



# PRAISE FOR SAFETY WORK

**A**n independent review into the effectiveness of the Service's frontline emergency response and community safety work has praised the commitment of staff and highlighted several projects as examples of national best practice.

A team from the national Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) spent a week in Cheshire earlier this year checking how effective the Service is at improving the safety of local communities and responding to emergencies.

The reviewers, who included fire and rescue officers and council representatives from other parts of the country, checked key performance statistics and interviewed a range of staff, senior officers and Fire Authority Members.

The final report said: *"The review team has found that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service is operationally effective, meeting its statutory duties and performing well against its key priorities. It has had a sustained period of improving performance and a strong community risk management focus."*

*"From frontline firefighters to senior management, there is a palpable atmosphere of enthusiasm, commitment and energy to make it one of the best fire services in the country."*

Other strengths highlighted included the Service's use and sharing of data to identify key vulnerable groups, its robust management of performance and its positive approach to equality.

Areas for improvement included:

- reviewing the way in which inspections of commercial premises are carried out and recorded
- systems to ensure effective quality control of community safety activity
- additional training for new Members of the Fire Authority.

"While this review is only one element of the external inspection facing our Service this year, it focuses on frontline services and the issues which matter most to the communities we serve," said Fire Authority Chair Cllr. David Topping.

"The findings demonstrate our innovative approach to identifying and responding to local risks and highlight how this has helped to achieve significant reductions in the number of accidental dwelling fires, the number of injuries and in the amount of arson."

Further external reports are due to be published shortly on other aspects of the Service, including how well resources are used and the contribution made to the work of key partners. Full details will be published on the Service's website.

**Your vital safety guide - p7**

**GO IN**

**STAY IN**

**TUNE IN**

**School girl saves family - p8**



## Joining forces to save lives



Officials from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, the North West Ambulance Service and elected members pictured at the launch of Nantwich's new co-responder scheme - page 3

## Ghana project success

Fire Cadets from Cheshire have been congratulated after helping to build three schools in impoverished African rural communities in the last four years.

The Ghana 2009 party of 14 cadets and six leaders arrived home in early August after a two week trip which saw them complete the building of a school in Adeklu Kordiabe, a village in the Volta region of Ghana.

Previous trips by Cheshire cadets have helped build schools in Akrofu in the Volta region in 2005 and Abordahi in 2007.

Despite the climate and the difficult roads, the latest school was completed on time and opened by the Ghanaian government Education Minister - resulting in national news coverage.

The Cadets also had the opportunity to meet the new Chief Officer of the Ghana National Fire and Rescue Service at the HQ in Accra who revealed that he plans to form five Cadet units in Accra as he has seen the benefits of having young advocates.

The full cost of the trip was funded solely by the cadets and their supporters through a series of fundraising initiatives, while the team also collected books, pens, paper, educational materials and sports equipment to fit out the new classrooms.

"To build three schools in Ghana is a magnificent achievement and it is great to see our cadets scheme being copied internationally," said Fire Authority Chair Cllr. David Topping.

Anyone interested in becoming a fire cadet or a leader should contact their local fire station or call 01244 342 449 for further details.



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**Spotlight on performance - p4-5**

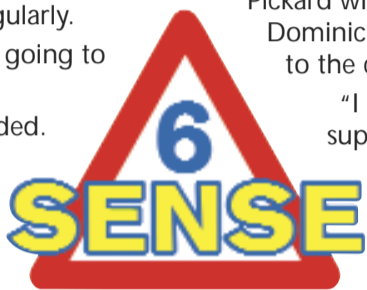
# Sense of success for new safety campaign

**A** new '6 Sense' campaign has been launched by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to promote safety in the home.

The campaign is being promoted through a range of publicity material including posters, banners and leaflets to get across six important steps people can take to prevent fires from happening and also what to do to stay safe if one does break out.

The '6 Sense' steps are:

- 1 **PLAN** - plan your easiest escape route.
- 2 **TEST** - fit a smoke alarm and test regularly.
- 3 **CHECK** - check all appliances before going to bed or leaving the house.
- 4 **CARE** - never leave cooking unattended.
- 5 **CLOSE** - close doors at all times – this can prevent fire spreading.
- 6 **CALL** - get out and call 999 at the first sign of fire.



Phil Hales, the Service's Head of Community Fire Safety said: "These messages were identified as the most important things to remember when either trying to prevent or deal with a fire. We wanted to present them in a clear and memorable way so that people can use them to stay safe."

The campaign was officially launched at this year's Cheshire Show, where hundreds of schoolchildren took part in a special '6 Sense treasure hunt' to find safety clues and win a goodybag of promotional gifts.

Hollyoaks stars Nathalie Emmanuel and John Pickard who play Sasha Valentine and Dominic Reilly have also lent their support to the campaign.

"I am more than happy to help support this important community safety campaign. The messages are simple but they are also life saving," said John.



