



Merseyside

**FIRE & RESCUE
SERVICE**

"An Excellent Authority"

Annual Report

2009/10



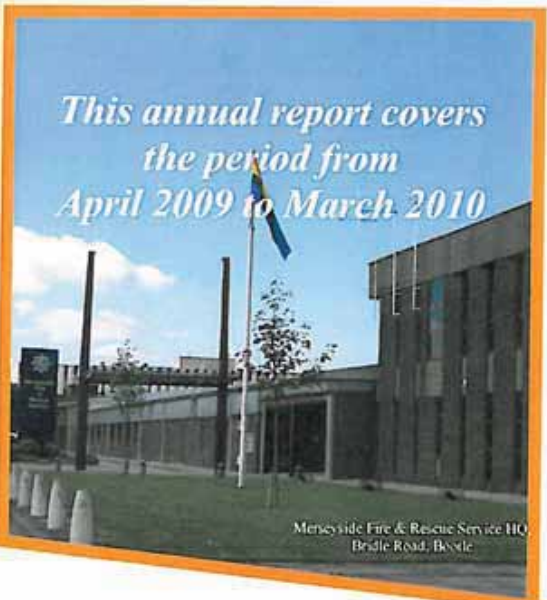
Foreword by Cllr Tony Newman, Chair of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is working hard to make our communities safer from fire as well as responding efficiently and effectively when people do need us in an emergency. In common with all other public services we are facing budget challenges that mean that we have to make savings while still offering value for money to our council tax payers. But we are continuing to make a positive difference to the people who live and work in Merseyside and visitors to the region, particularly those people most at risk. In the Audit Commission Comprehensive Area Assessment in 2009 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority was judged to be "Performing Well" which is demonstrated by the fact that in 2009/10 we were successful in reducing accidental and deliberate fires, road traffic collisions and hoax calls and we carried out over 100,000 free home fire safety checks, including fitting smoke alarms where they were needed. But when you do need us in an emergency we'll respond promptly and be with you within our challenging attendance standards on over 90% of occasions. When surveyed, one hundred percent of people who needed us in an emergency last year were satisfied with the response they received. We have made significant financial savings in recent years too, but we continue to offer innovative services that make a real difference to all our communities.

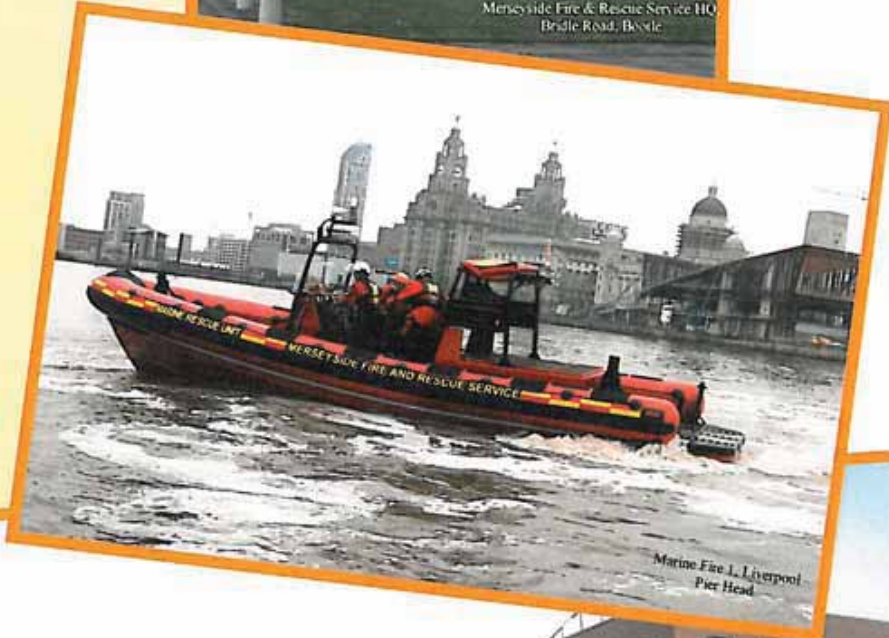


Tony Newman

*This annual report covers
the period from
April 2009 to March 2010*



Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service HQ,
Bridle Road, Bootle



