

NORTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

DATE:	21 st March 2005
REPORT BY:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To update members on the progress being made in establishing the Young Firefighters Association (YFA) in North Wales.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report outlines the progress made to date in the establishment and development of the YFA and gives an indication of future considerations

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Young Firefighters Association (YFA) is a Community Fire Safety initiative in which individual Services engage the youth of an area to transfer the positive ethos of the fire service. They do this by assisting young people to become more aware of their role in society and inspiring them to become better citizens.
- 2.2 The aims of the YFA include contributing to the improvement of community safety and bringing about a reduction in preventable fires, fire related injuries, hoax calls and attacks on firefighters. This is achieved by training and educating young people. These aims are consistent with the Fire Authority's long term strategies as expressed in the Integrated Risk Management Plan.
- 2.3 With the support of the Fire Authority the YFA was first established in North Wales in 1997 with the founding of a branch at Rhyl Fire Station.
- 2.4 Initially, financing of the branch's activities was done through public donations and fund raising by the volunteers running the programme. This fund raising provided for very basic uniform.
- 2.5 The equipment utilised by the YFA was ageing, but serviceable, equipment that had completed its operational life in the Service. The result of this process was that the YFA Units had a variance in both uniform and equipment.
- 2.6 In September 2002 the Fire Authority approved the future expenditure required for setting up YFA Units, in order to provide for uniformity across all branches and ensure that appropriate and effective health and Safety standards were met and maintained .

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Branches are established at Chirk, Prestatyn, Dolgellau, Amlwch, Conwy and Holyhead.
- 3.2 Encouraging and positive progress is currently being made to establish a seventh branch at Barmouth.
- 3.3 A measurement of the success of the YFA in North Wales is a zero rate of young people prematurely leaving the YFA once they have been accepted as a cadet. Additionally, a number of former cadets are now actively pursuing educational qualifications to assist them, in becoming firefighters in North Wales.
- 3.4 At present the Service is working with the Fire Service Youth Training Association to set up a BTEC Intermediate Award in Basic Firefighting Skills. Cadets will be able to work towards achieving this award during their time with the YFA.
- 3.5 The YFA budget for 2005/6 approved by the Fire Authority is £26,162. This money is used to assist branches in becoming established and covers the purchasing of equipment and uniform for cadets. This enables the Units to commence activities and begin recruiting YFA members from their local communities.

4. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The main area of concern facing the YFA in North Wales is sustainability. The Service is seeking to consistently engage with the young people within our communities with the aim of encouraging and supporting them to become more aware of their role in society and inspiring them to become better citizens.
- 4.2 To be successful, this has to be a long term investment. The YFA in North Wales and the Service acknowledges the continued support of Members and the Fire Authority in ensuring the YFA programme can be sustained.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Members note the contents of the report