reduce road traffic collisions (RTCs).

In 2009 there were 42 deaths on Cheshire's roads and 4,785 injuries compared to just one fire death and 37 injuries, with crews attending 470 house fires and 386 RTCs.

“Our crews see at first hand the consequences of the tragedies that occur on our roads, and while there have been recent reductions in the numbers of deaths and injuries, there is still a lot more to do,” said Deputy Chief Fire Officer Mark Cashin.

“Our home safety assessments and campaigns have helped to bring about massive reductions in the numbers of fires and we hope the 'road sense' campaign will have a similar impact on road safety.”

The 'Road Sense' reminders are as follows:

SEATBELT - You are twice as likely to die in a crash if you don't wear a seat belt

WEATHER - Drive at a speed appropriate for the conditions

SPEED - The faster a vehicle is driven, the less time there is to react to hazards

DRINK - Don't drive while impaired through drinks and drugs

DISTRACTION - Don't use your mobile phone at all while driving

RISK - Across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington 20 routes have been identified as carrying a higher risk to road users.

The campaign will run for two years and will be supported through a range of targeted events, advertisements, viral marketing and promotional material. It was first launched at the Cheshire Show where the Service had a special stand which included the chance for youngsters to take part in a special 'Road Sense' road trip and have a go on some go-carts.

Other attractions included a huge inflatable fire engine as well as demonstrations of some of the Service's modern rescue equipment.



Cheshire is one of 12 fire and rescue services in the country to have been accepted as a signatory to the European Road Safety Charter.

To be accepted the Service had to demonstrate that it is meeting and exceeding the Government's road safety agenda and has developed a Safety Strategy unique to Cheshire.

Key elements of the strategy include educating and working with all communities exposed to traffic risks and supporting partners in projects to target offenders and improve road conditions at accident black spots.

The Service's Road Safety Manager Martin Dowle said:

“This is a tremendous achievement and highlights the qualities and commitment we have throughout our organisation in reducing deaths and injuries on our roads.”



Firms on message

Businesses across Cheshire are being urged to sign up to a new free on-line messaging system launched by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.



The system means the Service can warn firms when major incidents happen in their area as well as giving out advice and information on safety risks, procedures and prosecutions via text messages.

The new system is part of the Service's commitment to strengthen links with the business community and ensure employers, employees and the owners of premises know their responsibilities under fire safety legislation.

“This new message broadcasting service provides us with a fast and efficient way to provide basic updates and advice directly to the business community and we would urge companies to spend a couple of minutes in registering,” said Business Liaison Manager Mandy Eeles.

To subscribe people just need to complete an online form at www.cheshirefire.gov.uk and register up to three post codes, for example their location and areas in which similar companies are located. For further advice or information contact the business liaison team on 01606 868768.

Springing to success

An innovative project aimed at improving the safety and quality of life of older people has won the Service a prestigious national award.



The SPRINGBOARD project (Starting Proactive Response, Introducing New Gains, Benefiting Older-people and Reducing Dependency) was developed in partnership with Age Concern and local health and social services and won the 'Innovation in strategy at a local level' category at the hotly contested E Government Excellence awards.

The project centres on the Service's delivery of Home Safety Assessments (HSAs) to the over 65's. Traditionally these would just focus on fire safety issues, however, these have been expanded so they can highlight and signpost people to more help and advice.

By working alongside partners at Age Concern as well as local health and social services, the Service has tapped into existing electronic databases, which has helped identify and reach people who may require extra help. This resulted in the Service arranging to visit more than 47,000 people aged over 65

“Developing a project which makes a real difference to the safety and wellbeing of older people in our communities is rewarding enough, but to get national recognition for our innovative work is the icing on the cake,” said Cllr David Topping, Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority.

Seasonal safety

With Summer over, the clocks going back and Bonfire Night coming soon, the Service would like to remind residents of some key safety messages:

Clocks – check your smoke alarms are working as you put the clocks back on October 31.

Keeping warm – Ensure electric blankets are working properly, any heaters are not obstructed and don't leave fires on overnight.

Bonfire night – Follow these tips to keep you and your family safe:

- Store and use fireworks responsibly
- Light fireworks at arm's length using a safety lighter, stand well back and never return once lit
- Keep a bucket of water handy
- Take care of children and pets
- Go to an organised bonfire but if you must light your own, don't use flammable liquids and site away from buildings and trees.