Marine Fire Unit, Liverpool
Pier Head



*Once again it demonstrates the commitment Merseyside
Fire & Rescue Service have made to make Merseyside a
safer, stronger, healthier place to live.*

City Centre Fire Station

Introduction

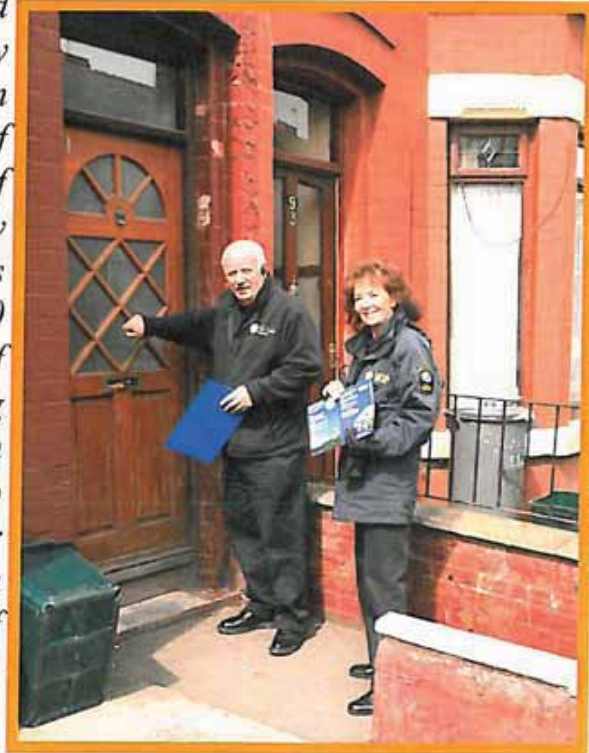
MF&RS divides its resources between prevention, protection and responding to emergencies. The use of Integrated Risk Management Planning has seen the service deliver improved emergency response services through a range of specific teams whilst delivering a comprehensive home safety programme and community engagement to



reduce risk of fire and other emergencies.

MFRS has a balanced approach to the services it delivers, alongside the emergency response provided 24 hours a day 7 days a week, we have a well established programme of delivering the home fire safety message through education and engagement to all the communities of Merseyside,

helping them to improve their own safety. Over 862,300 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC's) have been delivered since the beginning of the campaign in 1999. The rapid expansion of our community safety partnership work has been matched by the development of our response capability, both of which has led to successfully reducing accidental house fires by nearly 39% since 1999/2000 and reducing the number of fatalities in accidental dwelling fires by 53% (8 in 2009/10, 17 in 1999/2000). But when you do have a fire in your home or workplace we'll be with you within 7 minutes on over 90% of occasions and minimise the damage to your property.



Financial Successes in 2009/10

The Authority delivers a value for money service and approved a balanced budget of £72,100 million in 2009/10.

The successful key principals behind this were:

- To control Council Tax increases– it was kept to below 4%*
- To continue with the modernisation programme and make Merseyside a Safer, Stronger, Healthier Community*
- To deliver savings through efficiencies of which most were employee related and will be achieved without redundancy by using natural retirement rates and if required voluntary early retirement*



In 2009/10 we successfully achieved £3,872 million efficiency savings by implementing:

- a review of management structures — streamlining our structures*
- piloted self-rostering on stations – a change in the way stations are staffed whilst achieving our response standards*
- implemented a further low level of risk (LLAR) fire station making a total of 7 in all — these are stations that we staff differently because they are not called to as many incidents*
- implemented job evaluation - to rationalise our approach to staff salaries and also deliver against equal pay requirements*
- a review of roles that could be carried out by 'non uniformed' staff that were previously carried out by 'uniformed' personnel reducing the wage bill and maintaining high levels of performance*
- implemented income generation through social enterprise*

Audit and Inspection in 2009/10

MF&RS makes Communities on Merseyside Safer, Stronger and Healthier and the results of audit and inspection bear this out. In 2009 the new Audit Commission audit regime, Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) took over from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA - MF&RS achieved excellent status in 2005). CAA looked at how well local public services, working together are meeting the needs of the people they serve.

