Community Fire Safety:
Children & Young People Strategy.
2009 - 2011
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Introduction

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) is making a significant contribution to the Community Risk Reduction of the communities of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington.

In 2003, Communities and Local Government (then ODPM) published a report on the findings of a review into ‘The Fire Service working with young people in the community’. The review is based on questionnaires completed by all 61 fire services in the UK, and additional qualitative research.

The National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service, the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 and the Service’s responsibility under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have all confirmed the continued need and responsibility for the Service to proactively support children and young people.

90% of all Fire and Rescue Services now work within schools, providing fire safety and fire prevention education. They carry out a range of other activities, both in-school and out of school with young people. These activities aim to reduce anti-social behaviour and provide positive role models, as well as promoting the recruitment of fire-fighters from the community that are currently under-represented in the fire service.

The Service will work with all children and young people in order to assist in making them aware of the dangers of fire, arson and road traffic collisions. Through the Service’s range of programmes the Service will inform them of the risks to themselves and their community caused by anti-social and careless behaviour; and the risk to service personnel through false and malicious calls.

The Service will provide opportunities for Children and Young People to work with its staff and help them to become more able, safer and responsible citizens.

This strategy underpins the Authority’s vision of:

“A Cheshire where there are no preventable deaths or injuries and where there is no preventable damage from fires and other emergencies”.

The Strategic Context

The Children Act 2004 Section 10 provides that every Children’s Services Authority must promote cooperation between relevant partners to improve the well-being of children in its area. This is supported by the “Every Child Matters” agenda.

Whilst the Service is not itself a Children Services Authority, it does work in close partnership with the all four local authorities in its area.
The Service’s diversionary initiatives will provide outlets for the development of children and young people in a safe environment, and help embed a sense of responsibility, citizenship and a sense of community cohesion.

The Service’s work with children and young people will underpin the following key areas of service delivery:

- The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
- The Authority’s Equality and Diversity Plans
- The Community Risk Reduction Functional Plan
- The Community Fire Safety Department Plan
- The Community Fire Safety and Unitary Performance local plans
- The Authority’s Financial Plans

**External Influences**

The key external influences that underpin this strategy and the Service’s youth engagement programmes are detailed in the following pages.

**The Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004**

All fire and rescue authorities have a statutory duty under Section 6 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to promote fire safety, which includes working with other agencies and local partners to create safer communities. Sections 5, 11 and 12 of the Act also give them wide powers to provide a service which responds to local priorities.\(^1\)

**The Fire and Rescue Services National Framework 2008 - 2011**

The National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service requires all Fire and Rescue Authorities to have regard to the Strategy in all work with children and young people. The National Framework will form the basis of all future performance assessments of Fire and Rescue Authorities. But it will be for fire and rescue authorities to decide what type and extent of work with children and young people is appropriate for their areas, in accordance with the local priorities identified in their Integrated Risk Management Plan.\(^2\)

**Fire and Rescue Service Strategy for Children and Young People 2006/2010**

The National strategy is a four year high level strategy intended to deliver effective reduction of fire risk and fire crime, and sets out:

- All aspects of Fire and Rescue Services’ involvement with children and young people.

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\(^1\) Fire and Rescue Service Strategy for Children and Young People 2006/2010 DCLG Publications

\(^2\) Fire and Rescue Service Strategy for Children and Young People 2006/2010 DCLG Publications
• That this work is central to the Services’ statutory duty to promote fire safety.
• This work is key to delivering Public Services Agreement targets for 2010 to reduce accidental fire deaths in the home and incidents of arson.
• The Service has a role in helping disadvantaged young people, reducing health inequalities and preventing crime.

Integrated Risk Management Plan

The Service’s Integrated Risk Management Plan defines the approach which will be taken by the Service in managing the risk to the community from fire and other emergencies. This Children and Young People Strategy underpins the Authority’s Integrated Risk Management Plan and supports the Authority’s vision, mission aims and objectives.