Diwali – known as the Festival of Lights, starts this year on November 5 and sees homes decorated with candles and festival meals prepared. Candle fires increase by over a third during Diwali. Take care by:

- Keeping candles away from curtains, furniture and decorations. Long hair and clothing are also very flammable
- When cooking deep-fried food, never fill the pan more than one third full with oil and if the oil starts to smoke, turn off the heat and leave to pan to cool.

Autumn driving – colder nights mean more of fog, so slow down if visibility is poor and allow extra time for journeys.

First rate kit to protect crews

New fire kit and breathing sets have just been provided to all firefighters in Cheshire as part of a near £1 million investment in the safety of crews.

The new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is the highest-rated fire kit currently available and is made of outer fabric recognised as best in class for withstanding the most severe firefighting conditions.

The kit, which has cost nearly £500,000, incorporates a range of features specifically requested by firefighters including:

- reinforced knee and shoulder areas to limit damage from crawling or wearing breathing apparatus
- shaped knee, elbow and shoulders to stop the tunic riding up and exposing the wearer to heat
- a lightweight moisture barrier to reduce heat stress.

In addition, the Service's entire range of breathing apparatus sets have been replaced at a cost of around £430,000.

The new sets operate at a higher pressure and give firefighters up to 20 minutes extra air time compared to the existing apparatus. In addition the new sets also include a face mask with an

improved seal and an integral radio to boost communications.

"Our firefighters can find themselves in some extremely hot and potentially hazardous conditions and it is vital that we provide them with the best protection kit and equipment possible," said Chief Fire Officer Paul Hancock.

"This major investment will help to keep our crews safe and also ensure they are better able to protect local communities. Special cleaning and maintenance contracts have also been set up to ensure all the equipment is kept safe in the future."

Both the new fire kit and the breathing sets have been bought through contracts set up jointly by fire and rescue services in the North West.

This has ensured major savings and as neighbouring services will have the same kit and equipment it will make it easier and safer for crews when working together at major incidents.



DID YOU KNOW?

Over the last 12 months Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service attended a total of 10,573 incidents across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington – 6% less than in 2008/09. The figures for last year include:

- 1,583 primary fires, with 574 involving houses and 244 business premises
- 4,779 false alarms
- 580 deliberate fires involving buildings and vehicles
- 2,062 smaller rubbish and nuisance fires which have been started deliberately
- 1,377 special service calls, including, among other incidents, road traffic collisions and lift rescues.

In 2009/10, the Service attended 157 malicious false alarms, a 28% reduction on the 219 attended in the previous 12 months.

Partners on target for safety

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and partners have been celebrating after smashing a target to carry out 1,000 Home Safety Assessments (HSAs) in a day.

The Service's HSA programme involves giving householders free safety advice and fitting free smoke alarms and has played a major part in reducing the numbers of house fires, deaths and injuries in recent years.

To raise awareness of the this vital community safety work a special 'Cheshire Safety Day' was held earlier in the year with firefighters and staff from across the organisation joining forces with partners, sporting celebrities and politicians to complete an incredible 1,664 assessments.

"When we first put forward the idea of the event, the proposed target of 1,000 HSAs seemed like an almost impossible challenge," Cllr David Topping, Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority.

"To have hit that target with something to spare is a tribute to the hard work and commitment of everyone who was involved – from frontline firefighters and advocates to volunteers, support staff, elected Members and our regular partners."

Over 100 separate teams were involved in the day, with highlights including:

- **Cheshire East** – a partnership event was hosted in Alsager, giving local organisations the opportunity to promote their own services including housing, health, volunteering and road safety

- **Cheshire West and Chester** – MPs and teams of police community support officers visited homes and gave out information
- **Halton** – the Birchfield Rugby Union Club ground in Widnes was used as a base for local activities and fire cadets promoted the event by distributing leaflets
- **Warrington** – Warrington Wolves rugby league stars and mascot 'Wolfie' backed the campaign and visited the Service's community roadshow vehicle.

To request a HSA visit the Service's website – www.cheshirefire.gov.uk - contact your local fire station or call 0800 389 0053.



Focus on Performance 2009/10



Developing an excellent organisation

It is vital that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service closely monitors the impact its day to day work has on improving the safety of local communities.

Effective performance management ensures that the Service can respond quickly when things change, while publishing key figures allows people to check on how effective the organisation has been in delivering services on their behalf.