2009/10 saw MF&RS achieve:



audit commission

Use of Resources – level 3 (performs well) delivering a value for money service and showing we manage our finances well and with a good track record of delivering efficiency savings.

Organisational Assessment – level 3 (performs well) showing a good balance between emergency response, prevention and protection work.

BRITISH SAFETY COUNCIL

Managing Performance – level 3 (performs well) MF&RS responds well to fires and other emergencies and works hard to protect and prevent such emergencies within the community.

Training & Development Academy – 5 Star Award
A review of Health & Safety Management systems, COSHH and risk management were assessed and were found to be well managed

I&DeA
Improvement and Development Agency

Operational Assessment –
The Operational Assessment carried out by a Peer Assessor Team from the Improvement & Development Agency (I&DEA) in May 2010 found that we are operationally effective, meeting statutory duties and performing well in key performance areas with many areas of notable practice.

Investing to Make Merseyside a Safer, Stronger, Healthier Community

Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Stations

People and property in Merseyside will be even safer and benefit from new community resources because of the biggest Private Finance Initiative (PFI) project that the UK Fire Service has seen. Balfour Beatty has been appointed to build, finance and operate sixteen new fire stations across the North West. Seven of these fire stations will be built around Merseyside at Belle Vale, Bootle/Netherton, Formby, Kirkdale, Newton le Willows and Southport, five in Cumbria and four in Lancashire. The stations will help meet the changing needs and modern practices of the UK fire and rescue service and provide a better work environment for working, learning and training. They will also provide excellent facilities for Community use in the heart of those Communities. Work will begin on the first fire station in Kirkdale in November 2010.



Artist's impression of new fire station design

Firelink Radio System

Effective communication is crucial to the smooth running of incidents. As part of the Regional Control project the Airwave system will allow national radio coverage linking not only all fire & rescue services but also linking to other emergency services. The new Airwave radios have now been fitted to all of our emergency services.

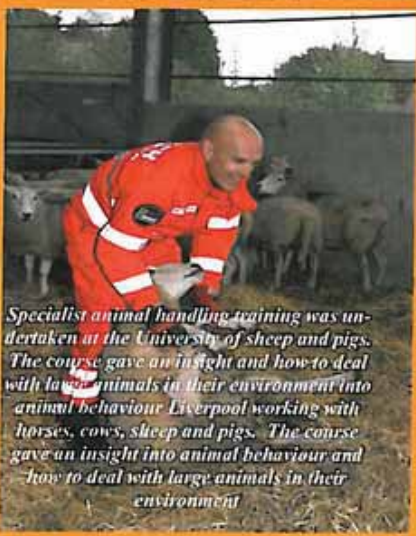
New Equipment in 2009/10



Specialist Training

Our firefighters respond efficiently and effectively to emergencies. Training and competency maintenance play an integral part of a firefighters daily role. Our specialist training facilities at our Training & Development Academy (TDA) allow realistic fire, road traffic incident and search & rescue scenarios to be carried out. A regular programme of training both on and off stations and at the TDA, ensures that all operational personnel are involved in developing and maintaining their skills and competencies.

2009/10 also saw:



Specialist animal handling training was undertaken at the University of sheep and pigs. The course gave an insight and how to deal with large animals in their environment into animal behaviour Liverpool working with horses, cows, sheep and pigs. The course gave an insight into animal behaviour and how to deal with large animals in their environment

Substantial research was carried out into high rise property fires, following a series of catastrophic fires in other parts of the country where residents and firefighters lost their lives. Operational fire procedures have

been changed and preventative maintenance measures been carried introduced in high rise buildings. Safety checks of the dry risers, fire doors, protected stairs and lobbies, have been carried out in over 80 former local Authority buildings of 6 stories high or more. Alongside this crews also carry out Home Fire Safety Checks and fit free smoke alarms for residents of the high rise buildings.



