



AGENDA ITEM: 7

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

16th November 2009

REVIEW OF THE HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECK REFERRAL SYSTEM

Report by Richard Fairhead, Senior Fire Safety Manager

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform Members of the increase in the number of referrals for Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) received by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service from the Local Authorities since 2007.

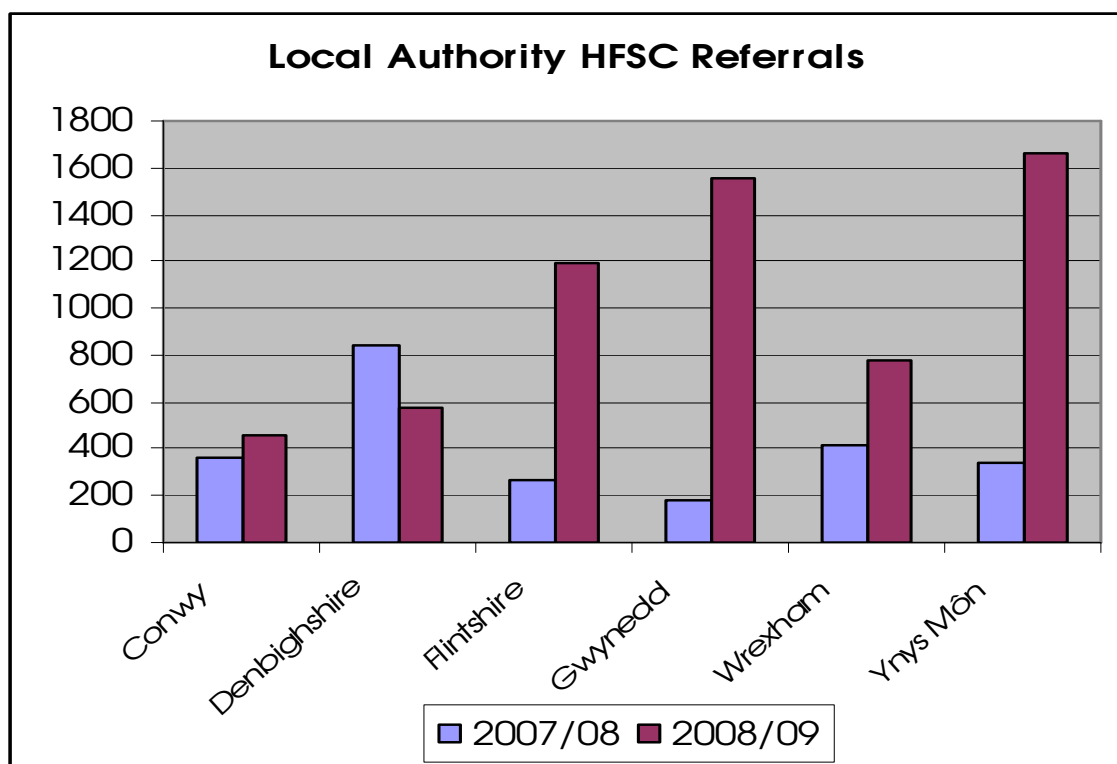
Background

- 2 The Chief Fire Officer's Task Group in 2007 identified that NWFRS should work more closely with other agencies who work with vulnerable people on a day to day basis. By setting up data sharing protocols with agencies, such as Social Services departments, it was hoped to increase the number of requests for HFSCs via these agencies on behalf of the vulnerable people who might not directly contact NWFRS themselves to ask for advice and assistance. NWFRS developed and signed Memorandums of Understanding with each Local Authority in North Wales by the end of February 2008.

Information

- 3 In 2007/8 the number of referrals received from agencies was 2,410, accounting for 9% of the 26,504 HFSCs delivered. By 2008/9 this had increased to 6,220 which was almost 20% of the 31,180 checks delivered. This shows that the partnership links and data sharing protocols made at county level between each Local Authority and NWFRS are generating more referrals.

- 4 The graph below shows the number of referrals by Local Authority area for the financial years 2007/2008 and 2008/2009.



- 5 It should be noted that these figures may be understated; the recent Chief Fire Officer's Task Group review team found that several referrals from partners were made via the freephone number and were not recorded as partner referrals.

The Future

- 6 The Senior Fire Safety Manager is currently reviewing the Home Fire Safety Check referral system and the Memorandums of Understanding signed by all the Local Authorities are being updated. Each County Safety Manager will contact their respective Chief Executive to arrange a meeting. The aim is to improve the dialogue and co-operation with the Local Authority partners and therefore increase the number of HFSC referrals.
- 7 A standard training package for partner agencies has been produced and part of the review of the Memorandum of Understanding will include ensuring that the standard package is

delivered consistently to all six Local Authorities. There will also be a consistent referral methodology to ensure that each agency referral is captured and sufficient information is gathered to enable the Service to prioritise the HFSC so that people at risk are visited first.

- 8 NWFRS now has a centralised database, the Farynor Fire Record Management System, which will improve the ability of the Service to allocate and monitor HFSC work and, in time, develop a revisit programme for the most vulnerable people in North Wales.

Recommendation

9 That Members:

- (i) note the contents of the report and the measures that are being developed to increase the number of Local Authority referrals and improve the referral system; and
- (ii) agree that a request is made to all six local authorities to review their performance and co-operation under the protocol with the aid of a joint meeting.