This report looks at some key indicators of the Service's performance during the 2009/10 financial year – if you have any questions, please contact the Corporate Intelligence Unit – intelligence@cheshirefire.gov.uk or call 01606 868700.

Key achievements by the Service during the year included:

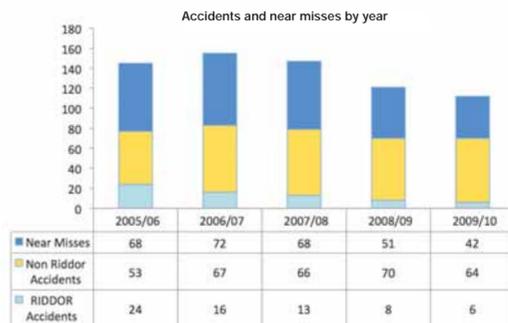
- Achievement of Level Four of the Equality Standard for Local Government within deadline
- Sickness absence - 6.46 days per employee compared with 7.48 the previous year
- 95% of invoices were paid within 30 days against a target of 90%
- A 15% increase in unique visitor numbers to the website – against a target of 5%
- 97% of orders completed on line – against a target of 95%.

Health and safety

During the year the Fire Authority approved a revised Health and Safety (H&S) Policy which included the appointment of a Member Champion for H&S.

Other key achievements included:

- The attainment of an International Safety Award from the British Safety Council for the Service's Safety Management System
- Implementation of a comprehensive drugs and alcohol policy, including training, education and a random testing programme
- An agreement to provide H&S support to the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service
- Development of a full day H&S module for new starters based on the British Safety Council Level 1 Award
- Completion of staff training in the use of new meters for monitoring exposure to noise to prepare for a major survey of equipment.



RIDDOR (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) – accidents or incidents which have to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive

Key statistics:

- **Accidents** - the target of a 10% reduction in accidents was achieved with a total of 70 reported.
- **Near misses** – this has decreased significantly over the past two years with just 42 in 2009/10. This includes physical and verbal attacks on staff - the total of 11 was the lowest in the last five years.
- **Duty days lost** – 88 days lost through sickness from eight accidents involving three operational staff and five in non-operational roles – a continuing year on year reduction.

Protecting our communities and reducing local risks

The Service's key project to protect communities from fire is its Home Safety Assessment (HSA) programme which involves giving householders free safety advice and fitting free smoke alarms.

During 2009/10 the 60,000 HSA target was again achieved, while 64% of those were delivered to vulnerable people – above the target of 60%. By the end of the last financial year a total of nearly a quarter of a million homes across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington had received a HSA.

The number of accidental dwelling fires has increased by 2% from 459 in 2008/09 to 470. Just 10 years ago, however, there were over 800 accidental fires in Cheshire homes. The dramatic reduction in more recent years coincides with the high volume of HSAs and the use of key data to target those most at risk. The graph alongside highlights the link between the two.

During 2009/10 there was just one preventable fire death - the lowest figure since records began. It compares to six deaths the previous year but the low numbers mean that it is difficult to draw conclusions about future trends.

There were 21 injuries in accidental dwelling fires compared to 16 in 2008/09. However, while this represents an increase of five injuries, these figures support a very positive medium-term trend which has seen injuries effectively cut by two thirds since 2006/07.

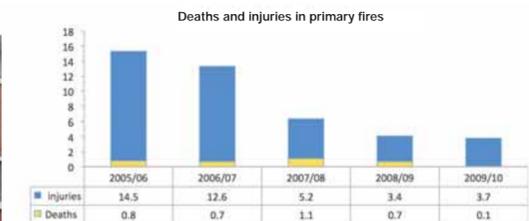
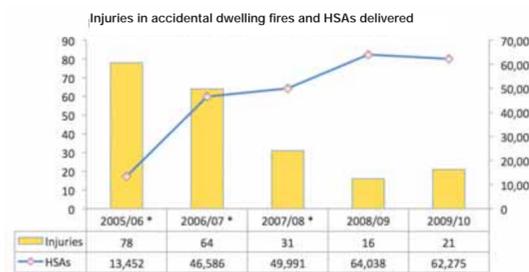


Business safety

The Service employs dedicated staff to raise fire safety awareness among local businesses and in 2009/10 a total of 12 targeted business liaison events were held, many in partnership with chambers of commerce and local councils. In addition, over 600 business liaison fire safety information visits were carried out, while more than 2,000 checks were made to test the effectiveness of local fire safety measures.

