



Preventing



Protecting



Responding



**Fire Authority for Northern Ireland
Annual Report & Statement of Accounts 2004/05**

FIRE AUTHORITY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**ANNUAL REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2005**

Laid before the Houses of Parliament by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety in accordance with Paragraph 12(2) and (4) of the Schedule to the Northern Ireland Act 2000 and Paragraph 18 of the Schedule to the Northern Ireland Act 2000 (Prescribed Documents) Order 2004.

17 November 2005

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17 November 2005

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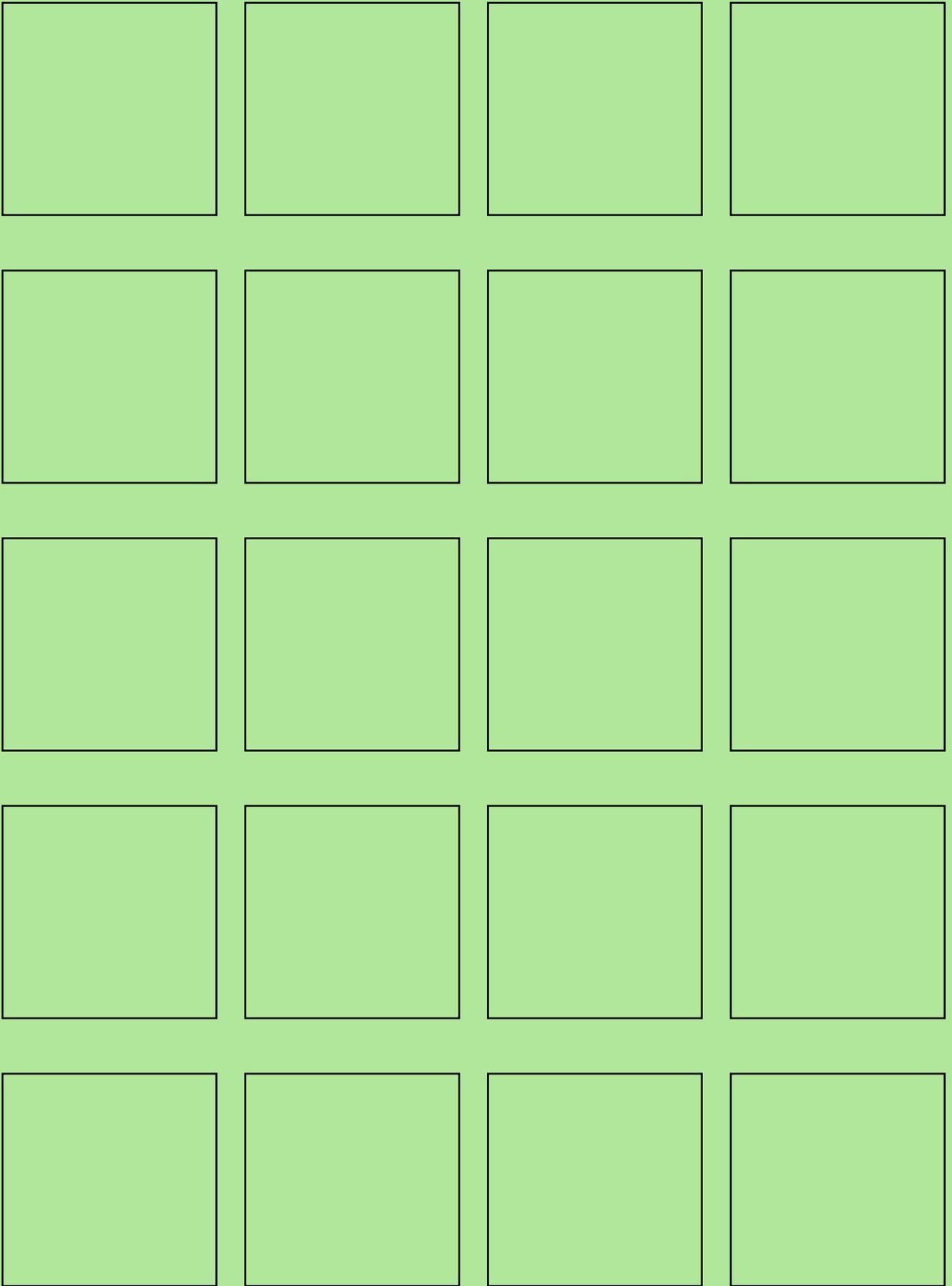
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Overview	7
Key Performance Targets	7
Chairman's Foreword	8
Chief Fire Officer's Review	9
Organisational Structure	10
Fire Authority for Northern Ireland	10
Northern Ireland Fire Brigade	11
Principal Officers and Directors' Group	12
Special Achievements and Awards	15
The Year in Progress	16
Responding to Emergencies	17
Operational Activity	18
Protecting the Public	19
Operational Support	20
Developing a Fire Safety Community	23
Building Community Education & Partnerships	24
Community Development - General Initiatives	26
Fire Safety Legislation	27
Supporting our People	28
Recruit, Train & Develop Our Workforce	29
Supporting Service Delivery	33
Managing our Resources	35
Planning for the Future	36
Value for Money	37
Information and Communications	38
Managing Our Estate	40
Protecting the Environment	41
Planning for Major Incidents	42
Planning for Major Disasters – New Dimension Initiative	42
Statement of Accounts	43
Internal Audit Validation Certificate	81



