

**NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
FIRE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL REPORT**

DATE:	31 st January 2005
REPORT BY:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To inform Members of the number of operational personnel currently on detached duties.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 While discussing retained recruitment under urgent matters at the Executive Panel meeting of the 18th October 2004 a request was made that the number of detachments undertaken by operational personnel should be reported at this, the following, Executive Panel meeting.
- 1.2 Detachment is the term commonly used within the Service to describe when an individual member of staff temporarily undertakes duty of an equivalent grade at an alternative workplace or a higher grade at an alternative or the same workplace.
- 1.3 Detachments may take place for a number of reasons such as covering long term sickness (in excess of 28 days), a Fire Service College residential course (of 4 or more weeks duration), or a vacancy. It may also be appropriate for an individual's long term career development to expose them to higher levels of management. This can develop an individual's competence in a wide range of differing skills

2. **DETACHMENTS**

- 2.1 As a reference point for the table below the following list represents the number of wholetime operational personnel at each level within the Service:-
 - Firefighter – 143 (All based at wholetime fire stations)
 - Crew Manager – 50 (48 based at wholetime fire stations)
 - Watch Manager – 47 (22 based at wholetime fire stations)
 - Station Manager A – 17
 - Station Manager B – 14
 - Group Manager A – 8

- 2.2 The table below shows the number of personnel currently detached as of 17th January 2005.

Number	Substantive Role	Detachment Role	Reason for Cover
24	Firefighter	Crew Manager	7 x Sickness 3 x F. S. College Course 12 x Vacancy 2 x Development
15	Crew Manager	Watch Manager	3 x Sickness 2 x F. S. College Course 10 x Vacancy
2	Crew Manager	Station Manager A	1 x F. S. College Course 1 x Sickness
5	Watch Manager	Station Manager A	2 x Sickness 1 x FSEC * 1 x Vacancy 1 x Development
1	Watch Manager	Station Manager B	1 x Sickness
4	Station Manager A	Station Manager B	2 x Sickness, 2 x Vacancy
1	Station Manager B	Group Manager A	1 x Sickness

* FSEC is the Fire Service Emergency Cover model project instigated by ODPM

3. **CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 Currently the Service complement of wholetime firefighters is 153, ten above our normal level of 143. This is as a result of the Service's proactive identification of crewing level requirements in advance of known retirements.
- 3.2 Taking into account our complement, and the number of firefighters on detachment, the Service is currently operating with 14 firefighters fewer than under ideal conditions. A position that due to sickness, vacancies, fire service college courses, specific projects and career development is invariably unattainable.
- 3.3 From the perspective of wholetime provision, the number of firefighters required across the 8 wholetime stations in North Wales to maintain the normal crewing levels is 116. The Service is currently operating with 129. The critical number of firefighters required to operate at the minimum crewing level would be 90.
- 3.4 Each firefighting crew requires a manager, this is either a watch or a crew manager. Normal crewing would account for 26 of these managers and currently the Service has a complement of 60. In addition there are a further 15 undertaking specialist functions. In respect of this level of manager normal crewing is also the minimum crewing level.
- 3.5 With the introduction of the new management structure each role level has been advertised and appointments made. The last role level to undergo placement was Station Manager A on 5th January 2005. The Watch Manager role is the next level to be appointed and interviews are taking place the first week in February 2005. It is envisaged that this will fill the 10 vacancies shown in the table. The next step will then be to resolve the Crew Manager level planned for the end of April 2005.

4. **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The current and planned rounds of appointments will resolve most of the vacancy issues at Crew and Watch Manager levels.
- 4.2 The Service operates a comprehensive sickness policy which entails monitoring individuals and where appropriate utilising the resources of occupational health to ensure a speedy recovery and return to work.
- 4.3 Firefighter requirements and recruitment is continually monitored and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer is currently in the process of appointing 12 recruits to commence service in March 2005.

5. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 Members note the contents of the report.