In the vast majority of cases owners responded promptly to any concerns raised, however, four prohibition notices were issued. All prosecutions were successful, with the courts issuing fines and awarding costs to the Service.

During 2009/10 there were 243 fires in business and commercial premises - a 14% reduction on the previous year.



* Denotes audited data



Responding promptly and effectively to emergencies

Over 70 per cent of the incidents the Service responds to each year are either false alarms or small fires, many of which have been started deliberately.

Attending these incidents means it can take longer for crews to respond to more serious emergencies, so the Service carries out a range of work to tackle both issues.

While the majority of arson involves anti-social behaviour such as setting fires to rubbish and bins, some cases see homes and businesses targeted and people's lives put at risk. Projects to reduce arson have included:

- removing rubbish in areas of high arson activity
- bonfire initiatives including patrols to discourage anti-social behaviour
- offering advice to businesses and local councils about arson prevention
- sharing information with partners such as the police to ensure arsonists are caught and prosecuted.

The work resulted in a 27% drop for 2009/10 in the number of arson incidents involving buildings and vehicles. There was also a 7% reduction in the number of other less serious deliberate fires.

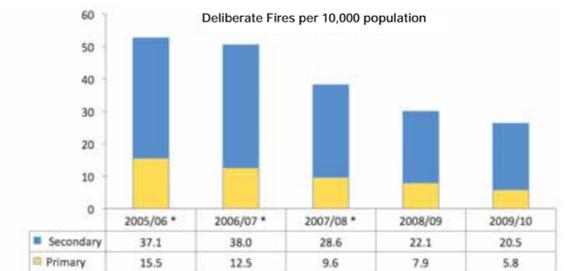
During the year a new policy was developed aimed at reducing the number of false alarms which the Service receives from automatic fire systems. During the year the Service attended a total of 2,334 incidents - a 9% reduction compared to 2008/09.

Training

While the number of incidents attended by the Service has reduced steadily in recent years, it is vital that staff are trained and able to respond when emergencies do occur.

During 2009/10 a total of 44 training exercises were carried out to reinforce the training and assessment of all operational firefighters. In addition a programme of trauma care training was delivered to all operational crews.

The Service also regularly reviews its fleet of emergency response vehicles and during 2009/10 three new standard fire appliances and three 'Midi' appliances were bought and equipped within the agreed budget.



* Denotes audited data



Champions get their reward

The work of people from across Cheshire who have made a difference to the safety of their local communities was recognised at a special awards evening staged by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Community Safety Champion Awards were presented in 10 different categories ranging from bravery to educating young people about safety issues. The event was hosted by BBC North West's Mark Edwardson, with the winners receiving their awards from Chief Fire Officer, Paul Hancock.

"It is important for us to recognise the help and assistance people give our Service throughout the year and these awards are an ideal opportunity to pay tribute to some truly inspirational people," said Mr. Hancock.

Cllr. David Topping, Chair of the Fire Authority added: "I was delighted to see people of all ages and from all walks of life coming together for what was a memorable and humbling event. Quite often those who are nominated are the unsung heroes whose work is not always fully recognised."

The award winners were:

- Contribution to tackling anti-social behaviour - Ann Pryor, Charities Officer, ASDA, Ellesmere Port
- Commercial and industrial safety - Industrial Fire Managers' Forum



- Contribution to reducing false alarms - Jayne Drum, Cheshire Police, Warrington
- "On-call" or Retained Duty System supporter - Barlows UK Ltd, Malpas
- Bravery Award - Glyn Evans, Macclesfield
- Community Safety Champion - Denise Rogers, Northwich
- Contribution to the education of children and young people - West Cheshire College, Chester
- Most effective partnership - Halton Housing Trust and Age Concern, Northwich
- Sustained contribution to community safety - Prince's Trust Cheshire, Cheshire
- Chief Fire Officer's Commendation - Halah Al-Mashta, Sandbach (pictured)

TEXT BOOST FOR DEAF COMMUNITY

Residents who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or those with speech impediments can benefit from a new on-line messaging system, launched by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The free service allows people to receive text updates about major incidents near their home or workplace along with safety advice and other information in a format that D/deaf residents can access.

Approximately 10% of the population in the Service's area have significant hearing loss, so this service will allow them to stay in touch with any major incidents the Service attends and receive key safety information.

