



Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Performance & Overview Committee
2nd September 2020
Item 8 Appendix 1

Annual Report 2019/20

for Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's
Performance and Overview Committee

September 2020



Author: Mark Shone, Safety Central Manager
Head of Department: Nick Evans, Head of Prevention

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is Safety Central's second annual report, summarising performance for the period April 1st 2019 to March 31st 2020. The first annual report, presented to the Performance and Overview Committee in September 2019, covered the period between opening in July 2017 and March 2019. We have therefore produced this first full-year annual report to a simpler format that will carry forward for future years.
- 1.2 It is important to note that the reporting period straddles two academic years; the summer term of 2018/19 and the first term and a half of 2019/20.
- 1.3 The Covid-19 (C19) pandemic forced us to suspend our education programmes from Friday March 13th 2020. This meant cancelling two weeks' of visits during the reporting period. At the time of writing, we are planning to recommence some limited provision in August and September 2020.
- 1.4 In spite of a difficult and disappointing end to the year, we enjoyed another successful 12 months during which visitor numbers increased, more volunteers were recruited and new partnerships were forged. Once again we received excellent feedback from visitors and continued to refine the way in which we deliver our programmes.
- 1.5 Over the following pages we summarise:
- **visitor numbers** by type and unitary authority area
 - the result of evaluation of **visitors' learning and experience**
 - **performance against the objectives** we set ourselves for 2019/20 and other notable developments in our education programmes and partnerships
 - our **plans for 2020/21**
 - our normal **education programme** and **team structure** (Appendices 1 and 2) for newer Members less familiar with our work.
- 1.6 Once again we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our volunteer rangers, without whom we would not be able to deliver such a broad programme of activity to so many children, young people and community groups. Although we have worked hard to stay in touch with them during the C19 lockdown, we know many of them have greatly missed volunteering and the company of other rangers. We look forward to them returning as soon as it is safe for them to do so.



2. Visitor numbers

- 2.1 The following table summarises the numbers and types of visitor to Safety Central and the local authority areas in which their schools or groups are located.
- 2.2 We set ourselves a target of attracting a total of at least 9,000 visitors during 2019/20 compared to 7,000 the year before. This figure would have been exceeded had the C19 lockdown not led to the cancellation of 22 days of visits in March, during which more than 600 people were due to attend. Nevertheless, a total of 8,773 visitors represents an increase of 26% on 2018/19.
- 2.3 It is worth noting that towards the end of the year we welcomed our 20,000th visitor since opening in July 2017.
- 2.4 Although more children and young people visited in 2019/20 and they still represent the largest visitor group, the overall increase must be attributed to the growing number of adults attending with community groups and the use of the centre for training, meetings and events. This is in line with the Authority's original vision of the centre serving a diverse range of visitors.
- 2.5 We welcomed slightly fewer Pan-Cheshire and out of county schools and groups, offset by increases from three of the unitary authority areas and stakeholders. Owing to continued low attendance from Halton, there has been significant effort this year to engage schools in that area (explained later in this report).

	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	July 2017 to March 2018	Total since opening
Individual visitors				
Children and young people	Mainstream 3,434 +99	Mainstream 3,335	3,313	10,995
	Non-mainstream 481 +49	Non-mainstream 432		
Accompanying adults	628 +94	534	645	1,807
Adult community group visitors	1,598 +664	934	Adult programme not yet launched	2,532
Community group helpers	211 +6	205		416
Stakeholder events, training and meetings	2,421 +921	1,500	533	4,454
Total visitors	8,773 +1,833	6,940	4,491	20,204



	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	July 2017 to March 2018	Total since opening
Visiting school and community groups by local authority area				
Cheshire East	43 +11	32	32	Totals since opening would not be meaningful owing to some schools and groups making repeat bookings each year.
Cheshire West and Chester	46 +6	40	25	
Halton	13 -6	19	11	
Warrington	58 +27	31	27	
Pan-Cheshire	20 -16	36	2	
Out of county	6 -4	10	2	
Total	186 +18	168	99	-

2.6 Included in the totals above are visitors taking part in other Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service interventions that make use of the centre for some or all of their programmes. These include visits by young people taking part in the Respect, Prince's Trust and cadet schemes and participants in Think Drive Survive, Biker Down and Pedal Smart road safety initiatives.