Every Child Matters

“Every Child Matters, Change for Children” is the approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The Government’s aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to be able to:

• Be healthy;
• Stay safe;
• Enjoy and achieve;
• Make a positive contribution; and
• Achieve economic well-being.

This means that organisations involved with providing services to children from hospitals and schools, to fire and rescue services, police and voluntary groups will share information and work together, to protect children and young people from harm, and to help them achieve what they want in life.

Children and young people will have far more say about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively. Over the next few years, every local authority will be working with its partners, through the Children’s Trusts, to find out what works best for children and young people in its area and put in place plans to deliver against their findings.

Children’s Trusts

Within each of the 4 Unitary Authority areas there is a Children’s Trust Board and the Service’s aim is to be represented on each of these four Boards. They have been set up under the Children Act 2004 in accordance with the guidance of ‘Every Child Matters’. This requires that each local authority appoints a Director of Children’s Services and that this person be accountable for ensuring that a single Children and Young People’s Plan is produced for each area. The Service needs to be represented on these boards to be able to support the Children’s Services to develop local plans and contribute to
local youth and crime strategies and Local Area Agreements. This strategy underpins these Children and Young peoples plans.

**Local Safeguarding Boards**

Children can only be safeguarded properly if the key agencies work effectively together. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are designed to help ensure that this happens. The objective of LSCBs is to coordinate and to ensure the effectiveness of their member agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The service is a partner agency\(^3\) of the LSCB and will work closely with the Local Safeguarding Boards to ensure the delivery mechanisms of this strategy support their aims.

**Youth Matters**

The Youth Matters Green Paper (2005) set out a vision of integrated youth support services helping all young people achieve the five ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes. The green paper says that this should be achieved through:

- Young person-centred delivery of information;
- Advice and guidance;
- Support;
- Development opportunities; and
- Positive activities.

Targeted youth support is central to achieving, and bringing to life this vision for vulnerable children and young people. Targeted support will identify those who are most likely to need help, and the opportunities that are available to help them from a number of different agencies. These agencies will provide a timely, coordinated and effective response. This response will give vulnerable children and young people the chance to be safe, enjoy their child and teenage years, build positive futures and avoid a range of serious potential problems.

**The Delivery Strategy**

To enable better targeting and use of resources this Strategy is broken down into three strands, **Indirect Engagement, Direct Intervention** and **Partnerships & Commissioning**.

**Indirect Engagement** - This work is the general education and awareness conducted by Fire Fighters, Community Safety Advocates and Volunteers using generic fire safety messages, or diversionary activities such as school visits and Fire Cadets. The young people engaged with these programmes and activities are normally not those who have, or are highly likely to offend, but the school aged population at large. The Service recognises that peer to

\(^3\) [http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/children/LSCB/Partners.htm](http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/children/LSCB/Partners.htm)
peer learning can be a key part of a young person’s development, and that some young people who are at a higher risk will be part of the indirect engagement programmes.

**Direct Interventions** - This is the work done directly with young offenders and those at a higher risk or more likely to commit fire crime and anti-social behavioural offences. The Service will use trained and experienced Youth Leaders and Volunteers to deliver these programmes. They will work with young people and partner agencies on diversionary programmes and activities designed to prevent and deter, rehabilitate and resettle. These activities will require a higher level of training and specialisation and will use the principle of providing positive role models and practical activities designed to change behaviour allowing young people to reflect on the consequences of their actions.

**Partnerships & Commissioning** - Capacity for maintaining current levels of activity is limited and challenging. Supporting and working closely with our partners will produce an effective response to youth and community need. Through evaluation and data analysis we will provide evidence of need to support opportunities to work with other agencies in providing sustainable solutions through a value for money approach. Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are at the centre of this strategy. The Service will continue to forge partnerships and be proactive in identifying and engaging with key stakeholders that will support the Service in the delivery of its own, and its partner’s objectives. This work will be carried out in accordance with the Service’s **Partnership Policy** and **Commissioning Policy**.