"At times of major emergencies, providing timely information and advice can help to protect and reassure local people and it is important we make best use of technology to help us reach all sections of the community," said Head of Communications Tim Bevington.

To register, people just need to visit www.cheshirefire.gov.uk and complete an online form, registering up to three post codes such as their home, work or where a friend or family member lives. If people do not have Internet access they can call 01606 868422.

The Service's D/deaf safety advocate Mel Pitts said: "People in the D/deaf community can be more at risk so I would urge them to take a couple of minutes to register for the new text messaging service."



Summary of accounts 2009/10



Fire Authority

Cheshire Fire Authority is the publicly accountable body which manages the fire and rescue service on behalf of the communities throughout Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

The Fire Authority is made up of 23 elected Members, with eight appointed by Cheshire West and Chester Council, eight by Cheshire East, three by Halton Borough and four by Warrington Borough. The current political make up of the Authority is Conservative (12), Labour (7) and Liberal Democrat (4).

The Authority is a separate legal body and has the power to set council tax and agree its own policies and procedures, without needing the approval of these local councils. Its meetings are open to the public and are held at the Service's Winsford headquarters – full details are on the website – www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

Key duties of the Authority include setting the annual budget, agreeing the numbers of staff and levels of equipment necessary to provide an effective service and approving the Service's key policies, plans and strategies.

Accounts

The accounts of the Fire Authority are important in showing how we use the resources provided to us to deliver a fire and rescue service in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

The summary accounts set out below provide an overview of where we get our resources from, how we allocate those across our services and our financial position as at the 31st March 2010.

Summary Revenue Account

The 2009–10 Fire Authority budget was £42.07m. The total expenditure incurred was £42.11m, an overspend of £0.04m which will be financed by our General Reserve. Our reserves are proportionate to the risks facing the Authority's area and are required to ensure that the Authority has sufficient funds to deal with major incidents, but we are also mindful of the financial scenario facing the public sector. Fire and Rescue Services will not be exempt from the cuts to public funding and in order to maintain the quality of service that we provide, we have developed a range of options to deliver savings, but must also recognise that we

might have cause to use our reserves to smooth the financial pressures of the next few years.

Summary Balance Sheet

The Summary Balance Sheet shows the 2009–10 end of year position for the Fire Authority. The most obvious point to note is that there is a net liability of £331m i.e. the Fire Authority holds assets worth £51m, but has liabilities of £382m – most significant in arriving at the latter total is a figure of £368m (2008-09 £254m) which recognises all our future pension liabilities. The pension liability figure has increased substantially from last year as a result of changes in actuarial assumptions about the length of time for which pensions will be paid, but also a reduction in the value of assets held in the Local Government Pension Scheme (caused by the economic downturn).

All local authorities are required to recognise this liability in their balance sheet even though it is not an immediate call on our resources, but instead is paid out over the life of our existing and future pensioners.

Summary Revenue Account 2009/10	£'000	£'000
Community Fire Safety	4,562	
Firefighting and Rescue Operations	31,310	
Corporate And Democratic Core	661	
Non Distributed Costs	100	
Net Cost of Service		36,633
Other income, expenditure and adjustments	5,485	
Amount to be met by Govt Grant and Local Taxation		42,118
Revenue Support Grant and Local Taxation	-18,034	
Council Tax	-24,042	
Net General Fund (Surplus)\Deficit		42
Balance on General Fund Brought Forward	-6,168	
Balance on General Fund Carried Forward		-6,126

Summary Revenue Account 2009/10	£'000	£'000
Fixed Assets	37,712	
Current Assets	13,990	
Long Term Liabilities	-375,590	
Current Liabilities	-7,168	
Total Assets less Total Liabilities		-331,056
Financed by:		
Notional Accounts	-342,379	
Earmarked Reserves and Provisions	5,197	
General Reserve	6,126	
TOTAL NET WORTH		-331,056

A full copy of the Statement of Accounts is available on our website - www.cheshirefire.gov.uk or by telephoning 01606 868815.

Hi-tech training is the best in Europe



A hi-tech incident command training suite believed to be one of the most advanced in Europe has been officially opened at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's headquarters.

The new state-of-the-art facility is part of an extension at the organisation's Winsford headquarters which also includes new conference and meeting rooms.

