



SEPTEMBER 2021

# INFORMATIVE

The quarterly bulletin of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

**CELEBRATING THE  
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NEWLY QUALIFIED  
FIREFIGHTERS**

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## NEW WELSH FIRE KIT FOR FIREFIGHTERS

**Fire crews across North Wales were issued with a new Welsh fire kit in July, signifying a major investment for the fire and rescue service.**

**Mike Owen, Head of Response, said: “Staff worked successfully with representatives from the manufacturers to complete this project which was made all the more challenging when the coronavirus restrictions came into place.”**

Following extensive trials and end user feedback, Ballyclare Ltd were the successful manufacturer selected to supply the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services with operational fire kit.

The Xenon fire kit is lightweight and provides maximum protection, aiming to minimise the risk of heat stress, which can impact decision making, by reducing the physiological load on the wearer. The innovative design provides high levels of comfort, breathability and freedom of movement, whilst ensuring excellent thermal protection including being water resistant and quick drying.

Performance trials took place back in April 2019 in Earlswood where crews on an all-Wales basis



took part in the extensive end-user trials. The comprehensive evaluations took place over a period of five days, with each set of kit evaluated in a number of key areas through practical scenarios. These included road traffic collisions, working at height, hose running, working in confined spaces, a casualty drag and hot fire breathing apparatus wears.

The shortlisted kits underwent Station based pilots. The final stage saw experienced crews carrying out extensive compartment firefighting techniques and procedures in extremely challenging conditions in Dolgellau's Fire Behaviour Facility.

Some of the current fire kit will be retained for use by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and the remainder is to be donated to charities who supply emergency equipment and aid to less well developed countries.



## AWARDS CEREMONY CELEBRATES STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

**This year's North Wales Fire and Rescue Service awards ceremony was a double cause for celebration in terms of honouring members of staff as well as being able to hold the event once more after it had to be postponed last year due to the pandemic.**

The annual awards ceremony is always one of the highlights of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service calendar and this was particularly so for this year's celebration held in September.

The Lord Lieutenant of Clwyd, Mr Harry George Fetherstonhaugh OBE, presented Long Service and Good Conduct Medals to operational staff during an outdoor presentation ceremony held at the headquarter in St Asaph.

The Chair of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, Councillor Peter Lewis, also presented the Loyal Service Award to members of support staff who had completed 20 years' service.

Dawn Docx, Chief Fire Officer said: "Receiving a long service and good conduct medal is an important occasion for every firefighter and this ceremony demonstrates the degree of commitment and dedication each one of the recipients has given to the Fire and Rescue Service in North Wales. All recipients can take pride and satisfaction in receiving their Long Service and Good Conduct Medals or Loyal Service Awards.

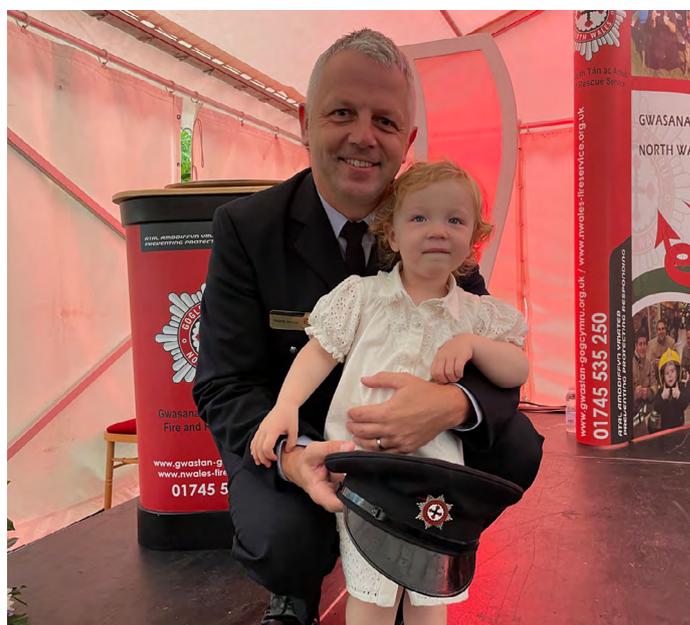


“Owing to the prevailing coronavirus circumstances, last year the Service had to make the difficult decision to postpone the 2020 Awards Ceremony in order to protect staff and defer until it was safe to bring people together to properly recognise employee achievements.