Throughout these three strands of work the emphasis will be to develop youth engagement programmes which are:

- Fit for Purpose
- Targeted in their delivery
- Meet the needs of the community
- Family Focused\(^4\) (*In line with the governments ‘Think Family Policy’*)
- Support Fire Fighters in their work with children and young people
- Support the Service’s objectives
- Support Local Area Agreement (LAA) priorities
- Support Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) statutory indicators
- Support partners and stakeholders agendas through a holistic approach via the common reference vehicle of Every Child Matters
- Incorporate the CLG National Strategy for FRS working with Children and Young People
- Deliver Value for Money.

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\(^4\) [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/think_families/think_family_life_chances_report.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/think_families/think_family_life_chances_report.pdf)
Further detail on the programmes the Service will deliver can be found in Appendix A

**A Targeted Approach**

The Service, when planning and implementing its Children and Young People engagement programmes will be intelligence led and will put in place processes and procedures for the collection of internal and external data. The Service will work with other stakeholders, and use risk based data in order to identify those Children and Young People who are deemed to be most at risk. More detail can be found about this approach in the Service’s *Community Fire Safety Targeting Policy and Intelligence Strategy*. An overview of the risk based approach can be found in Appendix B.

**Safeguarding Children and Young People**

The Service accepts its responsibility as a public Authority to ensure that all the children, young people and vulnerable young adults it interacts with are kept safe.

The Service recognises that the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable young adults is paramount; and regardless of age, ability, gender, religious belief, racial or ethnic origin they have equal rights of protection from harm or abuse. The Service has a duty of care when its employees and volunteers are working with children and young adults, and will do everything as far as is reasonably practicable to provide a safe and caring environment in all planned Service activities. The Service will act responsibly to ensure that any concerns encountered in the course of work undertaken by the Service are referred promptly to the relevant Children’s Service Authority if necessary. This will be in accordance with the Service *Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Young Adults policy*.

The Service will comply with all the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) registration where applicable in accordance with the Service’s *Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Young Adults policy* and *Criminals Record Bureau (CRB) policy*.

**Review**

All activity with Children and Young People carried out by the Service will be reviewed on a regular basis. Reports on progress against Children and Young Peoples objectives will be reported annually to Policy Board and quarterly to the DCFO, Community Risk Reduction within the corporate planning framework. These reports will be submitted by the Area Manager for Community Safety and will include;

- Performance against relevant indicators
- Performance against the objectives set in the departmental plan
- Performance against the financial plan
In addition to the corporate reports the Youth Engagement Group Manager will provide a 6 monthly report to the DCFO, Community Risk Reduction and an Annual report to Policy Board on performance in the following programmes:

- Princes Trust Team Programme;
- Cadet Units; and
- Youth Diversionary Programmes.

These reports will include performance against:

- Financial aspects of the programmes;
- Recruitment and retention rates on the programmes;
- Outcomes in relation to employment, education and training; and
- Equality monitoring of programmes.

**Audit**

The Service’s Children and Young people programmes will be delivered within the framework of Health and Safety guidance and control policies set out by the Service. These policies include the *Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Young Adults policy, CRB policy, Cadets policy, PTT policy* and *Education and Awareness policy*.

Each of these policies sets out the person responsible, the method and the frequency of the audits to ensure compliance with control measures and procedures. These audits will form part of an annual audit report which will be submitted to the DCFO, Community Risk Reduction. The Area Manager, Community Safety is responsible for ensuring the audits are completed and reported back to the DCFO.

**Conclusion**

This Strategy is intended to guide the Service and develop a strategic overview of work with children and young people. It should also help the service to develop local partnerships and contribute to local youth and crime strategies and Local Area Agreements.

Each year within its planning framework the Service will review what type and extent of work with children and young people is appropriate for the service. This will be done in accordance with the priorities identified in the IRMP. It may be right for elements of the Strategy to be delivered with or by local partners, rather than directly by the Service.

