

WYFRA	PERSONNEL AND TRAINING COMMITTEE	13 JULY 2007	ITEM NO
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REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF FIRE SAFETY & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

PURPOSE OF REPORT: TO REPORT ON THE PILOT YOUNG FIRE FIGHTERS SCHEME AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE RESOURCING AND DIRECTION OF THE SCHEME.

RECOMMENDATIONS: MEMBERS NOTE THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHEME AND APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH ARE INCLUDED IN SECTION 6 OF THE REPORT.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT DETAILS

EXEMPTION CATEGORY: NONE

ACCESS CONTACT OFFICER: Ms. S. Laidlow-Moore - 01274 866243

BACKGROUND PAPERS OPEN TO INSPECTION:

YFF Evidence File

F&RS STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: 2006-2010

YOUTH TRAINING AND DIVERSION IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (DCLG) 'good practice guide'

EVERY CHILD MATTERS 2003 'Green paper'

YOUTH MATTERS 'Green Paper' Safeguarding children in education (DFES 09 2004)

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Fire Service Youth Training Association (FSYTA) was formed in 1995 as a registered charity. Its primary role is to promote youth training across the country. It also seeks to identify examples of good practice in working with disaffected youth and to encourage Fire Services to participate in organised national activities that benefit local communities. A principal objective of this work is to reduce hoax calls and deliberate fire setting by young people.
- 1.2 The students are often those who truant from school or become involved in anti-social behaviour, this can include calling the emergency services to malicious incidents or more seriously becoming involved with deliberate fire setting and arson related crime. The scheme involves fire fighting related practical activities supervised by volunteer firefighters and can lead to the student receiving a nationally recognised BTEC 'Intermediate Award' registered with Edexcel the schools standards awarding body.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 The scheme started in 2004 at Wakefield Fire Station with a single class of students. At the present time the scheme is delivered to 23 school classes at 8 stations with 337 young people taking part. The stations which are currently participating include Wakefield, Ossett, Fairweather Green, Rothwell, Castleford, Moortown, Dewsbury and Halifax. By September 2007 it is estimated that 500 young people will be taking part, with the growth of the numbers at existing locations and the development of a scheme in the Gipton area of Leeds.
- 2.2 The main course is delivered at the Fire Station within the school day (one afternoon per week in school term) over a two-year period with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) designated as an outside learning provider. A teacher is always present during the delivery of the course and this reinforces that the course is part of the mainstream school day. At the end of the two year courses a graduation ceremony has been held at FRSHQ to celebrate the success of the students. This has proved to be a very popular event with all those taking part. Several other courses are also offered which are shorter in nature and are designed for such groups as:
- Cared for Children
 - Re-engagement programmes for students in danger of exclusion from education
 - Pre-admission during year 9.
- 2.3 In order to attract schools to send their students to the course WYFRS has had to demonstrate that it can achieve school targets such as attendance and assist in raising the self-esteem of those taking part. In 2005 the scheme was part of the schools OFSTED inspection process and achieved a level one, an award rarely given.