2.7 In addition, a range of partner organisations made use of the centre throughout the year in ways allied to our safety and well-being objectives. Delegates are counted in the stakeholder events, training and meetings category on the previous page. Bookings included:

- **British Red Cross** training day
- **Cheshire East Council** care group meeting
- **Cheshire Downs Syndrome Support** family fun day
- **Cheshire Magistrates Bench** meeting and training
- **Cheshire Police** departmental meetings and training
- **Cheshire Road Safety Partnership** major campaign launch
- **Cheshire Safer Schools and Young People's Partnership** school events
- **Cheshire Youth United** meeting and tour
- **Co-op** regional team meetings
- **Eclipse** junior dance troupe meeting and tour
- **Everton in the Community** meetings and tours
- **HM Lord Lieutenancy** conference for deputy lord lieutenants
- **Halton head teachers'** meeting and tour
- **Heartstart Lymm** monthly first aid sessions for local residents
- **High Sheriff of Cheshire** meetings and tour
- **Home Office** immigration enforcement team meeting
- **Institution of Occupational Safety and Health** Crewe branch meeting
- **JESIP** multi-agency training
- **Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service** tours for elected members and staff



- **Made by Mortals** theatre project with excluded young people
- **Manchester Airport** health and safety team meeting and tour
- **Manchester Camerata** music and theatre project for primary schools
- **NSPCC** schools' service meeting
- **National Fire Chiefs Council** regional thematic meetings and tours
- **North Wales Fire and Rescue Service** arson reduction team meeting
- **North West Ambulance Service** paramedic training and meetings
- **SP Energy Networks** health and safety team meeting
- **Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings** team meeting and tour
- **Silver Rainbows** coffee mornings and tours for older LGBT+ people
- **University of Staffordshire** health faculty meeting and tour
- **Warrington Borough Council** LGBT History Month planning meetings
- **Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** conference on preventing infants from being shaken
- **Warrington Primary Head Teachers' Association** meeting and tour
- **Warrington Safeguarding Partnership** meeting and tours
- **Warrington Voluntary Action** meeting and tour
- **YouthFed** training days for youth work professionals.



3. Visitors' learning and experience

- 3.1 Measuring behavior change in the disciplines of accident prevention and health promotion is problematic because it is difficult to establish a 'cause and effect' link between an intervention and any long-term difference in outcomes or attitudes. For that reason, we have taken a realistic, blended approach that aims to gauge visitors' satisfaction with their experience and the levels of understanding about key risk factors before and after a visit.
- 3.2 For children and young people, this involves completing quizzes before and after their tour, with the improvement in knowledge and understanding recorded. We had arranged for two undergraduates from the University of Chester to visit a sample of schools in April 2020 to measure longer-term retention of knowledge after their visits, but this could not proceed owing to the C19 closure of schools. We hope to undertake this work in 2021.
- 3.3 Children, young people, teachers, group leaders and adult visitors taking part in the community group programme also complete simple feedback cards which they can complete before they leave the centre or return to us via Freepost.
- 3.4 As was the case last year, it is clear from the results of this evaluation that the vast majority of people enjoy their visit and, in the case of teachers or supporting adults, strongly agree it benefits those they bring to the centre. There is also a marked improvement in knowledge and understanding of safety and lifeskill issues before and after a visit.

	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	July 2017 to March 2018	All time average
Average improvement in key subject knowledge after a visit	68%*	76%	88%	77%
Teachers rating their visit as 'good' or 'very good'	100% of 137 responding	100% of 110 responding	100% of 247 responding	100% of 247 responding
Teachers who would visit again	100% of 137 responding	100% of 110 responding	100% of 247 responding	100% of 247 responding
Percentage of children and young people scoring their visit 4 or 5 out of 5	94% of 736 responding	93% of 1,045 responding	93.5% of 1,781 responding	93.5% of 1,781 responding
Percentage of adult community group visitors scoring their visit 4 or 5 out of 5	99% of 420 responding	Adult programme not yet launched	-	-

* KS1 quiz scores were added during this year, affecting the overall percentage improvement.