## New team means business

**A** new team has been set up by the Service to improve the way it provides fire safety advice, education and information to companies and businesses.

The four-strong business liaison team have been established to strengthen links with the business community and ensure employers, employees and the owners of premises know their responsibilities under fire safety legislation.

"In the current economic climate we know how hard it can be for firms

to spare the time and money to attend events and seminars so part of our role is to go out and deliver advice in the workplace," said Business Liaison Manager Mandy Eeles.

"We are also working with local councils and the police to reduce anti social behaviour and arson incidents, as well as advising firms on how they can limit the impact of a major emergency."



Other work by the team includes helping to cut the number of false alarms from automatic fire detection systems which the Service attends and developing links with bodies such as chambers of commerce and specialist business groups like the Asian Council.

To contact the team call 01606 868768 or visit the business safety section of the Service's website – [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

## Cutting down on carbon



**The Service is continuing its campaign to be a greener organisation by joining 68 other local authorities in signing up to the Carbon Trust Scheme.**

The initiative will see the Service cut both its carbon emissions and the cost of its energy bills.

One of the recent projects has been to fit light sensors in stations to make sure that lights go out automatically after people have left the room. This is particularly useful when firefighters have to leave quickly to respond to incidents. The new fittings will continue to be installed as part of an ongoing station refurbishment process.

Another initiative contributing to the reduction of carbon emissions is a major project to rationalise printers and copiers throughout the organisation.

Faxes, copiers and old printers which could only print single-sided have been replaced with new multi-function duplex models. The new models consume less energy than the old machines as well as automatically printing double-sided, which cuts the Service's paper consumption.

## Response panel request

**Residents are being urged to have their say about the way the Service develops by joining 'Response', its dedicated consultation panel.**

The panel has over 800 members but more are needed so that the views of all sections of the community are genuinely represented.

While the Service would like to appeal to all residents to consider joining, it particularly wants to hear from people in the Warrington and Halton areas and from younger residents.

Members of Response take part in up to four postal or online questionnaires a year, with all returns entered into a prize draw for £100 in shopping vouchers to encourage prompt response rates.

Head of Communications Tim Bevington said, "We are committed to consulting and involving local communities in developing our services and the Response Panel provides us with vital constructive feedback."

Application forms for the panel are available on the Service's website – [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk) or by calling Consultation and Communication Officer Jeanette Bate, on 01606 868994 or email - [jeanette.bate@cheshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:jeanette.bate@cheshirefire.gov.uk)



## Seasonal safety

With Summer over, the clocks going back and Bonfire Night just round the corner, 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 25.

**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.

**Eid** – the Service issued advice and guidance to members of the Muslim community during this festival.

**Diwali** – Known as the Festival of Lights, starts this year on October 17 and sees homes decorated with candles and lamps and festival meals prepared. Candle fires increase by over a third during Diwali and over 20 percent of deaths caused by candles occur. 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** – Autumn is recognised as the season of transition and colder nights lead to greater chance of fog forming, so slow down if visibility is poor and allow extra time for journeys.

# Rewards at the double

**The Service's work with local communities has been rewarded with two national awards.**

The Service won an award for its partnership working at the hotly contested Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Awards, as well as winning 'Community Safety Team of the Year' at the Fire Excellence Awards.

Both awards are in recognition of the Service's fire prevention work, including a number of innovative campaigns which have targeted specific sections of the community. "We know our work is improving the safety of people across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington, but it is fantastic to have our efforts formally recognised in this way," said Fire Authority Chair Cllr. David Topping.

The Equality and Diversity award was in recognition

of the Service's 'Vulnerable People Project'. This was a targeted campaign done in partnership with local health services, social care and Age Concern to target and promote services to older people in the community.

It involves firefighters extending their usual Home Safety Assessments for elderly people so that they included a more detailed assessment covering other quality of life issues such as malnutrition, cold weather, severe loneliness, slips trips and falls as well as the financial impact of low benefits. The information provided by the firefighters is then fed back to and acted on by partners.

The Fire Excellence Award judges were also full of praise for the efforts of the Service's Community Safety Team in improving the safety of vulnerable members of the community.



• Staff receive the 'Community Safety Team of the Year' award.

Among work singled out was an innovative 'Student Safety' campaign and the completion of more than 60,000 Home Safety Assessments in a twelve month period.

# New services protect local communities

**Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has launched three new services to make sure it can respond to the changing risks facing local communities.**

Staff continually monitor the incidents and risks the organisation has to deal with and all three new developments are aimed at providing a quicker and more effective response to local communities.

## Water Rescue

Flooding and calls to carry out water rescues are now a recognised risk for the organisation, so the first development has seen the launch of new Water Rescue Units. The units comprise two fully equipped rescue boats and two four wheel drive vehicles which have been located in Chester and Warrington, close to two of the area's largest water systems.