**“I was delighted this year therefore that we were able to organise appropriate recognition of staff whilst maintaining Covid security, despite the unpredictable weather. My heartfelt congratulations go to all those who received their medals.”**



Councillor Peter Lewis, Chair of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, said: “On behalf of members of the North Wales Fire Authority I would like to congratulate everyone who received a medal or award. Many thanks to you all for your dedication.”





# CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF NEWLY QUALIFIED FIREFIGHTERS

## **Future Leader Apprentices who joined the Service back in April took part in a celebration of achievement parade in July.**

The firefighter apprentices are now on placements with full-time watches and undertaking periods supporting various departments across the Service, along with enrolment on academic and vocational qualifications.

All the latest Firefighter Apprentices have since completed their development and have been able to celebrate their achievement in this way with these events taking place outside on the yard at Rhyl Community Fire Station, giving family and friends the opportunity to witness what the apprentices have completed during their initial training. They performed a fire drill on the yard before being presented with their certificate by Dawn Docx, Chief Fire Officer.

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**Jami Jennings, Head of Training Delivery, said: “I’d like to congratulate our apprentices. This is an exciting opportunity for these individuals and for us as a Service.”**

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“These apprenticeships demonstrate how the national employment strategy can work to strengthen and promote development and growth within our public services.

“Operational training staff and colleagues across the Service area have been working to support the apprentices throughout their development.”



# PASSIONATE ABOUT PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE TO WORK AND VISIT

**The safety of local business has never been higher on the agenda for the Service as this July marked the 10-year anniversary of the reorganisation of the department which oversees business fire safety.**

Bob Mason, Head of Business Fire Safety, explains more: “Back in July 2011, we reorganised the Business Fire Safety model to provide a more responsive and dedicated team.

“Since introducing these changes, we have been able to target training in a more focused manner, with our professional staff working to provide reassurance to the public that commercial premises are safe.

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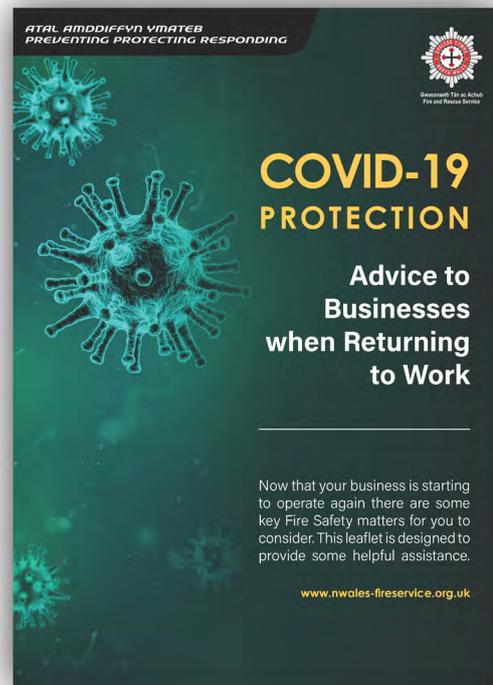
**“I am proud to say that the individuals within our team are wholly invested in business fire safety and passionate about providing a safe space for people to work and visit.**

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“Staff are being developed constantly, addressing new challenges including dealing with recycling plants, high rise premises and new social care premises. We are also welcoming changes to fire safety laws that will allow them to help keep people safe in their flats.

“Four of the staff within the team have worked in the department since the reorganisation - and it has been good to see how they have been able to support new staff and apprentices joining us on their journey.

“I have enjoyed working with all members of the department over the last 10 years. Their enthusiasm, thirst for knowledge and dedication have helped us to build a department to be proud of. The department continues to move forward and will provide the Service with the technical fire safety advice it needs in the coming years.”



If you would like to receive business fire safety information please sign up for email updates via the home page of the [North Wales Fire and Rescue Service website](https://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk).

If you need any information on business fire safety please contact the following:

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**ConwyOffice@nwales-fireservice.org.uk**

Telephone – **01745 355 450**

**Flintshire.Wrexham@nwales-fireservice.org.uk**

Telephone – **01978 367870**

**Gwyneddmonmailbox@nwales-fireservice.org.uk**

Telephone – **01286 662999**

Business Education Officer –

**Alastair.Horton@nwales-fireservice.org.uk**

**01745 535250**

# HOSPITAL VISITS SUPPORTING CHILD SAFETY



**Service staff were keen to support Child Safety Week in June even though Covid restrictions meant keeping a distance to maintain safety.**

The annual campaign is organised by the Child Accident Prevention Trust to raise awareness of the risks of child accidents and how they can be prevented.