The Strategy will be underpinned by a suite of policies and procedures that will identify specific actions by officers and other key stakeholders at a local level to support the Authority in implementing this Strategy.
The strategy is aimed at everyone in the Service who is concerned with the safety, education and wellbeing of children and young people and with reducing the impact of fire and fire crime.
Appendix A

Children and Young Peoples Delivery Programmes

Indirect Engagement

The Service’s Key Stage II visits to primary schools over the last 15 years have had a significant positive impact on young children aged 9 to 11 years old and their families. This programme of visits to over 300 primary schools every year will continue to be delivered.

School education programmes are designed to deal with a number of issues that young people face. They not only deal with fire related issues but also teach young people about drug abuse, bullying, citizenship and a number of other challenges that young people face.

Fascination with fire and inappropriate fire behaviour by children and young people has long been a contributory factor to dwelling fires, other building fires such as schools, garages, sheds and other small fires. The Service will continue to provide awareness support through its FIRESAFE awareness programme. This programme will provide support and education for the youngsters, their families and the agencies that work and support them.

Recognition of the link between Arson and Young People (those responsible for fire crime and anti-social behaviour) has been made and our youth initiatives will tackle the root cause.

Work placement, student placement and work experience programmes give young people the opportunity to discover work experience within the Service. The work placement will be designed to develop the individual and assist the individual in understanding the structures of employment, making them more employable.

Direct interventions

Children, Young People and Vulnerable Young Adult engagement programmes deliver targeted support to young people from disaffected and disadvantaged backgrounds. The Service will continue to plan, deliver, implement and evaluate all the direct intervention projects that it delivers.

The Prince’s Trust Team is a 12 week personal development programme for disadvantaged 16 to 25 year olds, designed to build confidence and self esteem. The programme gives young people who attend the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications.

Fire Cadets provide an opportunity for young people between the ages of 13 and 18 to engage in positive activities set in a controlled environment and managed by the Service’s volunteers. The programme is for local young people and it develops them as a team and as individuals. It gives the young
people who attend an insight into the Service and supports them in their personal development.

RESPECT (Reducing Exclusion Starting Positive Engagement with Children Together) is a tailored, targeted programme working with schools and is an alternative education provision for 13 to 16 year olds who have been or are at risk of exclusion from school. This programme works with partners to deliver an intense challenging programme with the aim of returning the young people back to mainstream education with a greater understanding of the consequences of their actions. The RESPECT project comes to the end of its life in October 2009. A new form of Youth Diversionary Programme will incorporate RESPECT, Kooldown and Get-Up-Get-Out programmes.

All of the above programmes will be supported by a suite of policy and procedural documents that will provide guidance and information that will enable them to be delivered consistently to an agreed standard. These policies and procedures will set out the methodology for review and audit of the Services Children and Young people programmes.

**Partnerships**

A range of partners both local and regional will have an interest in this strategy, these will include:

- Local Authorities, Children’s Trusts, Education and Social Care
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Local Safeguarding Boards
- Police Services
- Youth Offending Teams
- Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS)
- Local Criminal Justice Boards
- Primary Care Trusts
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Government Offices
- Businesses
- Third sector organisations

This list of partners is not endless; it will be organic in nature and will expand and contract as and when community needs dictate.

The diagram below shows the Service’s children and young people engagement delivery model starting with general education and awareness (green) up to prolific persistent offenders (red). The youth programmes that the Service delivers have been placed in order taking into account the young people and partners it works with. These programmes are either Indirect Engagement or Direct Interventions and cut across the need to prevent, divert and educate young people. Partnerships underpin all programmes that the Service will deliver.
CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT DELIVERY MODEL

DIRECT

PREVENT
- Action Prevention Programme APP
- Prince's Trust Team
- Fire Safe Programme
- Get up and Get Out
- Kooldown
- RESPECT
- Drive Survive
- Team Building
- Safe and Sound

DIVERT
- Work Experience
- Station and PDG Diversionary Cadets
- Key Stage 2 Visits to Schools
- School Talks