Community Safety Initiatives

Operation Homesafe

With over 10 years of visiting homes to offer safety advice and fit free smoke alarms since 1999, at the beginning of 2009/10 there were still 250,000 homes on Merseyside that had not had any form of home safety intervention. Using lifestyle data about households, looking at high incidence areas where fires have occurred and information from partners agencies such as social services, around 110,000 of these addresses were highlighted as priority addresses. Operation Homesafe was implemented in April 2009 to make sure that all homes on Merseyside had had some form of intervention, by giving a Home Fire Safety Check, an external Vulnerable Property Assessment, or a mail shot to non priority homes. Over 60 half day campaigns took place in the high risk areas, crews made a concentrated effort to access as many homes as possible. Volunteers from our charity run Fire Service Network delivered leaflets prior to the operation to ensure that residents were aware of what was happening.

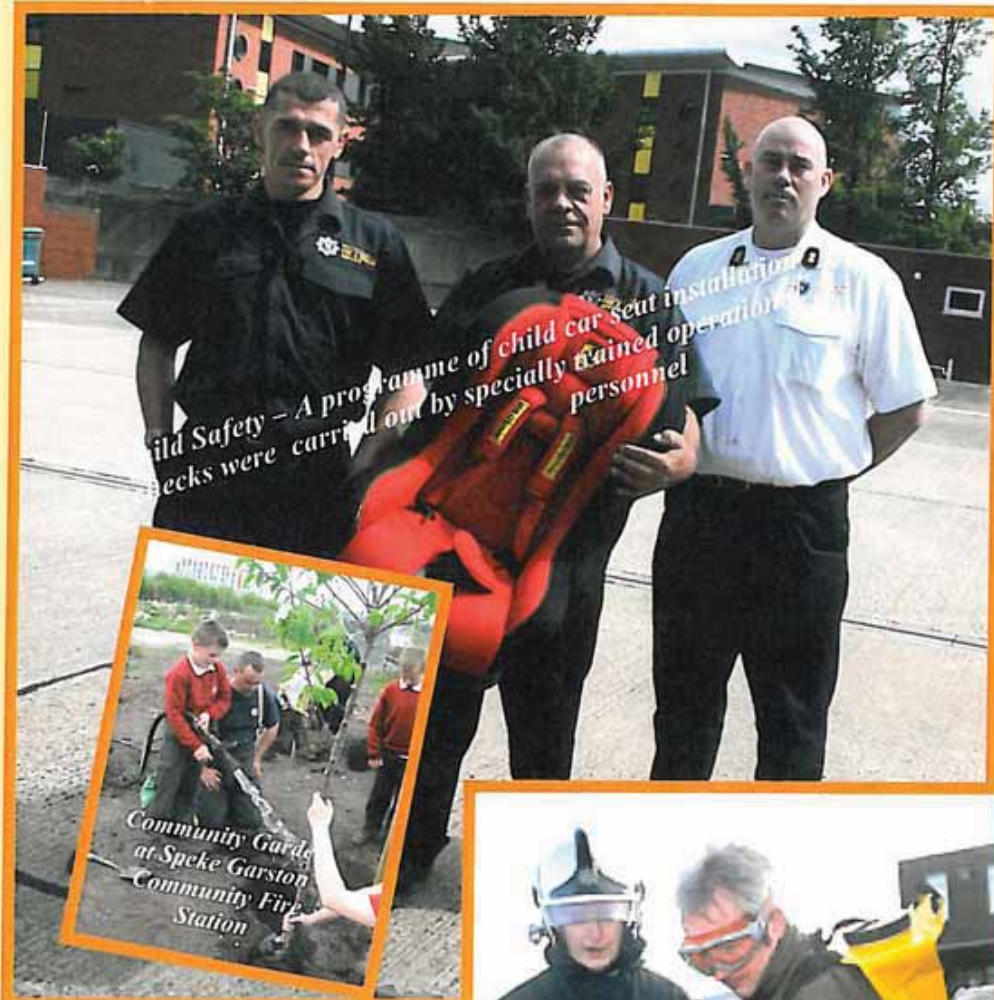


| Operation Homesafe Performance | 2009/10 |
|--|---------|
| HFSC's carried out in domestic dwellings that have not been previously visited | 47,875 |
| HFSC's carried out as re-visits | 54,451 |
| Vulnerable Property Risk Assessments (VPA) carried out | 69,386 |
| Mailshot leaflets | 250,000 |

