

Report of Assistant Chief Officer: Director of Prevention

Fire Cadets Annual Review – 2024/2025

Purpose of report

1. To provide Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Fire Cadets activity for 2024/2025.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that having scrutinised the report, it be agreed that the Fire Cadets programme continues to thrive, delivering meaningful contributions to the Service's Prevention agenda and offering young people valuable skills, experiences and opportunities for personal development.

Background and Introduction

2. The UK Fire Cadets programme, supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and affiliated with the Fire Standards Board, operates across 200 units nationwide. It is a nationally recognised, inclusive, and progressive uniformed youth organisation delivered through Fire and Rescue Services.
3. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) established its Fire Cadet unit at Droitwich Fire Station in September 2022 to support the Authority's statutory prevention functions.
4. Councillor Richard Morris was appointed Fire Authority Fire Cadet Champion for 2025 / 2026 at the Fire Authority meeting held in June 2025.

Fire Cadets – Droitwich Unit

5. The Fire Cadet unit at Droitwich is overseen by a team of volunteer instructors. The instructors are made up of Service Wholetime and On-Call staff, previous Fire Cadets (who have transitioned to a supervisory role in the unit) and a small number of parents whose children have previously been Fire Cadets themselves. The unit's two most senior Instructors have over 26 years' experience of working with Fire Cadets in HWFRS and lead the unit.
6. All Fire Cadet instructors volunteer support at weekly drill nights and additional activities. Drill nights are held every Wednesday for two hours, with Volunteer Instructors working before and after, to plan each session.

7. All Fire Cadet Instructors have a current Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate.
8. There are currently 18 Fire Cadets, 10 Instructors and 1 Young Instructor (under the age of 18).
9. The Station Commander for Prevention is the formal liaison for the unit and oversees the recruitment of volunteers. The role includes carrying out regular reviews of policy documents, guidance and procedures as well as overseeing budgetary spending.

Event Attendance

10. Throughout the year, the Fire Cadets attend both Service and community events to support Prevention activities and safety messaging. This year the Fire Cadets supported the Prevention department by delivering 116 Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) referrals. This fantastic achievement has helped increase our HFSV referrals in support of the Service's Prevention strategy to keep people safe from fire and harm.
11. Events included representing the Service at The Mayor of Droitwich's Civic Ceremony and attending the High Sheriff's Shrieval Service at Worcester Cathedral in October 2024.
12. In September at the Portsmouth Historic Docks, two teams of three Cadets took part in their first ever United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) Trauma Challenge against other Fire Cadet units from around the country. The training for this event started in June 2024 and out of ten national Fire Cadet teams, HWFRS Fire Cadets were awarded third place, receiving positive feedback from the judges. This achievement is underpinned by the professionalism and dedication of the unit's instructors in preparing the Fire Cadets to compete against units of greater experience in this type of competition.
13. In November 2024, the Fire Cadets supported the Worcestershire Medal and Awards Ceremony by meeting and greeting guests. The High Sheriff of Worcestershire's Award was also presented at the ceremony to the Top Fire Cadet. The recipient was nominated by the leaders of the Fire Cadets for demonstrating determination, enthusiasm and a desire to improve their personal skills.
14. On 10 May 2025, the annual Fire Cadets "Pass Out" Parade took place at Droitwich Fire Station. This was the annual celebration of success ceremony for all new Fire Cadet members who have achieved the required standard of skills, knowledge and discipline. The ceremony was an opportunity for those passing out to demonstrate their skills to family and friends and the Fire Cadets carried out numerous demonstrations showcasing the firefighting skills they had learnt since commencement in September 2024. This included hose running and ladder drills.

