

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

REVIEW REPORT TO THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

REPORT NUMBER: [CFO/024/16](#)

APPENDICES:

REPORTING OFFICER: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members note and endorse the work of the Authority in relation to its engagement with young people through the delivery of a number of outcome focused Youth Engagement programmes.

Introduction and Background

2. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service actively works with Children and Young People to provide fire safety and fire prevention education as well as carrying out a range of activities aimed at tackling wider health or social determinants which affect their day to day lives.
3. These activities reduce anti-social behaviour and provide positive outcomes for young people, as well as promoting the recruitment of firefighters from the areas of communities that are currently under-represented in the service.
4. Programmes range from primary schools visits - to teach young children the basic dangers of fire to health and wellbeing initiatives aimed at tackling health inequality.

5. A large number of the programmes focus on the delivery of youth diversionary programmes for young people who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream education or involvement in criminal and anti-social activities.
6. MFRS like other services uses its position and standing within the community to engage with those young people who are the hardest to reach.
7. When young people are struggling or become vulnerable, they often resort to anti-social behaviour and criminality. This behaviour has a direct impact on the resources of the Fire and Rescue Service.
8. These young people are not just creating challenges for the Fire and Rescue Service, but also challenge the resources of the Police, the Local Authority, and the Health Service.
9. As a Fire and Rescue Service we fully recognise the role we play in our communities.
10. The work that MFRS does with young people is incredibly inspiring and it changes lives – examples include.

Fire Cadets

11. The National Fire Cadets programme is currently being delivered across 4 districts in Merseyside (Liverpool, Sefton, St Helen's & Wirral).
12. MFRA secured a grant for the Fire Cadets programme to support the Chief Fire Officers Association and Youth United Foundation achieve the outcomes as set out in the Uniformed Youth Social Action fund.
13. The aims of the programme are to provide young people with an opportunity to learn about the Fire and Rescue Service whilst developing life and employability skills. It also offer opportunities to be involved in Social Action and put something back into the community in which they live.
14. Activities the young people will undertake include fire and rescue service drills: hose running, simulated fire service scenarios, whilst learning about all aspects of the fire and rescue service including fire prevention and protection.
15. The programme is open to young people aged between 13 to 18 years old.

Princes Trust

16. Prince's Trust 'TEAM' programme is delivered across Merseyside in partnership with City of Liverpool College and Wirral Metropolitan College.

17. The programme is currently delivered from Bootle and Netherton, Huyton, Bromborough and Toxteth Community Fire Stations alongside the Training and Development Academy in Croxteth
18. The funding is secured through the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency and is accessed via the host college.
19. The programme targets those young people who are classed as Not In Education, Employment or Training ('NEET')
20. The programme aims to re-engage young people by enabling them to develop the skills, confidence and motivation to assist them in progressing into education, employment or training.

SAFE – Juvenile Fire setter Education

21. MFRS engages with children and young people (CYP) who have been involved in or have shown a fascination with fire setting through its SAFE programme.
22. The programme has been developed to tackle issues such as fire play and fire setting – staff explain how the actions taken impact on the availability of fire appliances thereby explaining the consequences of any action taken.
23. Referrals are received by fire crews, partners and schools

Street Intervention Teams

24. Youth Engagement have recently taken over governance of the Street Intervention Team, a street based intervention programme which aims to divert young people off the streets and into existing youth provision whilst providing a highly visible presence within the community.
25. The team provide local reassurance and advice to residents whilst assertively challenging poor behaviour which can impact adversely on the wider community.
26. Discussions are taking place with Liverpool's Community Safety Partnership 'CitySafe' as a potential funder in order to continue the project into 2016/17.

Additional Activity

27. In the last 12 months MFRS has secured funding from Knowsley Headstart, a child and adolescent mental health charity, through Big Lottery Funding.
28. Utilising this funding the Service have delivered a Beacon programme, created a Fire Cadet programme and embedded a School Fire Liaison Officer into a local Knowsley primary school.

29. The objective of these programmes was to focus on improving young people's resilience by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to cope with difficult circumstances and common health problems before they become more serious and harder to combat.

Equality and Diversity Implications

30. All programmes are open to those who sit under the "protected characteristics" which include Disability, Sexual Orientation and Race.

Staff Implications

31. All youth engagement programmes are externally funded as such implications arise if funding is withdrawn or reduced.
32. The Princes Trust team programme has been significantly impacted by such funding cuts with the service moving from St Helens College to the City of Liverpool College as a result of cuts to funding.
33. Prince's Trust funding is allocated by Department for Education via Colleges of Higher Education.

Legal Implications

34. MFRA must adhere to any grant provisions, agreements and other relevant policies in place for the provision of the programmes referred to in this report in regard to youth engagement.
35. MFRA must comply with the relevant legislation in the exercise of these programmes e.g. Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 and Data Protection Act 1998.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

36. All funding agreements are agreed through MFRA's Legal and Finance Departments.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

37. Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2013) states that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

38. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key organisations such as local authorities and district councils to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
39. Section 11 does not give agencies any additional functions, but requires that they carry out their existing functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard children.
40. Training in key areas such as Safeguarding, Child Sexual Exploitation and Digital online safety is delivered on an ongoing basis in order to mitigate any risk to the delivery teams and the Authority.
41. All those who work alongside Children & Young People will be enhanced DBS cleared.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

42. Engaging with Children & Young People across Merseyside through Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) contributes to MFRS Mission of Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters.

Recommendation

43. That Members;
 - a) Consider the investment in prevention work to deliver bespoke programmes across Merseyside to enable our children & young people to flourish and live healthy and productive lives.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
