



AGENDA ITEM: 14

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

21st June 2010

COMPLAINTS AND LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Report by ACFO Colin Hanks

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 2009 to March 2010

Information

2 **Complaints Received April 2009 – March 2010**

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	Last Year	This Year
Welsh Language issues	0	2
Human Resource procedures	3	5
Driving	6	9
Fire Safety: Enforcement	1	0
Community Safety	6	3
Operational Activities	8	2
Conduct	6	10
Total	30	31

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

3 Summary of Substantiated Complaints

Welsh Language issues	
A complaint in relation to the advertising of an ICT Officer post in the medium of English only in the Daily Post July 2009.	Letter of apology sent to the complainant, detailing that all future job vacancy advertisements would be in line with the NWFRS Welsh Language Scheme.
Complaint regarding the provision of only Welsh literature at a community event.	Matter investigated to the satisfaction of the complainant with staff reminded of Service bilingual policy.
Driving	
Complaint received in relation to minor damage to plastic guttering of a property by a passing FRS Vehicle.	The complaint was resolved locally.
Complaint received in relation to the standard of driving of a Service vehicle whilst proceeding through a built up area.	The driver was formally interviewed and instructed to observe the speed limit and apply safe driving practices.
Complaint received in relation to standard of driving of Fire Appliance when responding to an incident on a dual carriageway.	The driver was formally interviewed, with a development plan issued to improve performance.
<i>Fire appliances and officer vehicles carried out 13,303 Blue Light journeys in responding to operational incidents between April 1st 2009 and March 31st 2010</i>	

Community Safety	
Unfranked letter sent to a member of the public in relation to a requested home fire safety check, resulting in a cost for the individual on receipt of the correspondence.	Verbal resolution of the complaint with the individual being reimbursed.
<i>NWFRS personnel carried out 32,802 home fire safety checks during this period</i>	
Operational Activities	
Complaint from the owners of a premises neighbouring a local fire station, stating that water had entered their property under a roller shutter door following a drill period.	No lasting damage done to the premises following the incident. The complainant was satisfied with the investigation and measures put in place to prevent a reoccurrence.
Complaint concerning excessive damage to a door following a forced entry by crews to an empty property to investigate a sounding smoke detector.	The complainant was reimbursed the cost for the repair to the door and a development plan was issued to the crew.
<i>NWFRS personnel attended 8,634 operational incidents in this period</i>	
Conduct	
Insensitive comments were posted on a social networking site by a member of staff following their attendance at an operational incident.	The person responsible was interviewed, and the comment removed from the site. The complainant was satisfied with the Service response to the complaint.
Complaint received regarding the appearance of staff following their attendance at a Remembrance Day parade.	A local Manager was interviewed and reminded that staff should be appropriately dressed as per Service policy at future events. The complainant was satisfied with the response to the complaint.

- 4 A complaint was received from a retired member of staff regarding the re-employment opportunities available to him. This was dealt with under stage 3 of the complaints procedure in April of this year.

Letters of Appreciation

- 5 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 a similar number 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:

Community Fire Safety Initiatives and Community Events

- 6 Twenty five expressions of appreciation were received for a variety of activities. They included talks and visits to groups such as, Young Fire-fighters' Association branches, fetes, fairs and open days. The public were also grateful for the opportunity to visit Fire and Rescue Service premises. Staff were congratulated for the provision of fire safety intervention equipment to safeguard vulnerable individuals. Activities such as environmental clean up days, road traffic collision impact road shows and hospital visits also attracted further letters of appreciation.

Equalities and Work Experience

- 7 Seven expressions of appreciation were received relating to the Service's support to equality events and providing work experience opportunities to young people.

Visits to Schools and Training

- 8 Three letters of appreciation were received for educational visits, to schools.

Home Fire Safety Checks

- 9 Eight letters of appreciation were received from recipients of a home fire safety check.

Partnership Working

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

Charitable and Partnership Support

- 11 Three letters were received in relation to the support given to charities by the Service.

Recommendation

- 12 That Members note the number of complaints and expressions of appreciation received.