

Report of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority - 27 April 2015

1. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service – Fire Cadet Programme

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service had been approached early 2014 by Youth United and the Chief Fire Officers Association to take part in an initiative to establish a small number of Fire Cadet Units in schools within Lancashire. The initiative was to run for a period of 12 months during the academic year 2014/15. The project was commissioned by the Cabinet Office, as part of a wider piece of research, to establish whether having some form of uniformed cadet service operating in schools, improved pupil's progression and attainment of qualifications.

Lancashire was one of a several geographical areas identified by the Cabinet Office as part of the initiative alongside other service providers for example Sea Cadets. A total of 40 schools were involved across various counties, 6 were within Lancashire:

- Carnforth High School;
- Ormskirk School;
- Whitworth Community High School;
- Christ the King Catholic College (Preston);
- Corpus Christi Catholic High School (Preston);
- St George's School (Blackpool).

The initiative which was being evaluated by Durham University had been set up to test the impact of youth social action activities on the engagement and attainment of pupils in Year 9 (13-14 year olds).

As a Fire Cadet the young people took part in a range of activities, including: volunteering projects in the local community; learning new skills such as: First Aid, learning about the role and responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Service, learning and developing operational type skills through practical training as well as developing as a person i.e. self-confidence, communication skills, leadership traits etc. The programme followed the Fire Services Youth Training Association Fire Cadets' syllabus. It ran for an academic year and could lead to a BTEC Level 2 Award qualification on successful completion.

Midway through the programme an evaluation process had begun with views being sought from all the interested parties – the school, the cadets themselves, their parents/carers and LFRS personnel involved in its delivery. Key findings received to date were:

- Headteachers had been very supportive of the programme and commented how much the Fire Cadets enjoyed it, feeling more confident and benefitting from being involved. They had also been impressed and spoken very highly about how LFRS staff worked with and engaged the young people - this was a credit to all staff involved in the delivery.
- Teaching staff viewed it as a valuable programme in that it helped the young people build confidence and develop themselves. They reported having seen increased maturity and self-esteem, team skills being developed, new friendships formed and better relationships formed with teachers.
- The young people wanted to be a Fire Cadet due to the potential future opportunities it would open up and the BTEC qualification they could achieve. They also liked the identity the uniform gave and made them feel proud.

- The parent/carers reported having noticed improved attitudes and maturity from their children and had developed greater interaction with their children as they now talked more freely about their role as a Fire Cadet with LFRS.

A final passing out parade would be held at each school shortly before they finished for the summer. The event would focus on celebrating the achievements of the Fire Cadets. A final evaluation report would be completed at the end of the programme to inform a decision on whether to continue the programme and, if so, how best to achieve this being cognisant of resources moving forward.

In attendance at the Authority meeting were staff involved in the Fire Cadet programme and 40 Fire Cadets. Members received personal accounts of experiences and achievements made so far from: Julie Simpson, Community Fire Safety (LFRS), Mr Harrison, Teacher (St George's School, Blackpool) and Fire Cadets: Harry Taylor, Molly Costello and Louis Burke.

2. Fire Related Prosecutions

A report detailing prosecutions in respect of fire safety management failures and arson related incidents within the period February 2015 to March 2015 was endorsed by Members. There had been 1 fire safety conviction within the period and detailed information was also supplied in relation to 8 arson convictions.

Members noted that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service had successfully prosecuted Mr Stuart De'Ath, the landlord of a number of premises in the Lytham St Annes area, for eighteen separate breaches of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 relating to three of his premises. The case was heard at Blackpool Magistrates Court and the defendant pleaded guilty to eighteen charges.

Although work was undertaken with landlords to ensure public safety it was also important to demonstrate that individuals would be held accountable for breaches of their statutory responsibility. Such prosecutions served as a warning to others to fulfil their obligations regarding the safety of people under their responsibility.

FRANK DE MOLFETTA
Chairman

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