The boats and equipment enable specially trained crews to carry out rescues on the water. This is a new development as previously water rescues were only carried out from the banks of rivers, lakes or canals.



"This represents a real boost to the safety of Cheshire's waterways and puts us in strong position to respond even more effectively to rescue situations and unpredictable environmental events such as flooding," said Paul Hancock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer for Emergency Response.

In addition to the Water Rescue Units, a Rope Rescue Team, located in Knutsford, has received water rescue training. Staff have been equipped with a rescue sled to enable them to carry out water rescues or provide support to the Water Rescue Units. There are now more than 80 Cheshire firefighters who have received this specialist water rescue training. During the past five years the Service has rescued 57 people from water incidents.

## Rapid response to road traffic collisions

The Service now rescues many more people from road traffic collisions (RTCs) than it does from fires and two innovative new vehicles have been launched to provide a faster and more effective response.

The Rapid Response Rescue Units (RRRU) are operating out of Holmes Chapel and Sandbach community fire stations because of the number of calls



to the M6 between Junctions 17 and 18, although they are available to respond to RTCs anywhere in the county.

The units are sent to RTCs as an extra resource in addition to the fire appliances which are normally mobilised. They carry a minimum of two trained staff and have a wide range of equipment so the staff can quickly establish a safe working area for themselves, oncoming crews and agencies, and those involved in the incident.

They also carry the latest hydraulic and manual rescue equipment so casualty care can start straight away.

"We have worked very closely with the Police, the Highways Agency and North West Ambulance in developing the service so that it will help all of us provide a better service for the community," said Mr. Hancock.

"While the main aim is to help us respond more quickly to incidents on the M6, we will also be looking to use the vehicles in other areas during spate conditions or when risks are known to be high."

## Joining forces to save lives

The third new service to be launched recently involves a collaboration with the North West Ambulance Service to deliver a potentially life saving 'Co-Responder' scheme.

The Nantwich Co-responders are firefighters specially trained in basic trauma and critical care. They are on hand to respond to a wide range of medical emergencies and aim to get to patients quickly and deliver vital early intervention care before the paramedics arrive to take over.

The aim is to cut the time taken for a patient to receive initial or 'first strike' treatment, especially in more rural areas when firefighters may be closer to an incident than the responding emergency ambulance.

"We are delighted to be part of this exciting partnership initiative. We know that in critical medical situations every minute can make a difference. Our crews have the training and local knowledge to

respond quickly and deliver early intervention medical treatment. This puts us in an ideal position to support our partners in the North West Ambulance Service to deliver this potentially life saving service," said Mr. Hancock.

Paul Ferguson, Deputy Director of Service Development for North West Ambulance Service, added: "Naturally, there will be occasions when fire service personnel are closer to emergency incidents than ambulance paramedics. We are keen to use the skills of firefighters in those situations where their early intervention can be of assistance to paramedics in achieving a positive outcome for our patients."

The partnership initiative, the first of its kind in Cheshire, was officially launched on September 9 at Nantwich Fire Station. The co-responders team operate from the station using a designated vehicle so there is no reduction in the number of fire appliances available to attend emergencies.

The sorts of calls they deal with could involve people suffering from cardiac arrests, asthmatic attacks, falls, chest pains, breathing difficulties or any other situation where the speed of the response time can impact on someone's survival or recovery.

They will also be called out to attend road traffic collisions where they will work alongside their fire service colleagues, using their additional skills and knowledge.

The distinctly liveried new vehicle carries additional medical equipment needed to carry out critical care, while the co-responders team have a separate uniform bearing the logos of both emergency service partners.

The Nantwich scheme is being monitored with a view to rolling it out to other suitable communities in the Fire Authority area.



# Focus on Performance

## Managing our performance

**C**heshire Fire and Rescue Service's vision is of a Cheshire where there are no preventable deaths, injuries or damage from fires and other emergencies.

To ensure we continue to make progress towards realising this vision, our key services are monitored through a series of performance indicators.

Some of these are reported to the Government who use the figures to monitor the effectiveness of fire and rescue services nationally. Others are used by ourselves to ensure we are improving the safety of local communities and that the organisation is managing its services efficiently and effectively.

This feature summarises the Service's 2008/09 performance in those areas which have the biggest impact on the lives of local residents and businesses - more information is on the Service's website or call 01606 868700.

In recent years we have been recognised as one of the top performing fire and rescue services in the country, and I would like to pay tribute to former Chief Fire Officer Steve McGuirk for his leadership over the last decade as he leaves to take up his new role with Greater Manchester.



Steve McGuirk



David Topping  
Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority

## Health and safety summary

**F**ire and rescue services operate in high risk environments, so it is important that we manage our activities to protect not only the communities we serve but also our employees, volunteers and cadets.

