



AGENDA ITEM: 16

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

15th June 2009

COMPLAINTS AND LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

**Report by Colin Hanks,
Assistant Chief Fire Officer**

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform and update Members in respect of the number of complaints and letters of appreciation received from the public for the period April 2008 to March 2009.

Information

- 2 Complaints Received April 2008 – March 2009

The number of complaints received, investigated and resolved in accordance with the policy and procedures adopted by the Fire and Rescue Authority have been recorded as follows:

Number of Complaints Received	This Year	Last Year
Welsh Language issues	0	2
Human Resource procedures	3	1
Driving	6	2
Fire Safety: Enforcement	1	0
Community Safety	6	3
Operational Activities	8	2
Noise – disruption	0	2
Mobilising	0	1
Conduct	6	5
Total	30	18

Number of Complaints Substantiated	This Year	Last Year
Welsh Language issues	0	1
Human Resource procedures	1	0
Driving	1	1
Fire Safety: Enforcement	0	0
Community Safety	3	2
Operational Activities	3	1
Mobilising	0	0
Conduct	2	1
Total	10	6

3 Summary of substantiated complaints

Welsh Language issues	
None received	
Human Resource Procedures	
Complaint regarding the tendering process for the occupational health contract.	<i>Complainant received a letter of apology with an explanation of how the error had occurred.</i>
Driving	
Complaint of a service vehicle driving on wrong side of the road between Pantarthog and Corris.	<i>Complainant happy with a verbal apology given, crew interviewed and reprimanded.</i>
Community Safety	
Complaint regarding a missed Home Fire Safety Check appointment.	<i>Complainant happy with a verbal apology given due to the crew attending an emergency call. New appointment made.</i>
Complaint relating to non production of Identification during Home Fire Safety Inspection.	<i>Apology given and complainant accepted the recommendations made by the investigating manager. Recommendations actioned.</i>

Inappropriate use of a name belonging to a deceased member of the public during a 'Pass Plus Cymru' training course.	<i>Written apology given and accepted by complainant on the understanding that the name of the person be removed.</i>
Operational Activities	
Complaint regarding a fire in the complainant's garden that was dealt with by a crew but the owner of the property was not informed.	<i>Relevant staff instructed to take action to avoid re-occurrence. Complainant satisfied with action and received a verbal apology.</i>
Complainant reported damage to car due to driving over 'Hose Ramps'	<i>Insurance claim resolved the matter to the complainant's satisfaction.</i>
Water Rescue Training in an area of water that would have implications for the Salmon/Trout farm nearby.	<i>Resolved by amendment to the Training months for that activity. Complainant was content with the outcome.</i>
Conduct	
Complaint relating to an employee using staff member's private phone number to text unacceptable messages.	<i>Member of staff advised of the Service Policy and the consequence of any repeat occurrence. Letter of apology from the employee to the complainant resolved the matter.</i>
Complaint against a member of staff using their position in the organisation to influence a private and civil matter.	<i>Initial complaint investigation has resulted in a full disciplinary investigation, still in progress.</i>

4 It is important to put these complaints into context ie the scale of operations and organisations and members of the public served:

- NWFRS personnel attended 18,789 "blue light" journeys in this period
- NWFRS personnel carried out 31,180 Home Fire Safety checks during this period

- NWFRS personnel carried out in the region of 1300 school or community events

5 Letters of appreciation

It is worthy of note that 76 letters, cards and e-mails of appreciation have been received expressing satisfaction with the Service. This compares with 89 received in the preceding year. The expressions of appreciation received covered a wide range of Fire and Rescue Service activity but fall broadly into the following categories:

6 Operational Incidents and Services to the Public

25 expressions of appreciation were received for dealing with various operational incidents in commercial buildings, homes and from victims of road traffic collisions.

7 Community Safety Initiatives and Service events

15 expressions of appreciation were received for a variety of activities. They included talks and visits to groups, Young Firefighters' Association branches, fetes, fairs and open days, visits to fire and rescue service premises. Staff were congratulated for the delivery of the 'Phoenix Course' to young people across North Wales. Activities such as environmental clean up days and hospital visits also attracted further letters of appreciation. A number of letters thanked staff members for their fund raising efforts.

8 Visits to schools and Training

7 letters of appreciation were received for educational visits and talks to schools and colleges.

9 Home Fire Safety Checks

11 letters of appreciation were received from recipients of a home fire safety check.

10 Partnership Working.

18 expressions of appreciations were received relating to the Service's involvement in partnership working.

Recommendation

- 11 That Members note the number of complaints and expressions of appreciation received for the financial year 2008/09.