Key Performance Targets

During the year under review, the Brigade produced a number of Performance Targets. Our performance in these areas is highlighted below.

Key Indicators & Target

	Performance			Target Achieved
	02/03	03/04	04/05	
Number of accidental fire deaths				
Reduce the number of accidental fire deaths by 20% over an 11-year period to March 2010 (equivalent to 24 fire deaths per annum).	10	10	8	✔
Number of civilian injuries in fires				
Reduce serious non-fatal casualties by 5% annually, leading to a 20% reduction in five years ("Safe as Houses" 1999/00 baseline of 319).	256	226	220*	✔
Number of house fires				
Reduce the number of fires in dwellings by 1/3 over a five year period (baseline 1999 of 1,324 dwelling fires).	1,094	945	910**	✔
Number of deliberate property fires (arson)				
Reduce by 10% the number of deliberate fires by March 2010 from the 2002/03 baseline of 3,786.	3,786	3,156	2,534***	✔
Percentage of working smoke alarms in private homes				
By March 2005 to have a working smoke alarm in 96% of private dwellings. By March 2007 to increase this figure to 97%.	93%	96%	96%	✔
Working days/shifts lost to absence				
To reduce Brigade's absenteeism to an overall average of 8 days/shifts per year by 2010.	13.06	12.97	12.19	
Average cost of services provided per head of population				
Maintain expenditure in line with the UK per capita average.	£30.10	£32.48	£36.13	
	(£32.42)	(£33.54)	****	

* 31% reduction in serious casualties from 1999 baseline "Safe as Houses - Report of the Community Fire Safety Task Force"

** This figure is subject to change due to outstanding Fire Damage Reports (FDR1s).

*** 2002/03 is prior to FRS17 reporting requirements and for this reason should not be used for comparisons

**** Figures in brackets are the average expenditure for Fire Services in England and Wales. 2004/05 data not available

Overview



Chairman's Foreword

As Chairman of the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland, I am pleased to present our Annual Review and Statement of Accounts for 2004/05.

We have a very good story to tell, as this past year has been one of tremendous achievement within a climate of constant change and modernisation.

We have much to be proud of this year with the resolution of the industrial dispute, as well as the ongoing implementation of the Fire Authority's new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

On behalf of the Fire Authority Members, I would congratulate all our staff, both uniformed and non-uniformed, for their readiness to embrace change and their commitment to moving forward with the Modernisation Agenda.