3.5 The following comments represent a selection of the positive feedback from teachers and group leaders attending with children and young people:

- We really can't believe how much you packed in to the day and how much the children learnt. Parents have already said they haven't stopped talking about it.
- All staff extremely helpful and knowledgeable. Children were comfortable and engaged.
- Wonderful visit, so hands on and current. All the children enjoyed, learnt so much.
- It was very informative and was set at the correct level for the age group.
- All the rangers were superb, great at all the tasks, very welcoming and inclusive.
- Excellent ranger was able to pitch information and questioning well to a low-ability group.
- Very practical and thought provoking real-life situations.
- We had a fantastic two days with you and can't wait to come back next year. The teaching, facilities and organisation were excellent.
- An invaluable day with practical, real world advice. It's already had a real impact on our children.
- Every child was included and Helen made sure the children had full understanding at the end of each activity.
- Staff worked hard to provide a positive experience for pupils at an appropriate level including making last minute changes to program.
- Informative and thought-provoking, highlighting how to eradicate risk.
- You pitched it perfectly for the group and we were totally spoilt by having four fantastic rangers all to ourselves.
- Excellent facilities which gave the children real-life contexts for the information given. Friendly, knowledgeable staff who were excellent with the children.
- Learners and staff had a great day, some didn't want to leave! Thank you to the rangers, Hazel and Selina for making today run so smoothly. The information and knowledge gained will equip our learners for the future. Thank you.

3.6 In addition, we received constructive feedback that we will take into account when refreshing our activities, visit formats and our ranger training:

- Spend a little longer on internet safety.
- I think the children would benefit from playtime after break.
- If the students had the area to run around outside at lunch that would improve it.
- Rangers were not geared up for non-verbal children to give them time to answer.
- Some parts felt rushed.
- Our ranger didn't seem clued up on how to speak to our pupils in wheelchairs.
- The facilities are amazing and staff very welcoming, but unfortunately the ranger did not recognise the cognitive ability of the group and was rather patronising towards them. This also showed in the ranger putting words into their mouths as they tried to answer.
- A pre-visit pack for children with special needs would be beneficial (e.g. tour plan, agenda of day, photos).
- The juggling, Jenga and hoop activities weren't really beneficial and more time could be spent on another workshop.
- Make more of bullying – not just a quiz, do more on strategies.

3.7 Here is a selection of responses from adult visitors, who participated in our SaferTogether community group session, when asked if there was anything we could improve upon:

- Amazing staff, amazing opportunity, amazing facilities.
- It seemed perfect, giving us a lot to think about.
- The whole visit was excellent. Thank you to the staff and volunteers for a great day, the village is fantastic.
- The visit more than met my expectations. I would love to be able to bring my grandchildren.



- I could not see where it could be improved. I was very impressed with the two rangers. They were clear and precise.
- Not needed really and the information pack is a fantastic reminder and will be very useful.
- Very good resource that is fit for purpose to educate people on the dangers/hazards at home and in the community.
- The road safety element would have been well suited to our group
- A very interesting and professionally run establishment. I feel that there is not much room for improvement - it is already excellent!
- Sell the products that you advocate.
- Some real hazards exist (unmarked edges of paths 'outside', otherwise it can seem you don't practice what you preach).
- Personal speaker for the guides would help or wait until the group as gathered before explaining.
- Less judgemental tone in the very messy bedroom "horrible", "nasty" - "dangerous" would be a better word.
- Possibly include the safety hazards in the garage and garden shed, also dangers of the loft and loft ladders etc.
- All excellent and clear and concise. Really kind and lovely staff - thank you!
- Possibly a very short break midway through.
- Not sure, everything seems to be already covered, thank you very much for looking after me whilst on oxygen and using a walk on the tour.
- It already exceeded expectations but to include a visit to the fire station would make it even better.



4. Performance against objectives for 2019/20

- 4.1 In last year's annual report we set ourselves a number of key objectives aimed at enhancing and refining the way in which we operate. In addition, we proposed a number of solutions to some operational challenges that we had encountered during our first two years.
- 4.2 As summarised in the table below, we are pleased to report that we largely achieved what we set out to do. Any pieces of work that are incomplete will be carried forward to 2020/21, during which every effort will be made to progress them bearing in mind the likely impact of any ongoing C19 restrictions.