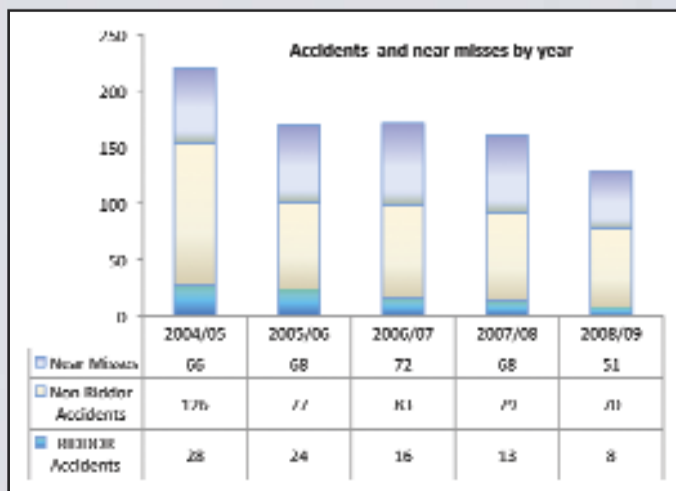
Several recent high profile incidents nationally where firefighters have died have further increased the scrutiny of the management of health and safety in fire and rescue services.

To highlight the Service's commitment, the Chair of the Authority has taken on the new role of Member Champion for Health and Safety (H&S) and he recently co-signed the new corporate H&S policy with the Chief Fire Officer.

We benchmark our performance against other fire and rescue services and following consistent improvements over the last five years, we are now one of the top performing services in the North West as measured by serious accidents and time lost due to accidents or work-related ill health.

The Fire Authority plays a key role in scrutinising H&S performance, receiving copies of audit reports as well as approving and monitoring the implementation of action plans to achieve a continuous improvement in H&S performance.

A key measure of performance is the number of events which have to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). The accident rate is calculated per 100,000 employees - Cheshire's figure is 40% lower than the national fire and rescue service average.



## Reducing fires, deaths and injuries

The Government uses a national indicator known as NI49 to monitor the effectiveness of fire and rescue services in reducing the number of primary fires. These are fires involving casualties, rescue or escape, any fire involving property, or ones where five or more fire engines are required.

The national indicator is made up of three parts:

- number of primary fires per 100,000 population
- number of deaths in primary fires per 100,000 population
- number of non fatal injuries in primary fires per 100,000 population.

In 2008/09 the Service attended 1,860 primary fires - a reduction of 38% since 2005/06. Clearly there are some factors outside the Service's control, such as the weather, which can affect the number of fires. However, our focus on community safety and fire prevention has clearly played a major part in bringing the numbers down.

Comparing Cheshire's performance to a group of 15 similar services across the UK, Cheshire is 7th with 186 primary fires per 100,000 population. The highest performer in the group had 144 and the lowest performer had 250.

Since 2005/06 there has been a 77% reduction in fire-related injuries, down from 122 to 28. This significant reduction puts Cheshire at the top of the league of similar Services with 3 injuries per 100,000 population in 2008/09. The lowest performer of the group had 27 injuries per 100,000 population.

Our success in this area can be attributed largely to our Home Safety Assessment (HSA) programme. In the past two years the Service has carried out over 100,000 HSAs and this has coincided with a significant reduction in accidental dwelling fires and a subsequent reduction in fire-related injuries. While fire-related deaths are down from seven in 2005/06 to six in 2008/09, it is difficult to make significant reductions in this area due to the very small numbers of incidents.

As well as reducing risk of death and injury, our success in bringing down the number of primary fires represents savings to communities of millions of pounds in damage.



\* Denotes audited data

# ce 2008/09



## Tackling arson

Arson covers all kinds of deliberate fires from incidents targeting homes and businesses where people's lives are put at risk, to anti-social behaviour involving litter bins and abandoned cars.

Across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington there are a number of areas which suffer from significant deprivation and social problems. This can lead to many types of anti-social behaviour, including arson.

Progress in reducing the number of deliberate fires is monitored by a national indicator known as NI33. This is made up of two parts:

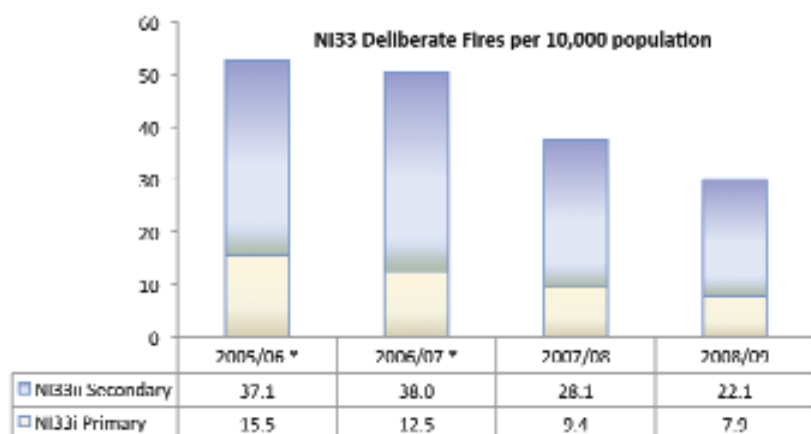
- number of deliberate primary fires per 10,000 population
- number of deliberate small fires per 10,000 population - these are less serious fires, often outdoors and do not involve property or a casualty.