While it is important to review and report on progress to date, we must continually look to and plan for future fire and rescue needs. The Fire Authority is committed to making sure that the Fire Brigade has all the necessary resources to meet these needs, as well as supporting and monitoring progress.

We look forward to the many challenges ahead with further reform, modernisation and indeed possible changes in Northern Ireland's fire legislation.

The Fire Authority has an important job to do and remains committed to securing for the people of Northern Ireland, an even better fire and rescue service.

Mr W F Gillespie
Chairman

The Chief Fire Officer's Review

The past year has been one of challenge and change within the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade and it has been a year of many successes.

This is a new era for the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade, and indeed the whole of the UK Fire Service, as we put the industrial dispute firmly behind us and move forward together with our staff and representative bodies to create an improved, modern fire and rescue service for the future.

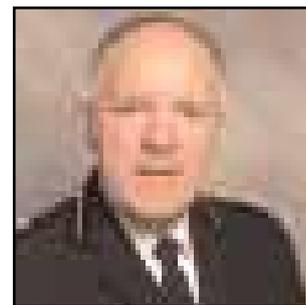
The Brigade is improving public safety for everyone in Northern Ireland, through enhanced community fire safety and prevention, as well as strong partnerships and an effective response to a wide range of life-threatening emergencies such as fires, road traffic collisions, collapsed buildings, specialist rescues and chemical spillages, etc.

The Brigade has performed very well over the past year. It has proved another challenging year operationally with the Brigade attending 33,132 incidents and our Fire Control Operators handling 53,838 emergency 999 calls. 148 people were rescued from fires but unfortunately accidental house fires claimed eight lives in 2004/05, two fewer than the previous year.

As public safety is our number one priority, this reduction in fire deaths has been a significant success for the Brigade this past year. The number of dwelling fires in Northern Ireland has also been reduced in this past year.

2004/05 also saw an increase in special service incidents such as road traffic collisions, rescues and chemical incidents. The Brigade attended 1,632 incidents this past year and the increase reflects the move from its sole need to fight fires to a broader role in providing emergency cover and protecting the public.

The Fire Brigade has also made excellent progress on the Modernisation Agenda, working at our own pace diligently on IRMP, IPDS and New Dimension initiatives. The shift in focus from intervention to prevention is evident in our work over the past year with the community, especially those vulnerable 'at risk'



groups, as well as with the emergency services and our other partner agencies.

In 2004/05 the Brigade has invested in many new appliances and new specialist equipment, as well as developing a programme of investment for new fire stations and refurbishment for stations. The Brigade remains committed to developing these investment opportunities with the DHSSPS and the Strategic Investment Board. We are however concerned that the budget allocation for next year may not be sufficient for delivering an effective and modern fire and rescue service to the Northern Ireland public.

2004/05 has begun a new era for the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade and as part of this, our name changed to the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service on 1 April 2005. Our new name better reflects our broader role and enhanced capabilities as a modern fire and rescue service, which includes all our specialist rescue work and our wide range of community fire safety activities.

None of the successes of this past year could have happened without the dedication and the commitment of all our uniformed and non-uniformed members of staff. This has been a year of significant change for everyone within the organisation and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one for their ongoing support.

As Chief Fire Officer, I am extremely proud of our achievements in 2004/05 and I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead, assured by the commitment of all our staff to deliver a world-class fire and rescue service that is ultimately saving more lives in Northern Ireland.

Colin Lammey
Chief Fire Officer

Organisational Structure

The Fire Authority for Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Fire Brigade serves the entire population of Northern Ireland, an area of over 5,500 square miles, with a population of 1.7 million.

The performance of the Brigade is overseen by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and 15 Members of the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland who are appointed by the Minister for Health, Social Services & Public Safety. The Minister is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the activities and performance of the Fire Authority through the Accounting Officer of the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety.

During the year under review, the Fire Authority held 10 Authority Board Meetings and 24 Committee Meetings.

The overall strategic aim of the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland approved by the Minister is to:

“Create a safer environment for society by providing an effective firefighting, rescue and fire safety service”.

