

Volunteers recognised at national awards

A team of volunteers from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service were recognised at the prestigious Guardian Public Services Awards, held in November.

The Post-Fire Support Team won the coveted Citizenship and Volunteering award in the national newspaper's showcase event for innovation and best practice across the public sector.

Following the presentation Cheshire's Chief Fire Officer Paul Hancock said, "This is a fantastic achievement by the Team, particularly as it has only been in operation for just over a year. Our volunteers not only give their time to help others, they are totally committed to the community and are an invaluable asset to the Service."

The team is an after-fire clean-up service organised and run entirely by volunteers across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. The idea came from firefighters themselves, who wanted to arrange support for distressed residents after dealing with smaller domestic incidents, such as kitchen fires.

Launched in July 2010, the team operates on a 24-hour rota and its eight volunteers work in pairs serving all fire stations in Cheshire. Volunteers are contacted by Cheshire's control room via pagers on the request of fire officers at a fire and arrive on the scene within 90 minutes, as long as the premises are still safe and habitable.

Over the last 12 months, the volunteers have attended over



twenty incidents and have provided services such as cleaning waterlogged areas, clearing fire soot, and dismantling and bagging up damaged furniture for disposal.



Service promotes home safety application



Last year Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service launched Home Safety Direct, which is an online fire safety assessment that assesses individuals as to their personal fire risk and provides safety advice through a short educational film.

We are asking stakeholders to help promote Home Safety Direct (www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/5mins) by endorsing the application and encouraging colleagues, partners and clients to log on. Other organisations have included details in their staff newsletter and permitted staff to complete the assessment during their lunch hour, or included the details on their website.

The assessment takes just five minutes and provides valuable advice on protecting people's homes and families.

Forms will be checked by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and staff from local fire stations will contact the individual to arrange any action that needs to be taken if necessary, such as a follow-up visit to discuss fire safety.

If you would like to promote the online application, please contact Claire.Fiddeman@cheshirefire.gov.uk and further information can be provided.

Children save a life in Runcorn

Two quick-thinking Runcorn children helped save a life in Runcorn when they spotted a fire in a flat at the beginning of January.

11 year old Thomas Littler and 10 year old Alicia Dunnette were walking along Exmouth Crescent when they saw an orange and red glow through a window. They ran to a friend's house nearby, told the owner what they'd seen and she dialled 999 as the children kept watch and updated her.

Three fire engines responded to the fire and firefighters quickly rescued the occupant, who was suffering from the effects of smoke inhalation. He was subsequently taken to hospital by ambulance.

Thomas's mum was so proud of what her son and his friend had done that she contacted the Fire & Rescue Service and they were invited to Runcorn Fire Station for a tour where they met firefighters on duty.

Station Manager Sean Henshaw said: "Inviting these two exceptional young people to the fire station was the least we could do. Their prompt actions almost certainly saved a life by enabling us to get to the fire quickly. Thomas and Alicia are a shining example to their parents, their school and their neighbourhood. I congratulate them wholeheartedly on their actions."

Chester restaurant fined for breach of fire regulations

A Chester takeaway has been fined more than £24,000 for serious breaches in fire safety.

The owners of Buffet City Ltd, the company that operates Buffet City on Newgate Street in Chester was ordered by Chester Magistrates Court to pay a total of £24,067 in fines and court costs in relation to six serious breaches of the Fire Safety Order.

The company was charged with a number of breaches of the Fire Safety Order, including not having a working fire alarm, not having conducted a fire risk assessment, failing to have an escape plan and being unable to provide a fire exit.

Teams of firefighters and specially trained officers regularly visit businesses across Cheshire to check that people are complying with the Fire Safety Order and that people's lives are not being put at risk. It was at one such visit that first highlighted the issues with Buffet City.

Fire and Rescue Service extends successful children's programme

Firefighters are to help teach Warrington primary school children valuable life lessons in staying safe and being good citizens in a pioneering programme being introduced to the borough.

'Primary RESPECT' aims to help youngsters understand that their actions have consequences, the importance of following rules and the value of teamwork. They will also learn about fire safety in the home and on the roads and gain an insight into the work of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, which has devised and operated the course.

The programme is being funded by the Warrington Partnership for one year after the Service was able to demonstrate the impact a pilot scheme has had in primary schools in Ellesmere Port.

The course comprises a two-hour session at Warrington and Birchwood Community Fire Stations every week for six weeks. Children from eleven different primary schools from year 5 and 6 complete the course in mixed groups of eight.

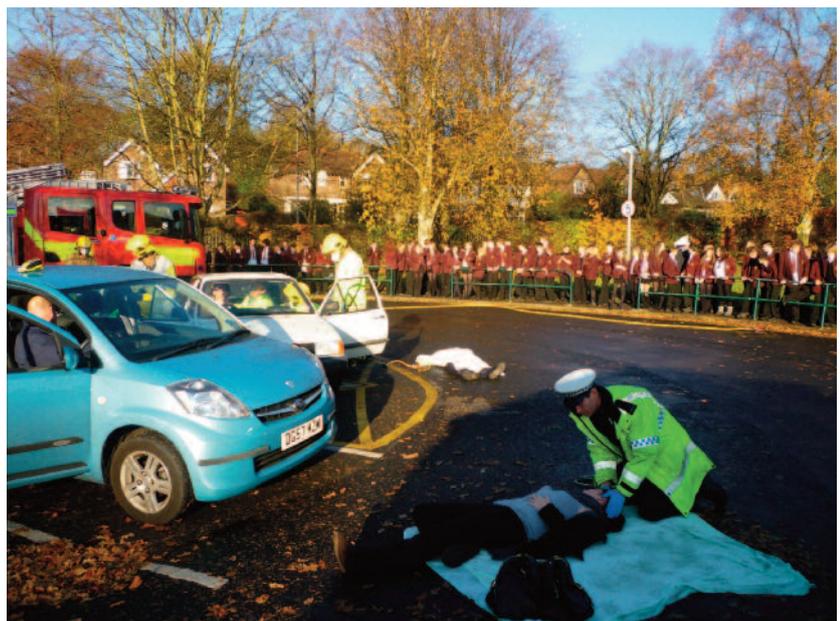


Pupils experience road safety demo

Firefighters from Macclesfield and Bollington, together with paramedics and police officers, recently attended Tytherington High School to promote road safety to over 200 pupils and staff.

Residents will be able to see what incidents have. The students were able to gain first hand experience of the emergency services working together at the scene of a staged road traffic collision. The demonstration involved the extrication of a 'casualty' from one of the vehicles, while police officers demonstrated closing roads, implementing cordons and dealing with the public.

Staff from all three of the emergency services spoke to the students to highlight the devastating affect of a road traffic collision and the impact that it can have not only on an individual, but also on their family and friends.



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