In 2008/09, we attended 791 deliberate primary fires and 2,216 deliberate small fires – these figures represent reductions of 49% and 40% respectively since 2005/06. When compared to similar fire and rescue services, for 2008/09 we were ranked 8th out of 16 with 30 deliberate fires per 10,000 population. The top performing service recorded 11 such incidents per 10,000 population and the lowest had 82.

Several projects are underway to reduce these figures further, including:

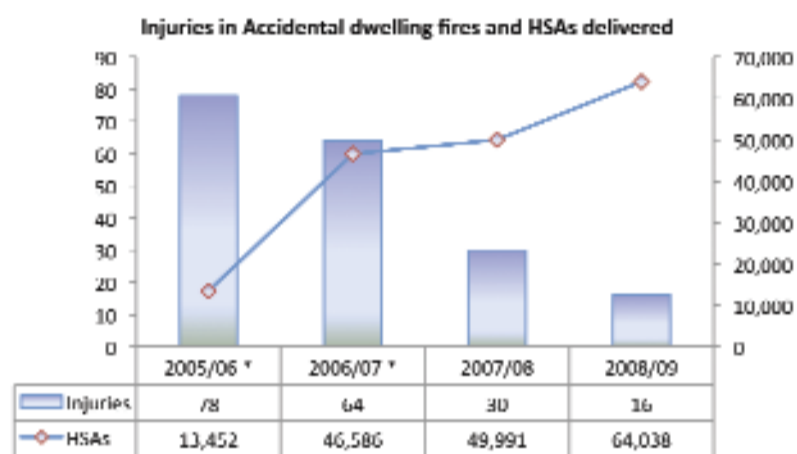
- the removal of accumulated rubbish in areas of high arson activity
- bonfire initiatives including using Targeted Response Vehicles (TRV) to patrol areas to discourage anti-social behaviour
- offering advice to businesses and local councils about arson prevention – particularly in areas with increasing numbers of vacant premises
- working with partners such as the Police and Crimestoppers to ensure arsonists are caught and prosecuted.



\* Denotes audited data

## Home Safety Assessments

This chart demonstrates the link between the increase in Home Safety Assessments (HSAs) in Cheshire and the reduction in accidental dwelling fires. In the last two years, firefighters, community safety advocates and volunteers have completed over 100,000 HSAs.



During 2009/10 another 60,000 HSAs will be completed with the aim of ensuring that 60% of these are carried out in the homes of people recognised as being at particular risk.

To target our HSA work where it is needed most, we have established data sharing agreements with partner agencies such as the health service, social services, local councils and the police.

Cheshire has completed the highest number of HSAs within its group of similar fire and rescue services – 14% more than the next best performer. In a document produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) earlier this year, Cheshire was recognised nationally for its 'innovative work' in this area.

The report highlighted the benefits that this type of prevention work has brought about so far nationally, for example, a reduction in loss of life and injuries and the economic benefits of 'reducing loss of buildings, contents and disruption to normal life - estimated at between £926 million and £1,943 million'.



Denotes audited data

# Your 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](http://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.

Members also attend the Service's regular performance meetings which are held in each of the council areas to monitor the effectiveness of the organisation in improving the safety of local communities. Local residents will have the chance to attend two of these meetings each year when plans and performance are being developed and monitored.

## Halton

-  Stef Nelson
-  Rob Polhill
-  Linda Redhead





## Cheshire West & Chester

-  Derek Bateman
-  Pam Booher
-  Keith Musgrave
-  Eleanor Johnson











Map shows the locations of all Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's stations

## Warrington

-  Mike Biggin
-  Hans Mundry
-  John Joyce
-  Colin Oliver

## Cheshire East

-  Jim Crockatt
-  Rod Fletcher
-  Bill Livesley
-  Gillian Merry
-  Margaret Simon
-  Chris Thorley
-  David Topping
-  Jacqui Weatherill

# Summary of accounts 2008/09

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 2009.

### Summary Revenue Account

The 2008-09 Fire Authority budget was £40.7m. The total expenditure incurred was £40.6m, an underspend of £0.1m which has been added to 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.

Recent history demonstrates that the Authority must be prepared to meet the costs of large scale incidents whether they are due to the impact of climate change such as major flooding, the threat of terrorism or more conventional large scale incidents.

### Summary Balance Sheet

The Summary Balance Sheet shows the end of year position for the Fire Authority. The most obvious point to note is that there is a net liability of £217m – most significant in arriving at this figure is a liability of £254m which recognises all our future pension liabilities.

