

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY REPORT

DATE:	27 th March 2006
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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 and rescue 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 and Rescue Authority's long term strategies as expressed in the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

- 2.3 With the support of the Fire and Rescue 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.

2. **BACKGROUND** (*continued*)

- 2.7 Units are encouraged to match the £500 budget by local fund raising. This enables the Units to commence activities and events and puts them on a sure footing for recruitment of YFA members in that local community.

3. **CURRENT SITUATION**

- 3.1 Branches are established at Chirk, Prestatyn, Dolgellau, Amlwch, Conwy, Holyhead and Barmouth.
- 3.2 Positive progress is currently being made to establish a further three branches at Mold, Llanfairfechan and Flint.
- 3.3 The equipment and uniform is now standardised for all YFA Branches. This ensures that appropriate and effective health and safety standards are maintained for the benefit of the young firefighters.
- 3.4 Dates have been set for the inaugural North Wales YFA Achievement Day event. The purpose of the event is twofold;
1. To recognise and acknowledge progress made by the young firefighters, and
 2. To facilitate the opportunity for cadets from different branches to interact, build interpersonal, individual and team skills within a rewarding, competitive, but fun environment.

The event will be held at University College Wales, Bangor on the 17th and 18th June 2006.

- 3.5 Members will recall in last year's information paper that the Service was investigating formal qualifications for young firefighters. Subsequently there are now established arrangements with the Fire Service Youth Training Association to facilitate the BTEC Intermediate Award in Basic Firefighting Skills which young firefighters can work towards achieving during their time with the YFA. Young firefighters at both Amlwch and Prestatyn branches have already commenced working towards this qualification.

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 and Rescue Authority in ensuring the YFA programme can be sustained.

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Members note the contents of the report