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Community Safety Initiatives



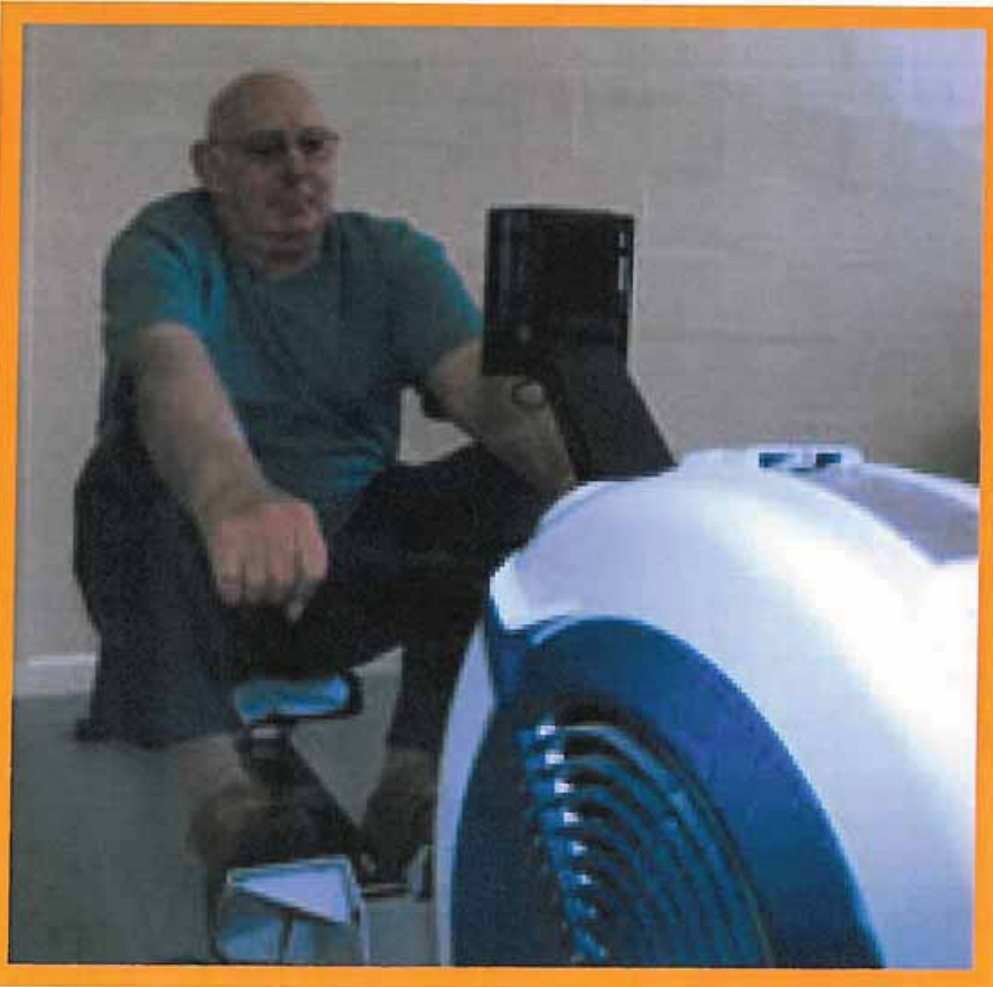
Fire Wardens – Wirral Community Patrols and the Wirral Ranger Service have been working in partnership with MF&RS, receiving training to extinguish small grassland fires to reduce the risk of them turning into large scale grass fires. They use special backpacks with portable fire extinguishers to allow them to douse small fires.



Community Safety Partnerships

Station Health Initiatives

Each of our stations is equipped with state of the art gym facilities. In a Partnership with Wirral Heartbeat (an independent charity who assist the Wirral PCT Heart Support Centre based at St Catherines Community Hospital in Birkenhead) MF&RS works with people who have suffered cardiac problems by allowing the use of gym facilities throughout our Wirral fire stations. As part of their recuperation programme a tailored fitness regime has been designed which is overseen by a Heartbeat gym instructor. Approximately 100 people attend the sessions each week. This initiative has since been extended to all of our stations throughout Merseyside.