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 2008/09	£'000	£'000
Community Fire Safety	5,617	
Firefighting and Rescue Operations	35,041	
Corporate And Democratic Core	736	
Non Distributed Costs	1,019	
<b>Net Cost of Service</b>		<b>42,413</b>
Other income, expenditure and adjustments	-1,808	
<b>Amount to be met by Govt Grant and Local Taxation</b>		<b>40,605</b>
Revenue Support Grant and Local Taxation	-17,426	
Council Tax	-23,282	
<b>Net General Fund (Surplus)\Deficit</b>		<b>-103</b>
Balance on General Fund Brought Forward	-6,065	
<b>Balance on General Fund Carried Forward</b>		<b>-6,168</b>

Summary Balance Sheet 2008/09	£'000	£'000
Fixed Assets	34,716	
Current Assets	14,578	
Long Term Liabilities	-261,179	
Current Liabilities	-5,064	
<b>Total Assets less Total Liabilities</b>		<b>-216,949</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>		
Notional Accounts	-227,266	
Earmarked Reserves and Provisions	4,149	
General Reserve	6,168	
<b>TOTAL NET WORTH</b>		<b>-216,949</b>

A full copy of the Statement of Accounts is available on our website - [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01606 868815.

# Public to play part in toxic cloud 'alert'

**F**amilies and pupils are being encouraged to play their part in a major exercise aimed at testing people's awareness of what to do in the event of a major emergency.

The 'Shelter Day' is scheduled for Tuesday October 20 and the event will take the form of a 'toxic cloud' leaking from a road tanker at Hapsford Services on the M56 affecting the nearby village of Elton.

The exercise is being led by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and crews will be using specialist protective equipment and decontamination kit to rescue the driver and tackle the leak of phosphoric acid.

The 'gas cloud' will go over Ince Marshes but will be sufficiently close to the village of Elton for the residents to be required to take shelter and follow the traditional safety message of 'Go In, Stay In and Tune In'. There are also plans to involve the local primary school and library on the day.

In the event of a real emergency, local radio stations would broadcast safety updates but they will not be doing so for the training event on October 20 to avoid unnecessary panic.

Text messages, however, will be sent out to people registered with the Service's website - [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk) - while a new Bluetooth message broadcasting system will be piloted to push details out to people in the area with mobile phones.

"Our staff have regular training exercises to make sure their skills are up to date, but this is the first time we have used an event to involve the local community and raise their awareness," said Fire Authority Chair Cllr. David Topping.

As well as the Service, there is also support for the Shelter Day from other members of the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Local Resilience Forum, the body responsible for ensuring plans and resources are in place to respond to major emergencies.

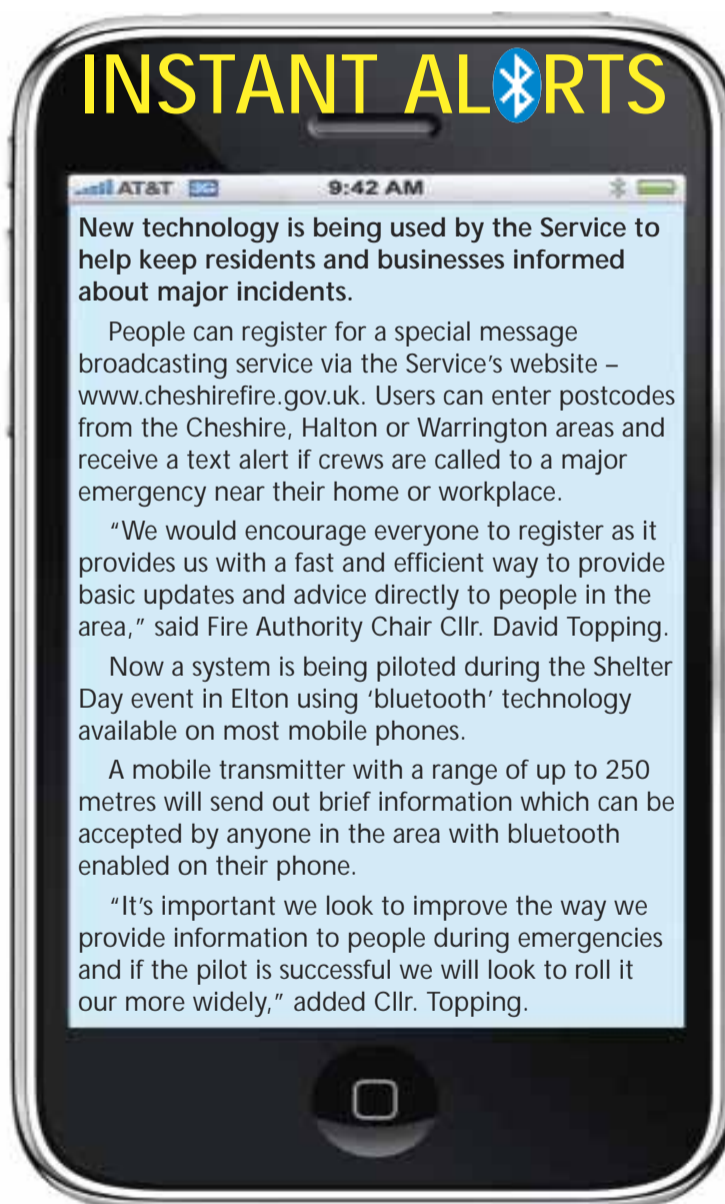
"The Forum also has to ensure communities know what to do in the event of a major emergency and that there are systems to warn and inform people.