Key objectives	
1. Increase overall visitor numbers to 9,000 between April 1 st 2019 and March 31 st 2020.	9,377 booked to attend, but ultimately reduced to 8,773 attending owing to C19 closure.
2. Recruit and maintain a cohort of 50 volunteer rangers.	37 active and a further five in the application or training process at March 31 st 2020 – an increase of 11 rangers on the same time the previous year. Internal audit found 'significant assurance' in the way the volunteering programme runs.
3. Working with colleagues in Business Intelligence to develop ways of targeting schools and community groups in areas of highest need.	Annual Indices of Multiple Deprivation now used to target marketing at schools and groups. Direct engagement with Halton schools led to 15 head teachers booking for three full weeks in April and May 2020. These are to be rearranged for later in 2020/21, with support from Crimebeat to subsidise transport costs.
4. Develop a relationship with an academic partner to further develop the process of evaluating visits.	Working with the University of Chester to place two undergraduate students with us each May to produce an evaluation report that includes measurement of post-visit retention of knowledge.
5. Achieve Council for Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, to give assurance to teachers about the safety and quality of provision.	Action plan drawn up to work towards standards, but Quality Badge scheme suspended in December pending update and relaunch following C19 schools closure.



6. Increase social media following to more than 1,000 on both Twitter and Facebook.	Twitter followers currently stand at 1,223 and Facebook followers at 649.
Other solutions	
7. Launch a new, user-friendly website, with integrated calendar and ranger sign-up system and to better showcase the centre's work.	New website launched in February 2020 with live booking functionality. Ranger sign-up system in place, but yet to be introduced owing to C19 suspension of programmes.
8. Refit our mock convenience store with support from the Co-op.	New store fitted out and launched in December 2019, at a cost of £35,000 to the Co-op and its suppliers. Old shop fittings, props and stock donated to Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service's SkillZone safety centre.
9. Appoint a new maintenance contractor to look after scenery and interactives.	Tender specification drawn up and pre-tender engagement begun with potential suppliers, but process suspended owing to C19 closure. Process recommencing August 2020.
10. Explore an alternative educational use for the building site scenario.	Cheshire Safer Schools and Young People's Partnership, YouthFed and volunteer rangers support the idea of a small multi-purpose classroom space, themed on its exterior to resemble a community centre but using projection to enable the interior to be altered for different topics. Business case and project plan in 2020/21.
11. Quality-assure the evaluation methodology for revisiting schools to test longer-term retention of knowledge.	See 4 above regarding engagement with University of Chester.
12. Relaunch the KS3 Lessons4Life programme in a format more appealing to schools and youth groups.	Programme rebranded as SafeWise and redesigned to cover criminal justice system and cybersafety in the morning with key partners, then fire and road safety, first aid and diversity and inclusion in the afternoon with rangers. Pilot session postponed owing to C19.
13. Trial shorter version of the new KS3 programme with older uniformed	1.5 hour evening fire and road safety successfully trialled with scout groups in



groups such as cadets, scouts and guides.	October 2019 and made available to book through the new website.
14. Trial bonfire and Halloween sessions for younger uniformed youth groups such as cubs and brownies.	Sessions trialled in October 2019 with mixed results. Considerable effort required to set the centre up for evening themed sessions, when school visits run during the day.
15. Trial public SaferTogether sessions using Eventbrite, for people who do not belong to a structured community groups.	One session organised in September 2019 but insufficient public interest to run it. Focus will be on engaging a wider range of community groups.
16. Further explore options for a programme aimed at parents and carers of 0-5 year olds, continuing discussions with the Millie's Trust family first aid charity.	Partnership offer made to Millie's Trust, but no response received. Discussions now underway with Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust about running antenatal and parenting classes at the centre.



