



Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service



Richard Smith has been in the fire service for 27 years and joined Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service as its Deputy Chief Fire Officer in July 2003. He took on the role of Director of Service Policy and Planning in 2004 which included responsibility for health and safety leadership.

DRIVERS FOR LEADERSHIP

To successfully mainstream health and safety into the organisation it was critical to get the message across that the Service takes the continued health, safety and welfare of its employees very seriously and that it is important enough to have a Director responsible. Richard feels he has a moral responsibility to his staff and despite the inherent risks within the fire service he believes that people should be able to do a job in a safe operating environment.

	No. of employees	1400 (57 Fire Stations across Mid and West Wales)
	Business Sector	Public
	Business Activities	Fire & Rescue Service
	Location	Wales (covering 6 counties)

“Richard’s leadership leaves no doubt that his regard for health and safety issues in the Service is one of high priority, his direction during health and safety meetings is clear and precise and leaves no stone unturned to get to the bottom of an issue.”

Roger Perry, Fire Brigade’s Union Wales Regional Official

VALUE OF LEADERSHIP

- Demonstrate to staff and trade unions that we are taking health and safety seriously
- We are meeting a key corporate objective by being socially responsible
- Providing a role model for other fire services
- Improved relationship with the HSE
- Clear lines of responsibility and communication on health and safety issues



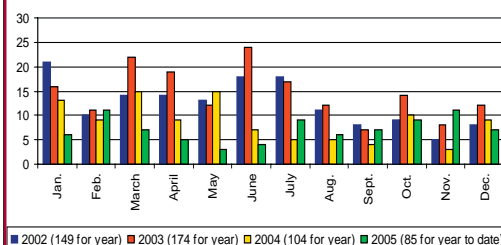
Richard Smith



BENEFITS OF LEADERSHIP

- Improved management of corporate strategic risks leading to insurance liability premiums being reduced by over £100,000
- Sickness absence as a result of work related injuries reduced by 50% over last 2 years which has reduced the strain on resources and costs
- Reduced injury incidence rate by over 50% during the last 3 years
- Greater awareness by staff of their role in achieving health and safety standards within the workplace

On Duty Injuries
2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 to date





RICHARD'S MESSAGE TO OTHER DIRECTORS IS...

“You have a responsibility for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of your staff so you should accept accountability and lead your organisation in managing health and safety risks, not trust to luck or leave it to others. It is right from a moral as well as a business viewpoint.”

HOW WERE ARRANGEMENTS DEVELOPED?

Advice from the Home Office and HSE during 1998/99 and collaborative work with the two other Welsh Fire & Rescue Services led to the appointment of a Health & Safety Adviser reporting to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer. This brought a wealth of expertise in health and safety management into the Service.

Richard joined the Service in 2003 as Deputy Chief Fire Officer and he took on the role of Director for Health and Safety. The Health & Safety Adviser's role also changed to that of a Risk Manager to allow other aspects of Corporate risk to be incorporated under one department reporting directly to Richard.

CURRENT BOARD ARRANGEMENTS

The Board has four Executive Directors. The Executive Group includes other Senior Management representatives to help facilitate the function of the Board.

The Service's Health and Safety Policy is jointly signed by the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman of the Fire Authority. The Risk Manager reports directly to Richard and works closely with a representative of the Fire Brigade's Union.

WHAT WAS DONE?

Richard placed significant emphasis on improving accident and injury reporting, investigation and monitoring procedures. Another initiative introduced early intervention and reduced days lost through work related absence. He also instigated initiatives to minimise vehicle reversing accidents, enforced the wearing of seatbelts and personal protective equipment at incidents and assisted in developing a smoking policy. Greater emphasis was also placed on implementing health and safety management audits. Increased involvement with insurance brokers allowed the Service to obtain expertise in strategic risk management which helped develop a number of risk control processes.

DIRECTOR'S ENGAGEMENT

Richard has a programme of fire station visits where he will engage the workforce to discuss health and safety issues. Staff and unions are consulted on key aspects of health and safety policy and representatives are involved in health and safety committees. Health & Safety performance data is provided to Directors on a regular basis. Richard shares the expertise and best practice developed in Mid & West Wales with other services.



WHAT DOES THE DIRECTOR DO?

“Richard's drive, enthusiasm and leadership as our Services' Director for health and safety has focused everyone's responsibility for health and safety management. The work of the Fire & Rescue Service can be very demanding and maintaining a safe workplace for our employees is crucial in delivering an effective service to the public”

Mr. Brian Hall, Chair of the Mid & West Wales Fire Authority

Sits on the Chief Fire Officers' Association's National Forum as the health and safety representative for all three Welsh Fire & Rescue Services

Reports on health and safety issues to the monthly Executive Board meeting, the quarterly Fire Authority Board meeting and the Fire Authority Performance and Policy Review Committee

Chairs the Service's quarterly Health and Safety Committee

Has responsibility for occupational health as part of his role as Director of Service Policy & Planning