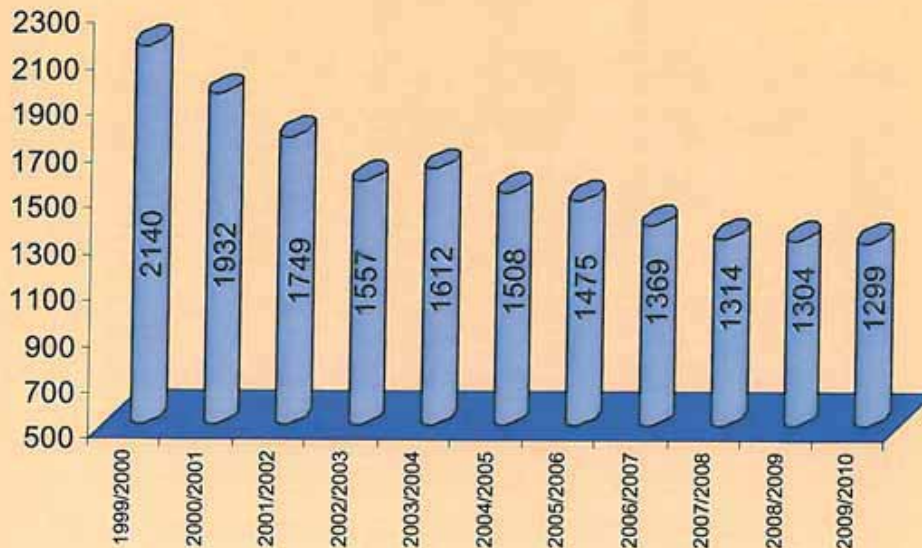
Performance Summary for 2009/10

There has been nearly a 39% reduction in accidental fires in the home since 1999.

Operation Homesafe – 11 years of the Home Fire Safety Check campaign has seen nearly 862,300 free smoke alarms installed in the homes of Merseyside's residents. At the beginning of 2009/10 there were still 250,000 homes on Merseyside that had not had any form of home safety intervention, 'Operation Homesafe' was introduced to ensure that every home on Merseyside had some form of home safety assessment. 2009/10 saw 102,326 Home Safety Checks (nearly 48,000 of these were in homes that had never had any form of assessment carried out), nearly 70,000 external Vulnerable Property Assessments (carried out when crews cannot gain access to homes), and 250,000 mail shots delivered to encourage residents to have some form of safety check.



**Accidental Fires in the Home
Between 1999/2000 - 2009/2010**



Performance Summary for 2009/10

39%

reduction in
Accidental Fires
in the
home

between
1999/2000



Over
50%

reduction in
the number of
deaths that
have occurred
in the home
since before
the HFSC
programme
began in 1999

8 in 09/10

10.5%

reduction in
fires in the
Workplace

compared to
the same period
last year
171 in 09/10
189 in 08/09

9%

reduction in
fires in
Public Buildings
compared to
the same
period last
year

220 in 09/10
240 in 08/09

13%

reduction in
fires in
Licensed Property Fires

compared to
the same
period last
year
270 in 09/10
306 in 08/09



93%

of
Accidental Fires
were confined to the
room in
which they
started

91.4%

Standards of Fire Cover
of
incidents mobilised to within
the Standards of Fire Cover
target set *

