

## **DRY RISER TESTING – CASE STUDY**

Fire Service Direct (FSD) was contacted by the Business Manager at Hope Academy, Ashton Road, Newton-le-Willows, WA12 0AQ who requested our services to conduct the testing of three dry rising mains.

For information, Hope Academy is a £33m two year build programme, constructed by Wilmott Dixon which opened on 8th September 2011.

FSD arranged for Station 51 (Newton-le-Willows) to attend the Academy on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013 to conduct the testing of the three dry rising mains. In attendance were WM George Jennings (OIC), WM Mark Jones (Community Fire Prevention Team) and Kevin Johnson (FSD Business Manager).

On initial inspection, it became immediately apparent that the dry rising mains all had female coupling (outlets) instead male coupling (inlet), which is what would have been expected. Due to this, the dry rising mains were unable to be tested.

As the test being conducted during the school holidays, the Business Manager was not on site and as such I sent him an email communication detailing the issues, copying Community Fire Protection St Helens and Group Manager Case.

The Business manager contacted FSD on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and advised me that the Construction Company had attended the site and confirmed that all three dry risers did have the incorrect fittings and that this would be resolved immediately.

On 4<sup>th</sup> September Station 51 revisited the Academy to test the dry rising mains. In attendance were WM George Jennings (OIC), WM Mark Jones (Community Fire Prevention Team), Kevin Johnson (FSD Business Manager) and Paul Draper (Community Fire Protection Team, St Helens).

The tests were completed successfully and found to be operationally effective and working in accordance with 7(2)(d) of the Fire & Rescue Services Act (2004).

There are a number of areas here that raised concern, particularly in respect of:

1. How the original commissioning tests were completed and to what standard.
2. The potential for critical delays had the crews attended a fire call and the inability to feed water to the upper floors; and
3. Whether a private company would have reported the remedial action required to resolve the issue.

The following should be noted:

1. Station 51 personnel were professional, competent and enthusiastic in delivering the dry riser test;
2. The familiarisation of the building could prove invaluable in the event of a fire call to the premises;
3. Dry riser testing gives the Station Manager the potential to attend to observe the operational crews off site, conducting a service we have not delivered since circa 2005.

4. The issues raised above are being addressed by the Business Manager and MFRS.

FSD will be positively promoting the dry riser testing service throughout Merseyside w/c 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2013 and has already secured an agreement to deliver at 12 high rise sites on behalf of Knowsley Housing Trust and is awaiting a response from One Vision in Sefton.

**Kevin Johnson**  
**FSD Business Manager**