15. Assistant Chief Fire Officer Ade Elliott, Assistant Chief Officer Anna Davidson and Assistant Director Jon Butlin presented awards to all seven Fire Cadets who successfully completed their training. Other awards for the Highest Achiever, Most Improved and Highest Attendance, were presented by the Mayor of Droitwich.
16. All Fire Cadets have now successfully completed all the modules to be awarded the National Fire Cadets Award Level 1 and are now working towards the completion of the Level 2 award.
17. On 17 July 2025, Fire Cadets hosted the Secretary from the Trinidad and Tobago Branch of the Institute of Fire Engineers and the National Fire Cadet Manager where discussions involved ways it could work collaboratively in the future and share best practice. This has enhanced the reputation of the Service's Fire Cadets and provided potential opportunities to shape further the Fire Cadets support to the Prevention Strategy.
18. A recruitment campaign for the next cohort of Fire Cadets took place during the summer, recruiting ten young people for the year 2025 / 2026. The process commenced in July with a recruitment open evening, and the new Cadets will start with the unit in mid-September 2025.

Training

19. Over the last year all Instructors and Fire Cadets became qualified and certificated in Active First Aid which was delivered by HWFRS Paramedics.
20. All instructors have completed safeguarding training relevant to their roles as set out in the Services' Safeguarding Training Competency Framework. This includes Level 2 and 3 Safeguarding Children and Young People, Suicide Awareness, Prevent, Mental Capacity Act and Managing Allegations training.
21. All instructors have completed additional mandatory training including Ethical Dilemma workshops and social media training.

Budgets

22. The Fire Cadets receive an annual budget of £8,000 to maintain its function and this is managed by the Prevention Department. Additionally, the Fire Cadets and volunteers proactively fund-raise to meet the costs of their team building activities. The branch also intermittently receives charitable donations from local benefactors.
23. HWFRS Fire Cadets continue to have membership of Young Solutions Worcestershire, a progressive infrastructure charity dedicated to keeping young people safe and involved. Young Solutions provide training options and offer advice and support when required.

Fire Cadets Meetings

24. The Fire Cadets are overseen and supported by the Fire Cadet Management Group who meet on a quarterly basis. This group sets the direction of the Fire Cadets and ensures that the aims and objectives are met and that the Fire Cadets policy is complied with.
25. To ensure effective governance of the Fire Cadets unit, an Executive Committee has been formed. Chaired by the Assistant Director for Prevention, the Executive Committee ensures full integration of Fire Cadets within the Service and meets on a bi-annual basis. The meeting provides opportunity for the FRA Fire Cadet Champion to assist in decision making, provide guidance and expert opinion pertaining to Fire Cadet activity and to promote the work of the Fire Cadets in its discharging of the Fire Authorities statutory functions.

The Year Ahead

26. In September 2025, two Fire Cadets will be attending the National Memorial Arboretum to represent the Cadets at the Annual Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony.
27. Two Fire Cadets have also been nominated to attend the London Cenotaph Remembrance parade on 9 November 2025, where, with other Fire Cadets from across the UK they will pay tribute to all those who served and died during conflict.

Conclusion/Summary

28. The Fire Cadets programme continues to thrive, delivering meaningful contributions to the Service's Prevention agenda and offering young people valuable skills, experiences and opportunities for personal development.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The Service provides an £8K budget annually to cover Fire Cadets running costs and provides suitable accommodation for their base location (Marshall House at Training and Development Centre).
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<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<p>Youth engagement supports the Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and Prevention by engaging with young people locally to develop and enjoy an immersive experience in a Fire and Rescue environment and in doing so assisting them to influence their peers. It also allows the Service to demonstrate inclusivity by recognising the diversity of our community and providing equality of access to our Prevention agenda.</p> <p>CCofE – Putting our Communities First, Leadership, Equality Diversion and Inclusion (EDI).</p>
<p>Productivity & Efficiency (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<p>Working with Young People does present an element of corporate risk; however, the unit is well supported and managed within the Prevention Department and has performed well in two recent (independent) audits. Relevant risk assessments are completed for specific activities / event attendance.</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>A People Impact Assessment (PIA) was completed for initial unit set up. A PIA is completed for new activities.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>N/A</p>