Staff accompanied Sbarc the dragon who made an appearance outside Ysbyty Gwynedd, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and Ysbyty Wrexham Maelor hospitals to share colouring books and pencils with children on the wards.

Youngsters from Ysgol Dewi Sant, Rhyl also featured in a specially organised short video featuring

important safety messages for children.

Kevin Jones, Head of Community Safety, said: "We're here to keep people safe, but in addition to responding to incidents, we understand the value of preventing incidents from happening in the first place. As a result, we also do a huge amount of work to prevent accidents from happening as part of our Safe and Well Checks.

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**“We wanted to support Child Safety Week in a bid to encourage parents, guardians or carers to think about how they can put simple measures in place to safeguard children against anything from minor accidents to serious harm and injury.**

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“We work hard throughout the year supporting campaigns and coordinating educational sessions for schools, but Child Safety Week is a fantastic opportunity to spread the word on safety as wide as possible. This year we were still able to get some messages out whilst maintaining social distancing whilst visiting the different sites.”

# SILVER AWARD FOR EMPLOYER RECOGNITION

**North Wales Fire and Rescue Service was honoured with a Silver Employer Recognition Scheme Award from the Ministry of Defence in July.**



This scheme encompasses awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to the defence and armed forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Service is one of only 24 Welsh employers to have received this Silver Award in 2021 - fellow winners include local authorities and private sector employers from across Wales.

Stuart Millington, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, said: "I am delighted to see our work recognised in this way - the Service signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant in February last year to mark our

commitment to members of the British Armed Forces and their families. Achieving the silver award for employer recognition was great news.

"Our work to support current and future staff members with a connection to the armed forces community has continued this year and we have developed a new Armed Forces Veterans and Reservists policy. This formalises the procedures for releasing Reservists for their training commitments and details the support available, including additional leave, for Reservists or close family members of those who are mobilised.

"The policy also describes our commitment to the guaranteed interview scheme for qualifying veterans and Armed Forces partners and spouses.

"In addition, we have established Armed Forces champions within the Service who continue to be available to provide support wherever necessary."

## SHOWING OUR SUPPORT FOR ARMED FORCES WEEK

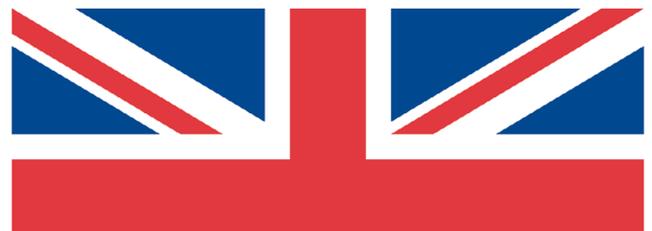
**This year the Service's support for Armed Forces Week in June focused on virtual celebrations and a week of special events, culminating in Armed Forces Day.**

Stuart Millington, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, said: "It was really good to see staff getting involved with the celebrations.

"This year we also celebrated Reservists Day, with a post on our social media channels thanking our colleagues who play their part in protecting us all.

"Reservists give up their spare time to serve in the Reserve Forces, balancing their civilian life with a military career to ensure that should their country require them, they would be ready to serve as part of the military.

"The Reserve Forces make up approximately one sixth of our Armed Forces personnel and as such are integral to protecting the nation's security at home and overseas."



**ARMED FORCES DAY**  
**26 JUNE 2021**





## TIMELY FIRE SAFETY REMINDER TO LICENSED PREMISES OWNERS

**Following the reopening of nightclub venues in August without the need for Covid restrictions, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service worked to ensure licensed premises owners and proprietors kept up with fire safety requirements.**

A campaign was undertaken to ensure that legally required fire safety provisions were in order and that occupancy numbers were kept to a safe level.

Bob Mason, Head of Business Fire Safety, said: “After the long closures under lockdown it was understandable that pubs and nightclubs in North Wales were looking forward to welcoming back customers following the lifting of Covid restrictions.

“With the increased number of seasonal visitors to the area and the lifting of restrictions, it looked very likely that licensed premises in the region would be exceptionally busy from August onwards.

