

NORTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

DATE:	19 th July 2004
REPORT BY:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To inform and update Members in respect of the number of complaints received and the number of letters of appreciation received from the public

1. **INFORMATION**

1.1 Complaints Received April 2003 – March 2004

The number of complaints received, investigated and resolved in accordance with the policy and procedures adopted by the Fire Authority were:

Number of Complaints Received	
Welsh Language issues	1
HR Procedures	3
Driving	13
Fire Safety	2
Operational Activities	6
Mobilising	2
Total	26

Number of Complaints Substantiated	
Welsh Language issues	0
HR Procedures	1
Driving	10
Fire Safety	2
Operational Activities	3
Mobilising	1
Total	16

2. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS

2.1 HR Procedures

Concerns were raised by a potential retained firefighter trainee with reference to selection procedure and associated medical standards.	<i>Explanation of medical procedures given to candidate – resolved locally.</i>
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During this period 90 other candidates underwent retained Firefighter selection interviews.

2.2 Driving

Member of public observed a Brigade vehicle being used for an unauthorised private journey.	<i>Driver formally interviewed.</i>
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Three separate complaints received concerning retained firefighters using excessive speed when responding to the fire station.	<i>On each occasion personnel were instructed to observe the speed limit and to observe safe driving practices.</i>
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There were four complaints from motorists involving fire appliances en route to emergency calls.	<i>On each occasion the fire service driver was interviewed and the complainant was satisfied with the outcome.</i>
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Motorist observed aggressive driving (non-emergency) by fire service employee.	<i>Officer interviewed and advice given – resolved locally.</i>
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Farmer alleged that driver of Brigade vehicle was rude and abusive when he stopped the traffic to allow livestock to cross the road.	<i>Officer interviewed – resolved locally.</i>
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Fire appliances carried out 17,866 'Blue Light' journeys in responding to operational incidents and NWFRS vehicles covered 2,420,000 miles throughout North Wales.

2.3 Fire Safety

Owner of hotel complained about the attitude and manner of fire safety inspecting officer.	<i>Resolved locally.</i>
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2.3 Fire Safety (continued)

Complaint received about standards of fire safety in retail premises.	<i>Premises inspected and instructions given to Store Manager.</i>
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A total of 9,303 fire safety inspections were carried out last year.

2. **SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS** *(continued)*

2.4 Operational Activities

Damage caused to neighbouring property during search of premises for missing person.	<i>Resolved locally.</i>
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Inadequate arrangements had been made post fire to secure premises which resulted in a theft of personal items.	<i>Owner compensated – resolved locally.</i>
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Local residents complained of severe reduction in water pressure when fire station hydrant in use.	<i>Property Manager resolved the issue via utility company.</i>
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NWFRS personnel attended 11,845 operational incidents in this period.

2.5 Mobilisation

Delay in attending incident involving activation of fire alarm at private residence. This was due to insufficient address details held by alarm monitoring company.	<i>Resolved via Control Room Manager and alarm company.</i>
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NWFRS mobilising control room dealt with 19,322 calls last year.

3. **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

- 3.1 Our aim in North Wales Fire & Rescue Service is to provide the best possible services in the best way possible. Yet we accept that things do go wrong from time to time. We are determined to learn and profit from our mistakes when things go wrong and we are always looking for ways of improving our service to customers.
- 3.2 With this in mind, we will be introducing this year the facility to submit complaints and appreciative comments via the North Wales Fire & Rescue website.

4. **LETTERS OF APPRECIATION**

- 4.1 It is worthy of note that 48 letters of appreciation have been received expressing satisfaction with the Service.

4. **LETTERS OF APPRECIATION** *(continued)*

4.2 Letters of appreciation received covered a wide range of Fire Service activity but broadly fall into the following categories:

Operational incidents

Community fire safety initiatives and visits

Standard of evidence submitted at Court

Charitable work

Visits to schools

Work experience placements

Initiatives to reduce arson and youth offending

Attendance of NWFRS personnel at funerals

5. **RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 That the Fire Authority notes the number of letters of complaint and appreciation received.