

## **Report of the Chief Fire Officer**

### **12. Chief Fire Officer's Service Report**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform the Authority of recent key developments and activities.
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#### **Recommendation**

***The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.***

#### **Primary Authority Scheme**

2. In late December 2015 it was formally confirmed by the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO), part of the Government's Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) Department, that Primary Authority Partnership applications had been approved between Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and two local businesses.
3. The approved partnership with Marston's PLC (a national brewery) and one currently being negotiated with Mainstay Residential (a Worcester based property company) will see the Community Risk department offer fire safety advice to both companies, and discuss fire safety enforcement matters with other Fire Services regarding both companies' property estates around the country.
4. Both partnerships enable HWFRS to cost recover appropriate fees against any work undertaken on the businesses behalf, and each agreement will be reviewed annually. The Government's key driver for Primary Authority Partnerships is their ability to offer business consistent regulatory advice across county boundaries. The Community Risk department is pleased to have secured approval with these two local companies and will continue to discuss the merits of Primary Authority with other interested parties when appropriate.

#### **Medical Response by Firefighters**

5. West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) does not currently have any significant schemes in place to work with its local Fire and Rescue Services to utilise the emergency medical skills of firefighters, although it must be emphasised that they do have robust response arrangements utilising a number of different response resources. An outline proposal has been developed through the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) Regional Operations Committee, led by Area Commander Jon Pryce (HWFRS), which looks to offer assistance to the Ambulance Service in remote areas where an ambulance may be some distance away and where there is no WMAS community first responder available. The Chief Fire Officers of Hereford & Worcester and West Midlands Fire Service recently met with the Chief

Ambulance Officer to discuss how all West Midlands Fire Services could work more closely together.

6. In some areas and on occasions, ambulances may need to travel considerable distances to attend life threatening emergencies. All HWFRS fire stations have a defibrillator, full trauma packs, oxygen and trained staff, and we believe the FRS may have a role play in contributing to the provision of life-saving medial response. The draft proposal is being considered by WMAS as a part of a wider review of their operational response and attendance times and, should they decide to develop the proposal into a pilot scheme, we will be seeking Fire Authority approval and permission to consult more widely with staff and Representative Bodies.

### **Service to sign up to Mental Health Anti-Stigma Pledge**

7. The Service has joined over 300 emergency service employers in England by signing up to the Blue Light Time to Change Pledge, which aims to put an end to mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace.
8. One in four individuals in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year. Furthermore, independent research indicates that an estimated quarter of a million individuals who work or volunteer for the emergency services are more likely to experience a mental health problem, but are less likely to receive support. The Blue Light Programme, which is run by the mental health charity Mind, aims to address this gap by providing independent mental health support for all emergency service employees across England.
9. By signing the pledge, the Service aims to encourage staff to feel more able to speak openly about mental health and to seek support when they need it. It will also help to improve mental health awareness within the Service, which will better enable staff and volunteers to look out for themselves, their team and members of the public. Moreover, bigger problems have a better chance of being prevented if staff and volunteers feel able to get support as soon as they need it.
10. As part of the signing up to the Blue Light Time to Change Pledge the Service will be:
  - Launching an internal communications campaign to raise awareness of mental health issues and MIND support/courses available;
  - Reviewing policies and processes which impact on mental wellbeing;
  - Offering support for managers in the form of a half day course focusing on how to manage mental health within the workplace. Each district or department will be asked to nominate a minimum of one manager to attend this training; and
  - Taking part in mental health awareness week 16-22 May 2016.

### **Public access automated external defibrillator (AED) now at Broadway Fire Station**

11. Thanks to a donation from Broadway Parish Council made to the Community First Responder scheme, Broadway Fire Station now has an AED that is available to the public, 24 hours a day.
12. The AED has been supplied by West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and is located in a green security box at the front of the building. This new

addition means that there are now two public access AEDs in Broadway, with one each end of town.

13. In addition to Broadway, Bromyard, Kingsland and Redditch fire stations also have a public access AED.

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