“With this in mind, we were keen to highlight how it must be ensured that fire safety provisions are in full working order for the safety of customers and staff. It is of paramount importance that occupants can

be alerted to a fire and are able to quickly and safely escape from the premises in an emergency.

“If you run a licensed premises it is a legal requirement to have a recorded fire risk assessment. It is important that you review and update your Fire Risk Assessment to account for any changes made to the premises, to identify if your existing general fire precautions remain adequate and where deemed necessary, implement additional control measures to ensure occupants are kept safe in the event of a fire.

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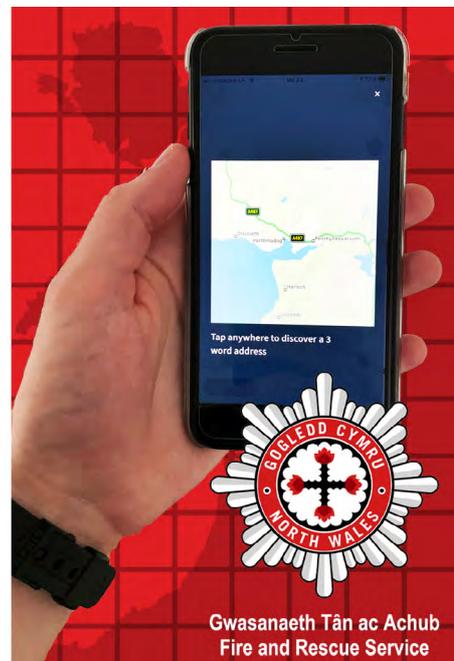
**“Your fire risk assessment will also determine the maximum occupancy figure for the premises - the maximum number of people that can be safely accommodated. This figure is based on the number and size of available exits and floor space factors. The maximum occupancy figure must never be exceeded.”**

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Further Business Fire Safety information is available on the [North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's website](#).



# what3words



## #KNOWEXACTLYWHERE IN AN EMERGENCY WITH WHAT3WORDS

**Every second counts in an emergency and time wasted explaining the location of a fire could endanger lives - at best, it can be frustrating and a drain on resources but at worst it can mean the difference between life and death.**

With an influx of more visitors than usual to North Wales this year, our control room reported callers having difficulty explaining where they were. This year more than ever, emergency services across the UK experienced an exceptionally busy summer as restrictions on international travel resulted in a huge increase in people opting to holiday at home.

Peter Davis, Senior Head of Control and ICT at North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, said: “Where’s the emergency?’ is one of the first questions asked when people call 999 but saying exactly where you are can be challenging, particularly if you are not familiar with the area.

“We experienced callers with incomplete details about where they were so our advice to visitors was to make a proper note of their camp site or holiday location when visiting the region.

“We also raised awareness of what3words which can help pinpoint a location, and took part in #KnowExactlyWhere summer safety campaign in July to promote use of free what3words app and how it can be effectively utilised in an emergency.”

Every year emergency services join together with local authorities and organisations from across the UK to encourage the public to download the app as a simple way to save time, resources, and in some cases, lives. What3words has divided the world into a grid of 3m x 3m squares, giving each square a unique identifier made of three random words which can help pinpoint a precise square.

“We have been using what3words since 2019,” said Peter. “It has been used a number of times to help us to ensure our resources are sent exactly where help is needed, fast.

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**“We encourage people to download the app which can be used in emergency situations and is also a useful aid for anyone who needs a better understanding of their location.**

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“What3words can reduce the amount of time spent pinpointing the location of a fire, allowing crews to get to work to tackle the fire before it spreads.

“It’s great to see new technology being developed which is accessible for most of us and can really make a big difference in times of need.”



## GORSE FIRE IN RHEWL DEMONSTRATED EXCELLENT PARTNERSHIP WORKING

**Crews attended an accidental mountain fire in Rhewl near Llangollen in June which saw approximately a kilometre of gorse, undergrowth and forestry affected.**

The incident involved considerable resources and the area was monitored closely over a number of hours for hotspots once the fire was brought under control.

Firefighters worked with colleagues from Natural Resources Wales, Denbighshire Wardens from Denbighshire County Council, North Wales Police and the local 4 x 4 volunteer group to bring the incident under control. A helicopter also attended to drop water on the hillside to help extinguish the fire.

With this fire occurring during the period of hot weather experienced this summer, crews were faced with some extremely challenging conditions.

The incident highlighted the importance of partnership working, with assistance from other agencies helping to bring the fire under control quickly and safely.