"We intend to use this Shelter Day as a way of increasing public awareness not just in the Elton area but throughout Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. I would urge people to register on the Service's website for text alerts and to cut out and keep the information featured on this page," added Cllr. Topping.

Copies of the full leaflet are on the website and can be obtained in other languages and formats. Call 01606 868700 for further details.



Crews rescue a 'casualty' during a previous exercise



## Project to boost safety of migrant communities

A joint project to improve the safety of migrant communities in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington is to share nearly £500,000 from a special Government fund.

The bid was submitted by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the four local strategic partnerships in its area and will see the organisation training seven migrant workers to provide safety advice and support for their communities during the next 12 months.

Other key proposals include extending advice and support services such as accommodation, welfare, tackling hate crime, access to employment and translation and interpreting.

The national Migration Impacts Fund has granted an initial £476,388 to the project with a further £470,425 provisionally awarded to continue the project in 2010/11.

"People who have recently migrated to our area tend to be more at risk and establishing specialist community safety advocates will improve their safety and also help them to access local services," said Mark Cashin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer for Community Risk Reduction.

## Cheshire Resilience

GO IN

STAY IN

TUNE IN

Major emergencies can be caused by anything from flooding and transport accidents to chemical spills and terrorism. In nearly every case you can help by following these three simple steps.

### 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.



Check local emergency websites for updates - see contact details below.

### Toxic Chemical or Radiation Release

If you live near to a large industrial site you will be told if there are special emergency arrangements for your area. The following advice also applies in the event of a major transport incident, eg. A tanker spillage. When warned of an incident you should:

- Go indoors • Bring all pets inside • Close all windows and air vents • Switch off air conditioning or ventilation • Cover food • Extinguish naked flames • Do not go outside unless told to do so by Emergency Services • Do not collect children from school until told to do so - they will be taken care of.

### Help yourself by being prepared

It always pays to be prepared. Follow this advice to help to you cope with an emergency. Pack an emergency kit containing:

- a torch
- a wind up or battery powered radio
- a supply of ready to eat food
- a supply of bottled water
- have medication and prescriptions in a small bag - take it with you!
- a list of useful phone numbers
- your mobile phone and charger
- spare batteries
- know how to switch off your gas, electricity and water supply



### For more information and contacts

Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service 01606 868700  
[www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

Cheshire Constabulary 01244 350000  
[www.cheshire.police.uk](http://www.cheshire.police.uk)

Environment Agency Floodline 0845 9881188  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

# Advice helps girl to save family

**F**ire chiefs have commended a young girl from Sandbach who used advice given during a safety talk at her school to lead her family to safety and to provide vital information to 999 operators and firefighters.

Twelve-year-old Halah Al Mashta dialled 999 after a fire broke out in one of the bedrooms at her house on Offley Road in Sandbach earlier this year.

On arrival, firefighters found the bedroom to be well alight but that all occupants of the property which included three children aged nine, four and two and the children's grandmother had been led to safety by the eldest daughter who is just 12 years old.

Halah, from Iraq, translated crucial safety information to her grandmother who speaks very

little English and also helped firefighters at the scene.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Mark Cashin said, "The fire officers who attended this fire at the time told me that Halah was a very brave and helpful young girl and a huge help to both our control operators and firefighters.

"I commended Halah at the time for her quick actions which undoubtedly saved the lives of her brothers, sisters and grandmother. I was also delighted to hear that Halah knew what to do as firefighters had visited her school previously to give a fire safety talk."

Following the incident, firefighters carried out a home safety assessment and fitted a smoke alarm downstairs at the property and have also visited neighbours of the family to give fire safety advice.



## Couple help hit safety target

A couple from Goostrey received a surprise presentation after their home became the 60,000th to receive a Home Safety Assessment (HSA) from the Service in the last financial year.

The organisation hit its challenging target of carrying out 60,000 HSAs, which involve the provision of free fire safety advice and free smoke detectors, on the last day of the financial year. Fire Safety Advocates Alnoor Bhaloo and Lorna Thompson carried out the last HSA at the home of Lt Col David McLellan OBE DL, and his wife Mary, of Brooklands Road, Goostrey.