The development by the Fire Authority aims to give its fire crews the most realistic training environment possible and incorporates a range of innovative features including:

- Fully customisable virtual reality software capable of recreating any type of fire or major incident
- multi display screens to create a 360 degree view of a major emergency
- advanced CCTV and sound system to allow feedback and add realism.

The new facilities were officially unveiled by the

Duke of Westminster who said: "I am delighted that the Service is leading the way when it comes to the training and development of its firefighters. These facilities will undoubtedly lead to Cheshire being a safer place to live, work and enjoy due to the highly trained staff front line staff."

Chief Fire Officer Paul Hancock added that while there would always be a need for practical training in using equipment to fight fires and rescue people from vehicles, the use of virtual reality facilities was also a vital element in the future.

"Cheshire is now far safer than it used to be with major reductions in the number of fires and incidents we attend. That means far less practical opportunities for staff to develop their skills, so our new suite is essential in providing a completely safe environment for people to become competent in managing a whole range of emergency incidents.

"We are confident this is the best training facility of its kind in the country and probably in Europe and it represents a major investment in the safety of our communities and our staff that work within them."

Fire Authority Chair Cllr. David Topping added that the extension had been completed in under a year and praised the work of staff, main contractors Reed Construction and Rotterdam-based software developer VSTEP who have entered into a partnership with the Service.

New units to protect environment

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has joined forces with the Environment Agency to provide additional protection during incidents

The Service has launched two new Environmental Protection Units, based at Ellesmere Port and Frodsham Community Fire Stations, which will be sent out to all major incidents or those that pose a risk to heritage sites.

The units include a range of specialist equipment including a 6,000 litre flexi tank, inflatable drain blockers, large oil and chemical booms.

Cllr Graham Smith, Vice Chair of the Cheshire Fire Authority said: "This is an excellent partnership project that is really working to protect the communities, businesses, environment and heritage of Cheshire. The support and funding from the Environment Agency has been instrumental in delivering this exciting and important project."

Keith Ashcroft, Environment Agency Area Manager said: "We are delighted to be working with the Service to ensure there is a 'blue light' response to environmental incidents. These state of the art Units contain essential equipment to minimise environmental damage and together with joint training, will ensure continued protection of the environment across Cheshire."



Campaign boosts Public awareness



An exercise aimed at raising people's awareness of what to do in the event of a major emergency proved to be a big success.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service used a training event involving crews dealing with a 'toxic cloud' leaking from a road tanker to highlight the traditional major emergency public messages of 'Go In, Stay In and Tune In'.

The exercise at the Hapsford Services on the M56 attracted a lot of media coverage and in a survey of the local community afterwards, 61% said they were now either fairly or very well informed about what to do in the event of a major emergency. The average level of awareness across Cheshire West and Chester before the event was 12.5 %.

Key aspects of the project included:

- A safety leaflet sent to all 2,500 homes in the immediate area and visits to the local primary school and businesses
- Features on the Service's website and its Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels
- Use of the Service's text messaging and Bluetooth communication channels for mobile phone users.

Key emergency information is set out in the panel alongside. Visit the Service's website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk to download a copy of the full leaflet and to register to receive text alerts if a major incident occurs near you.

Be prepared for emergencies

Cheshire Resilience Forum has launched a pocket sized publication packed with information about what to do in the event of a major emergency.

The chances of you and your family being caught up in a major emergency are low – but it is important you to know what to do if such an event happened. The leaflet gives vital information about preparing for an emergency as well as outlining what to do during a major incident such as flooding, an industrial accident or severe weather conditions.



Copies are available from libraries, leisure centres and other public buildings across Cheshire - or download a copy from the website www.cheshireresilience.org.uk

KEY MESSAGES

GO IN Go Indoors and go upstairs if possible, stay on the side of the building away from the incident.



STAY IN Close all doors and windows. Switch off gas supplies, do not collect children from school until told to do so – they will be taken care of.



TUNE IN Tune into local radio/TV and follow official instructions. Have a wind up or battery powered radio in case of power cut.



Unique garden grows links

Visitors to Runcorn Fire Station had two reasons to celebrate earlier this year as the station marked fifty years of being open at the Heath Road site plus staff, dignitaries and members of the community were on hand to witness the cutting of the tape on the new Runcorn Community Bio-Diversity Garden.

This exciting partnership project, which was the brainchild of firefighter Rob Everson, has come about after 11 months of hard work to both raise the necessary funds and build the garden that has transformed an unused area of the station into a flourishing, fully accessible garden for the whole community to use.

