

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	18/06/2018
Lead Officer	Richard Fairhead, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Gavin Roberts (01745 535 264)
Subject	Complaints and expressions of appreciation



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To inform members of the numbers and types of complaints and expressions of appreciation received by the Service between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018, and the numbers of complaints resolved during that same period.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 During the year 2017/18, a total of 31 complaints and 115 messages of appreciation were received. 13 complaints were substantiated.
- 3 Matters of conduct accounted for almost one third of all complaints received – an increase of seven when compared with the three-year average for this category. Six of the thirteen complaints substantiated during the year were also about matters of conduct. However, more positively, expressions of appreciation for matters of conduct more than doubled during 2017/18 by comparison with the three-year average - the largest percentage increase recorded in any category of appreciation.
- 4 Expressions of appreciation increased by comparison with the three-year average in all categories except one, which related to the Service's support to charities. However, this should be viewed in the context of the unusually high number in this category that were received in 2016/17.

RECOMMENDATION

- 5 That members note the contents of this report.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 6 This report has not previously been considered by Members.

BACKGROUND

- 7 Complaints received by the Service from organisations, groups or members of the public are subject to formal management and monitoring procedures. This promotes consistency in complaints handling and supports learning and continuous improvement.
- 8 Reportable complaints are those brought to the attention of the Service regarding the standard of service provided or the actions or inaction of staff or anyone else acting on the Service's behalf.
- 9 The total number of complaints does not include those received from concerned members of the public about the fire safety provision at premises for which North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority would be the enforcing or a consulting authority for safety legislation and regulations applicable to those premises.
- 10 Expressions of appreciation received by the Service are similarly subject to a standardised management procedure as these can indicate good practice and ensure that particular achievements or actions by members of staff do not go unrecognised.

INFORMATION

- 11 The tables below detail the number of complaints and expressions of appreciation in recent financial years.

Table 1. Reportable complaints received, investigated and resolved:

Complaint categories	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	3-year average*	2017/18	Comparison with 3-year average	
Welsh language	1	0	1	1	0	↓	-1
Policy and procedure	3	3	6	4	7	↑	+3
Driving	4	8	3	5	4	↓	-1
Operational activities	4	3	7	5	4	↓	-1
Conduct	5	6	8	6	13	↑	+7
Business/Community safety delivery	3	5	5	4	3	↓	-1
Total	20	25	30	25	31	↑	+6

*The average number received in the previous 3 years, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 2. Reportable complaints substantiated during the year (some of which may have been initiated in previous financial years).

Complaint categories	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	3-year average*	2017/18	Comparison with 3-year average
Welsh language	1	0	1	1	0	↓ -1
Policy and procedure	1	0	3	1	1	↔ 0
Driving	2	2	2	2	1	↓ -1
Operational activities	3	1	1	2	3	↑ +1
Conduct	2	2	0	1	6	↑ +5
Business/Community safety delivery	1	2	2	2	2	↔ 0
Total	10	7	9	9	13	↑ +4

*The average number received in the previous 3 years, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 3. Messages of appreciation received by letter, card, e-mail, social media and in person:

Appreciation categories	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	3-year average*	2017/18	Comparison with 3-year average
Community safety initiatives, events and visits to/by NWFRS	19	25	26	23	27	↑ +4
Home safety checks, home safety interventions (including by Community Assistance Team)	14	12	19	15	20	↑ +5
Partnership working (including Phoenix and Arson Reduction)	5	11	1	6	7	↑ +1
Charitable support (including community bonfire donations)	4	9	34	16	8	↓ -8
Operational incidents and exercises	15	29	37	27	37	↑ +10
Conduct	4	6	12	7	16	↑ +9
Total	61	92	129	94	115	↑ +21

*The average number received in the previous 3 years, rounded to the nearest whole number.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	This report links to NWFRS long-term well-being objective which is "To facilitate high quality, responsive and better integrated fire and rescue services so that prevention activity and emergency response can continue to be available when and where required, affordably, equitably and on the basis of risk."
Budget	Considered not relevant.
Legal	All relevant legislation considered when dealing with complaints received.
Staffing	Substantiated complaints are used as development opportunities for individual members of staff and the organisation as a whole.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	All protected characteristics considered and the appreciation/complaint will be dealt with bilingually or as requested by the individual.
Risks	Considered not relevant.