EDUCATE
- Generic Safety Messages
- Education & Awareness

ENSURE
- Policies - Staff Training CRB checks and EVALUATION

GOOD PRACTICE
- Evaluation and Dissemination of Best Practice

INDIRECT

PARTNERSHIPS

PROGRAMMES
## An overview of the risk based approach

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<th>How it will be used</th>
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<td><strong>Children and Young Peoples Plans (CYPPs)</strong></td>
<td>CYPP are produced by each of the 4 Children’s trusts in CWAC, CE, Halton and Warrington. They set out the strategic objectives for Children’s Services in each of the 4 unitary authority areas.</td>
<td>This will provide the Service with information which will be used to target and deliver its Children and Young Peoples programmes</td>
<td>It will be used to identify the priorities for local children’s services to underpin the Service’s plans and ensure a coherent joined up approach to delivering children’s services</td>
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<td><strong>Focus Wards</strong></td>
<td>These are wards within the Service’s area which have been identified as having a higher rate of dwelling fire injuries. This is achieved through the Service’s Rapid Risk Calculator.</td>
<td>This will provide the Service with information which will be used to target and deliver community safety programmes.</td>
<td>It will be used to identify the homes of children and young people involved in fire situations.</td>
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<td><strong>Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC)</strong></td>
<td>This is a National Fire and Rescue IT tool provided by the CLG to assist in refining and developing the IRMP.</td>
<td>It provides management knowledge and assists in the assessment of the distribution of risk in the Service’s area and records the resources the Service has determined are required to deal with risk in individual risk areas. This information also provides information about deliberately started fires.</td>
<td>It will be used to support the strategic development of business planning and in particular support the IRMP process. It will also be used to target Children and Young People programmes in areas where it is identified that these young people are starting these fires.</td>
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<td><strong>Vulnerable Localities Index</strong></td>
<td>The Vulnerable Localities Index (VLI) was developed to help identify priority areas for attention. The VLI is a composite measure that does not just identify high crime neighbourhoods but was designed to help identify the worst affected communities for breakdown tension and fragmentation.</td>
<td>It provides the Service and its partner agencies with information about anti-social behaviour activity within communities.</td>
<td>It will be used to target intervention activities and programmes in order to drive down anti social activities inclusive of small deliberate fire setting.</td>
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<td><strong>Children and Vulnerable Adults</strong></td>
<td>This is information about children and vulnerable adults and is received through the Service’s attendance at the Safeguarding Boards in each of the 4 Unitary Authorities. It is supplied through a multi agency approach to identifying those more at risk within the communities.</td>
<td>This data will provide the Service with an ability to identify those who are more at risk from fire and other injuries in the home and in the community.</td>
<td>This information will be used to prioritise the Service’s community safety responses into the communities it services and work in collaboration with others to provide ‘joined up’ solutions.</td>
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<td><strong>Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference</strong></td>
<td>This is a Police led multi agency networking conference aimed at discussing those people who have been identified as being at risk from physical, mental, emotional and financial abuse or neglect by others (domestic violence).</td>
<td>This will provide the Service with data which identifies those who are more vulnerable from the threat of injury from fire and other causation factors.</td>
<td>This information will be used by the Service to target its community safety resources at those who are deemed to be at a greater risk from harm than other members of the community. This is particularly so for children and young people within the context of this strategy.</td>
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<td><strong>Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships</strong></td>
<td>This statutory multi agency information sharing group under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act has combined community activity data collected and is analysed by a professional analyst.</td>
<td>This data is about crime and anti social behaviour and trend analysis.</td>
<td>This information will provide the Service with the ability to focus its resources into known areas of community concern. Particularly those which involve children and young people within the context of this strategy.</td>
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<td><strong>Focus Groups</strong></td>
<td>These are groups of people from within the community. They can be made up of representatives from the community itself, public, private and third sector representatives.</td>
<td>It will provide the Service with intimate community knowledge which has been gained from first hand experience by those who live, work or visit these communities.</td>
<td>This information will be used to support directed specific children and young people community safety engagement.</td>
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