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- 2.4 Since its inception, the scheme running costs have been funded almost exclusively by external sources including schools and the LEA. In 2005/6 it was agreed that the scheme should receive capital funding from the Fire Authority to help maintain the infrastructure of the scheme (kit, appliances and building repair etc).
- 2.5 At the July 2006 P&T committee meeting it was agreed to create a post of 'Youth Training Co-ordinator' for a twelve month trial period funded from the revenue received from Schools and the LEA's. At present the post holder is Ff Martin Hoole who is responsible for all aspects of the scheme including:
- Budget management including billing individual customers and ordering supplies
 - Trainer co-ordination, trainer training, trainer assessment and discipline
 - Course quality control and development, Monitoring and evaluating schemes
 - Marketing and external liaison with schools, LEAs etc
 - Logistics
 - Identifying and disseminating good practice in working with young people within the brigade
 - Child protection issues related to the scheme.
- 2.6 It must be noted that the success of the scheme to date in West Yorkshire must be attributed to Ff. Hoole. His vision, determination and commitment to the pilot has been a credit to the service. His work has recently been acknowledged nationally with a nomination at the Fire Industry Awards for his contribution to community safety. He is also instrumental in the development of the BTEC award and sits on the national steering group for the FSYTA.
- 2.7 In addition a local co-ordinator is appointed within each of the stations where the project is organised to ensure that the scheme runs smoothly at a local level. The course is delivered by a team of very enthusiastic operational fire fighters (a requirement of the national standard) and all trainers are required to undergo appropriate behavioural training and child protection awareness to enable them to engage effectively with young people. The trainers carry out all instruction and attend trainer training outside normal working hours. They are paid the standard rate of overtime. Instructor pay is funded externally from the schools taking part and the LEA's.
- 2.8 A review on the impact on the students has recently taken place and the results are very impressive
- The students - Increased self confidence and self discipline leading to increased attainment across the curriculum, education for young people who in turn educate their families and friends in fire safety skills and responsible citizenship.
 - Schools – Successfully catering for needs of less academically focused young people resulting in better grades achieved by greater numbers of pupils.

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- Communities – Less hoax calling, fewer Fire fighters attacked. Station seen as part of the community, Firefighters known in community and respect for FRS increased through engaging actively with the young people and their families.
 - Partnership Working – A model example of how successful partnerships can be in achieving common objectives.
- 2.9 Not all of the pilots have been fully successful. A project in the Moortown area was developed for a group of young people who had fallen out of mainstream education, but it was recognised that the model adopted was not appropriate. Future contact with this group of people will be of shorter duration and more focused on their needs.
- 2.10 Future expansion of the scheme is still possible and it is anticipated that if demand continues at the current rate 1200 students can be accommodated over the next two years. It is very pleasing to note that there is no shortage of Fire and Rescue Service staff prepared to undertake training to be involved in the scheme.
- 2.11 Further areas of work which will be developed are a contribution to the development of a Public Service Diplomas in partnership with the LEAs and the potential to work with the Youth Offending / Inclusion Officer to deliver a variety of short courses focusing on inclusion. A pilot working with 'looked after children' is currently underway in Wakefield. An opportunity also exists to develop youth inclusion activities in various forms; however this would require a growth in the team delivering the work.
- 2.12 The Scheme coordinator and existing Youth Offending Officer both maintain training in 'Child Protection Issues' and all instructors have a level of knowledge which is commensurate with their commitment to the scheme. There is a clear and workable child protection policy specifically tailored to all youth engagement activity.
- 2.13 The YFF Scheme will form part of the inclusion and education methodology which is being developed as part of the Fire Place strategy.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 As mentioned in the body of the report the ongoing costs of operating the scheme has been met from the income generated. In addition the Authority will commit capital resources of £300,000 over three years providing equipment and building adaptations to support the extension of the scheme.

4. EQUALITIES AND FAIRNESS ISSUES

- 4.1 This student breakdown includes 25% girls; 14% BME; 2.4% with a disability and this initiative provides evidence to meet the Leadership and Corporate Commitment and Community Engagement indicators at Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

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5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The pilot scheme has become a massive success for the Authority. From the initial involvement at Wakefield to the growth across each of the districts it is clear that the role of the Fire Service in youth inclusion and education activities now has a series of objectives and outcomes which are highly respected by both the schools taking part and the LEA's. These will be used to ensure that the growth of the scheme continues to produce the same results.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The pilot scheme is mainstreamed as part of the strategy for youth inclusion and education.
- 6.2 WYFRA continues to contribute to the capital budget for the scheme and revenue costs continue to be met by participating organisations.
- 6.3 The role of YFF Scheme Co-ordinator is confirmed as a permanent post within the organisation with funding provided from external sources.