98%

of
Emergency Calls
were
answered
within 10
seconds

98% in 2009/10
96% in 08/09

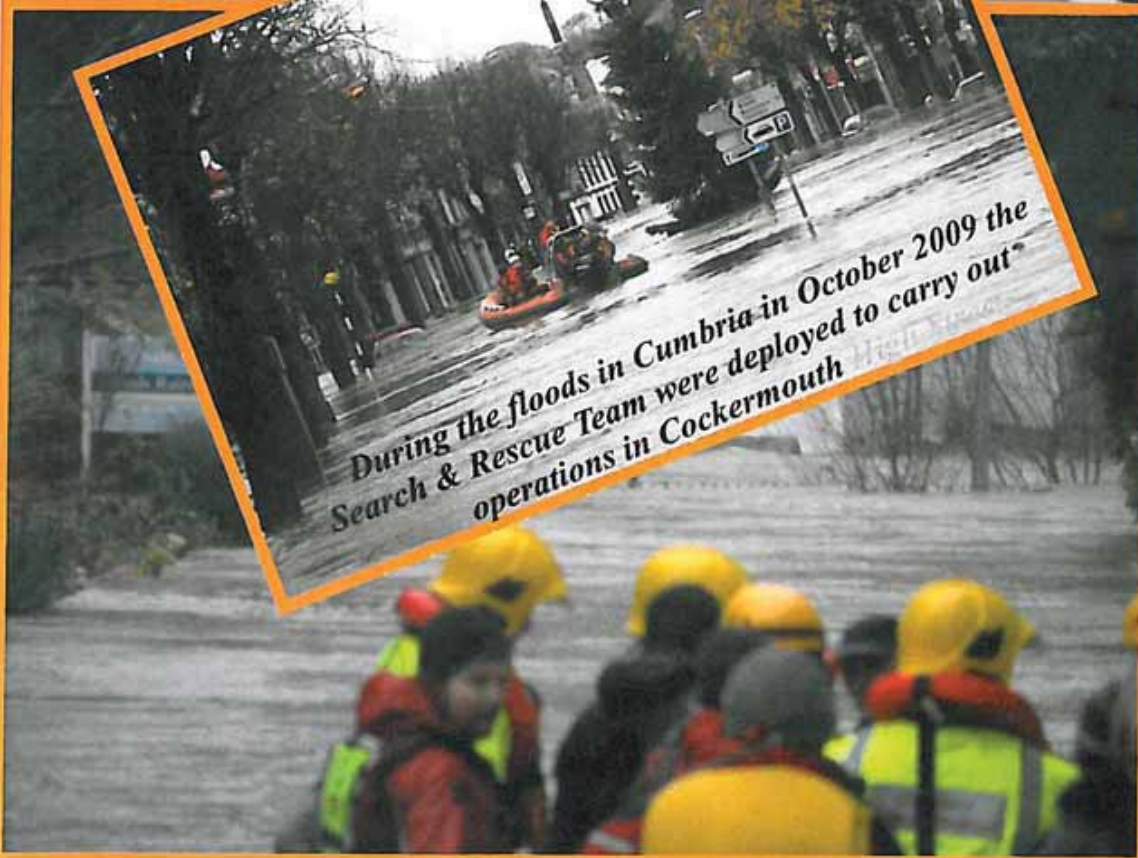
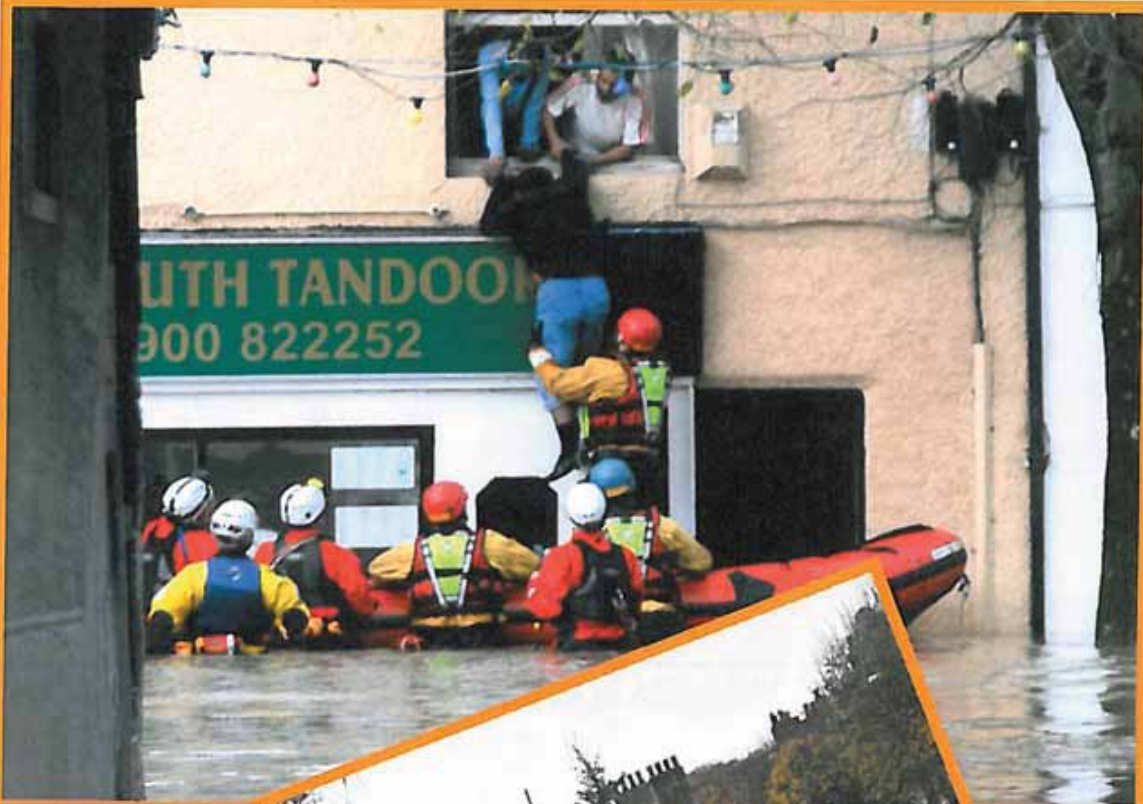
* **Standards of Fire Cover**