Rob explained: "It's something I'm really passionate about and I've been grateful for the support I've received from the Service and its partners. Particular thanks goes to Tommy Bryan who is the resident expert on site, he gives all his own time for the good of the community and the youngsters who visit the garden."

The innovative project is the first of its kind in the Cheshire area and is thought to be the first in the country established on a fire station.



Over recent months a large number of different community groups have worked on the project including, Respect, Prince's Trust, Fire Cadets and the Halton Youth Offending Teams. Firefighters working alongside the groups have taken the opportunity to educate the youngsters in fire and road safety in addition to assisting the youngster to build self respect and refrain from anti social behaviour activities.

'Skate factor' for Widnes



Firefighters Tony Hughes and Pat McBride judging.

Widnes firefighters took part in an exciting youth engagement project earlier this year when they helped judge a local skateboard and BMX competition.

The event, which was organised by the Service's 'On the Streets' team, attracted a fantastic turnout of more than 200 young people.

Phil Kilgour, Widnes Station Manager, said: "This was a really great event and a fantastic opportunity for us to chat to and engage with local youngsters."

The firefighters who attended got a lot out of the day, although they said that the high standards meant that judging was

certainly not an easy task."

The 'On the Streets' scheme in Halton is a partnership project between the Service and a local charity called Young Addaction.

The team take a proactive approach to engaging with young people especially in areas that have historically been associated with high levels of anti-social behaviour or fire crime.

By working closely with local youngsters the team ensures young people get a say in how their local services are developed - in line with the Service's commitment to the 'Hear By Rights' agreement.

Halton Unitary performance area profile



Fire Authority Members

Halton has the highest proportion of deliberate fires within the Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service area, with almost one third of all deliberate small fires, and one quarter of all deliberate car fires occurring in Halton. Consequently the main focus for the Service in Halton other than safety in the home is the reduction of these types of incidents. It can be seen from the statistics that significant reductions have been made in deliberate fires over the last three years - deliberate primary fires down by 46% and deliberate secondary fires down by 37%.

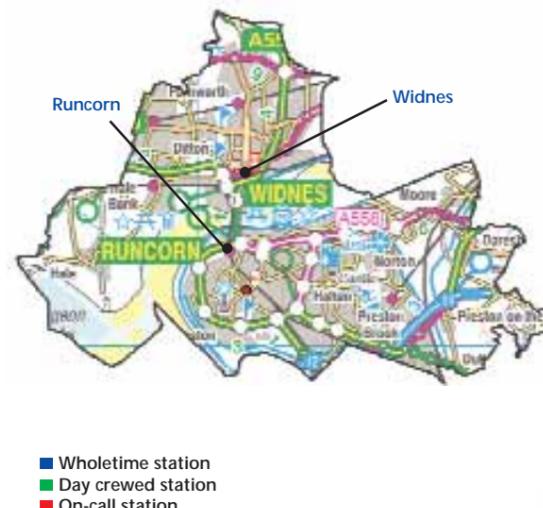
Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service actively engages with the community through Area Forums, community events, Whatever It Takes events, walkabouts, and during Home Safety Assessments. It also works with partners such as the police, registered social landlords, neighbourhood management and council waste management teams to deliver innovative and dynamic initiatives to drive down anti-social behaviour fires which will build on the success of the last three years. The Service is investing heavily in youth education in the borough. As a result of the Phoenix Project, in which fire fighters work closely with schools, they engage not only with the children but build relationships with the school community as a whole. Children have also been involved in the Station's bio-diversity gardens by growing their own vegetables. This encourages healthy eating and gives fire fighters the opportunity to pass on their safety messages.



Key statistics	07/08	08/09	09/10
Deliberate primary fires per 10,000 pop	18.07	15.40	9.77
Deliberate secondary fires per 10,000	77.90	60.42	49.28
Primary fires per 100,000	296.20	261.09	191.24
Fatalities from primary fires per 100,000	1.67	1.67	0
Non-fatal casualties per 100,000	7.53	5.86	5.05

Key contacts

 Richard Gorst Unitary Performance Manager	 Lorna Lucas Unitary Safety Manager	 Liz Thompson Unitary Administration Manager	 Kevin Massey Station Manager - Community Fire Protection
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Your local station

For more information about your local fire station, its opening times and any upcoming open days or other events please visit our website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

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