5. Our plans for 2020/21

- 5.1 Even though restrictions are gradually easing and children are returning to school in September 2020, the C19 pandemic will continue to have a significant impact on the way we run Safety Central for some time to come. For the foreseeable future it will not be possible to accommodate large groups of visitors or have different groups using the centre at the same time. The health, safety and well-being of our visitors, volunteers and staff must remain our number one priority.
- 5.2 For that reason, we have agreed with the Service Management Team a proportionate and phased approach to restarting some of our activities:
- Phase 1, July 2020 – making the centre a C19 Secure building, enabling the staff team to work there on a limited number of days
 - Phase 2, August 2020 – running pre-booked two-hour summer safety tours for single family/household groups of up to six people
 - Phase 3, September 2020 – hosting one KS1 and KS2 primary school visit a day, Monday to Thursdays, for single classes of up to 30 children, touring the centre in teams of six plus one teacher and one ranger
 - Phase 4, January 2021 – relaunch all education programmes and use of the centre by partner agencies if circumstances allow.
- 5.3 During Phase 3 the Service’s Prince’s Trust and Respect teams will be able to use the centre on Mondays to Thursdays not booked by schools. We will also proceed with a planned trial of a small community midwife clinic with Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, using our First Aid/Quiet Room on Fridays.
- 5.4 As part of the Service’s departmental planning process, our five key objectives for 2020/21 had already been agreed prior to C19 having a major impact on the way we work. While it will not be possible to further increase our visitor numbers, we will continue to work towards the other objectives around operating the centre in the way set out above.

Key objectives 2020/21

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | Increase overall visitor numbers to 9,500 between April 1 st 2020 and March 31 st 2021. |
| 2. | Maintain a steady cohort of 50 volunteer rangers. |
| 3. | Measure the number of schools and groups visiting from areas of deprivation to set a benchmark for the following year. |



4. Undertake a project to replace the building site scenario with another relevant educational feature.
5. Update the intro/outro films shown in the cinema room before and after a visit.

Objectives carried over from 2019/20

6. Work with the University of Chester to measure and evaluate longer-term retention of knowledge among children who have visited with school.
7. Work towards Council for Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, to give assurance to teachers about the safety and quality of provision, if circumstances allow scheme to relaunch.
8. Scope and trial home safety and first aid classes for parents of 0-5 year olds in partnership with Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, if circumstances allow.



Appendix 1 – our normal programme at a glance

SAFETYSTARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aimed at children aged 5-7 in Years 1 and 2 at KS1. Five 20-minute games focussing on fire, home and road safety, five ways to wellbeing and healthy eating. Activity book, colouring and outdoor space available at break times and lunch. Maximum of 40 children across five teams, each with two rangers – one facilitating, one acting ‘unsafely’ to help reinforce messages.
SAFETYQUEST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aimed at children aged 9-11 in Years 5 and 6 at KS2. Twelve quick-fire activities lasting 12 to 36 minutes covering subjects above plus online, water, electricity, farm and building site safety, basic first aid, bullying and journey planning. Based around the choices of a fictional family, introduced in the cinema room, and evaluated using quiz software. Maximum of 60 children across five ranger-led teams.
SAFEWISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aimed at young people aged 13+ at KS3 and Respect, Prince’s Trust, pupil referral units and cadet and uniformed youth groups. Consequences of crime and cybersafety in the morning, followed by fire safety, road safety, first aid and diversity and inclusion in the afternoon. Maximum of 30 young people across four staff or partner-led teams.
SAFER TOGETHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aimed at community groups including Women’s Institutes, Rotary Clubs, faith groups, social clubs, residents’ associations and carers’ groups – not specifically for older people. Four 25-minute activities focussing on fire safety, accidents at home and assistive technology, personal safety and online scams. Maximum of 40 people across four staff or ranger-led teams.

	9.30am to 2.30pm	2.30pm to 5pm	6.30pm to 9pm
MONDAY	SAFETYSTARS SAFETYQUEST SAFEWISE	SAFERTOGETHER	HEARTSTART
TUESDAY			FIRECHOIR
WEDNESDAY			SAFERTOGETHER
THURSDAY			UNIFORMED YOUTH GROUPS
FRIDAY	BESPOKE VISITS	<i>TEAM PLANNING</i>	CLOSED
SATURDAY	SAFERTOGETHER	ROAD SAFETY	
SUNDAY	ROAD SAFETY		



Appendix 2 – our team