High Risk—1st appliance within 5 mins and 2nd within 10 mins

Med Risk—1st appliance within 6 mins and 2nd within 11 mins

Low Risk—1st appliance within 7 mins and 2nd within 12 mins

Flood Assistance in Cumbria



During the floods in Cumbria in October 2009 the Search & Rescue Team were deployed to carry out operations in Cockermouth

Working in Partnership to Make Merseyside Safer, Stronger and Healthier



MF&RS works in Partnership with many public and private and voluntary sector organisations to reduce risk and provide high quality value for money services .

Examples include:

United Utilities

Effective water management is key to a successful outcome when crews are deployed to major incidents. A 'super hydrant' agreement between United Utilities and MF&RS will ensure Merseyside is better protected against major blazes.

United Utilities and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have teamed up to identify strategic hydrants on large water mains across the county that will provide firefighters with the increased water flow they need to tackle big fires.



The deal will also have positive benefits for domestic customers by reducing the risk of low water pressure and discoloured water while the fire service is making use of mains water to fight fires.

Until now MF&RS has had only limited information about the best hydrants to use for fire fighting. By guaranteeing access to these hydrants at 121 key locations across Merseyside the deal will deliver an important boost to local firefighting capacity in the event of a serious incident.

Fire Support Network

MF&RS works extensively with Partners to reduce risk. One example is our work within the voluntary sector through the Fire Support Network. Since April 2007 the Fire Support Network have been working with MFRS to deliver initiatives to minimise the risks and effects from fire to the residents of Merseyside and assist in the delivery of the Integrated Risk Management Plan. FSN are a charity run organisation which with the aid of volunteers successfully works in Partnership with MFRS.

2009 saw the following initiatives delivered by the Fire Support Network:

- ◆ Over 72,000 Home Fire Safety leaflets delivered
- ◆ 78 High fire loads removed—removal of excess rubbish to prevent anti social behaviour fires
- ◆ Responded to 62 after care incidents—to minimise properties remaining empty for long periods after a fire or flood, volunteers help to clean and paint dwellings to ensure families can move in as soon as possible
- ◆ 680 electrical items safety tested
- ◆ To The Bright Sparks Campaign saw 60 young volunteers sign up to be trained to inform vulnerable communities on how to become more energy efficient. They have been trained to complete surveys to evaluate fuel poverty and distribute leaflets to raise awareness of the benefits available to residents from local energy agencies, many at no cost. They also offer free light bulbs to residents.

FSN SUMMER CAMPS



Football, dodgeball, rounders, table tennis and basketball



FSN Summer Camps offer the chance for free sport sessions to young people, as well as offering the chance to become sports coaches