As well as fire safety advice and two smoke alarms, the couple also received a 'contact assessment' which can provides access to a whole range of support services, including help

and advice from Age Concern. Deputy Chief Fire Officer Mark Cashin said: "Reaching this 60,000 target was the ultimate goal for the Service for this year and brings us closer to our vision of zero preventable deaths in the area.

"HSAs combine advice on fire and other safety issues with the fitting of free smoke alarms. The Service intends to carry out another 60,000 in 2009/10, while ensuring that 60% of these are from defined high risk groups.

"It is vital that we show we not only carry out large number of visits but that these visits are having a real impact on saving people's lives."

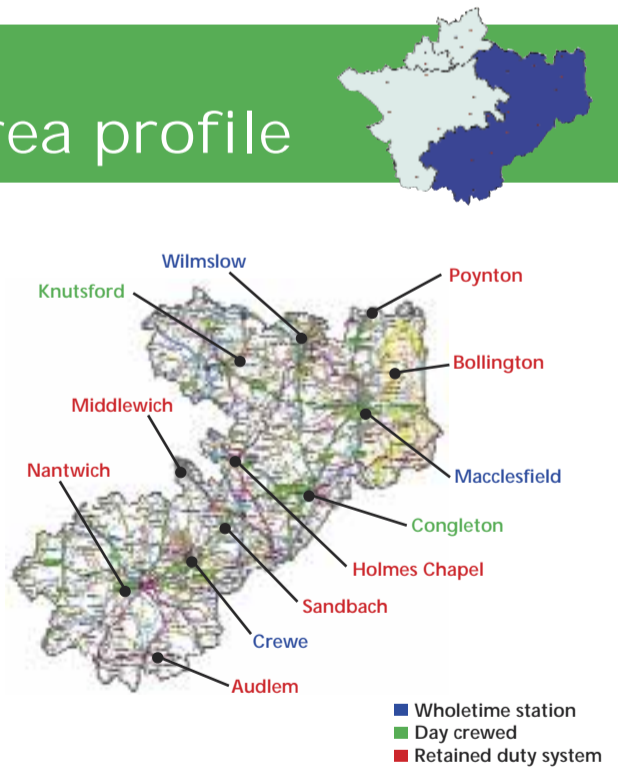
Fire Authority Chair Cllr. David Topping added: "This was a truly outstanding achievement by staff across the Service and I know their work is making a real difference to the safety of our communities."

## Cheshire East Unitary performance area profile

Over the last three years Cheshire East has seen a significant reduction of 44% in the number of deliberate primary fires – more serious incidents involving property.

There has also been a 46% cut in the number of small deliberate fires over the same period. One of the biggest factors has been extensive collaboration with the police to reduce anti-social behaviour incidents and a comprehensive programme of youth engagement activities such as Fire Cadets, RESPECT, Kooldown and Princes Trust.

Fire-related injuries have reduced by 59% in the area since 2006/07 – mainly due to fire prevention initiatives such as Home Safety Assessments targeted at the most vulnerable members of the community. By data sharing with other agencies, it has been possible to identify those most at risk of a fire in the home and give them priority.



Key statistics	06/07	07/08	08/09
Deliberate primary fires per 10,000 pop	9.56	6.42	5.33
Deliberate secondary fires per 10,000	19.80	13.17	10.61
Primary fires per 100,000	232.22	184.49	167.21
Fatalities from primary fires per 100,000	1.18	2.12	0.79
Non-fatal casualties per 100,000	12.98	4.51	5.28

### 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](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

**Key contacts**

 Alex Waller Unitary Performance Manager	 Lorraine Page Unitary Safety Manager	 Bev Dyer Unitary Administration Manager	 Ian Swan Station Manager - Community Fire Protection
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## Families urged to help cut chimney fires

Firefighters are urging Cheshire East residents to get their chimneys swept to avoid fires breaking out.

Their warning comes after an increase in the number of chimney-related incidents. Between January 2008 and September 2008 crews were called out to deal with 28 chimney related incidents. This figure more than doubled to 64 in 2009.

Alex Waller, the Service's Unitary Performance Manager for Cheshire East said: "With the colder months looming, people start using their open fires again. To keep you and your family safe you must ensure that your chimney is regularly swept. I would also stress the importance of having a properly fitted smoke alarm."

How often you have your chimney swept depends on the type of fuel you burn. The following is a useful guide:

- Smokeless coals - at least once a year
- Wood - up to four times a year
- Bituminous coal - twice a year
- Oil - once a year.

Crews around Cheshire East joined forces with the National Association of Chimney Sweeps and The Guild of Master Sweeps for the Chimney Fire Safety week in September. The Government campaign urges householders to ensure their chimney is safe by having it swept by a registered chimney sweep.

A safety leaflet has been produced for all households with a working fire – for details and further advice visit our website.