The main functions of the Fire Authority through the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade are to:

Provide and maintain an efficient and effective fire and rescue service which is responsive to the needs of the community in Northern Ireland and represents value for money;

Reduce the incidence of fire by the provision of an efficient and effective fire safety education, advice and legal enforcement service;

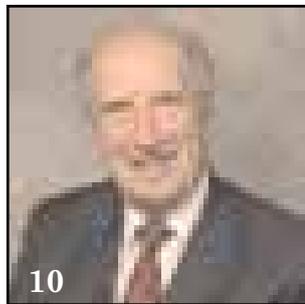
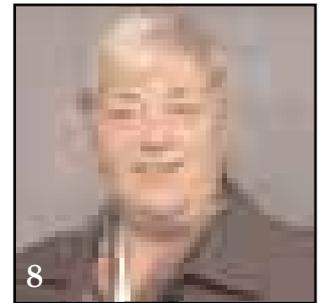
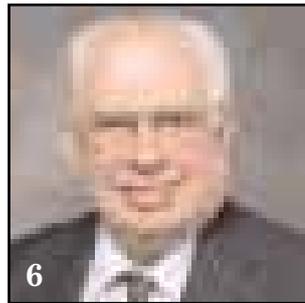
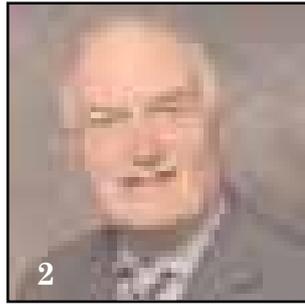
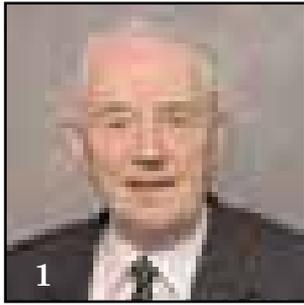
Secure and develop a workforce to meet current and future organisational needs, reflecting equality and diversity requirements and national training and development recommendations. Progress the Modernisation Agenda and provide an environment that will promote the health and welfare of staff;

Provide a service committed to quality and continuous improvement in all aspects of fire and rescue provision including support arrangements; and

Protect the people and the environment of Northern Ireland from the adverse impact of chemical emergencies and pollution and other local and regional emergencies.



Organisational Structure



- Members of the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland***
- 1 Mr W F Gillespie OBE TD MBA JP DL FCIQB FSCA (Chairman)
 - 2 Mr P Bradley CBE MA (Vice Chairman)
 - 3 Councillor J Beattie MCIPD
 - 4 Councillor M Black
 - 5 Mr J Campbell BA MBA FAIA FCIS FInstAM FCMI
 - 6 Councillor J Clarke
 - 7 Mrs S Dixon
 - 8 Councillor B Gilliland
 - 9 Mr K Harper MIFireE
 - 10 Alderman G A Hatch TFA
 - 11 Mr J Hughes
 - 12 Councillor A M McAleenan
 - 13 Councillor J F McKeever
 - 14 Councillor O P Molloy LLB
 - 15 Mr S Montgomery BCs MSc MCIQB MRICS MBEng
 - 16 Mr R Pollock
 - 17 Mr J Ross FCA ATII

Organisational Structure

The Northern Ireland Fire Brigade

The Brigade is managed by the Chief Fire Officer, Mr Colin Lammey, who is also the Chief Executive assisted by a Deputy Chief Fire Officer, two Assistant Chief Fire Officers and three non-uniformed Directors known collectively as the Principal Officers and Directors' Group.

The Brigade is divided into four operational command areas, Eastern, Northern, Western and Southern (shown below) with Brigade Headquarters situated in Lisburn, County Antrim, and a Training Centre in Belfast. Each Area Command is responsible for a number of Districts which are, in turn, responsible for a number of Fire Stations.

There are 67 Fire Stations in total throughout Northern Ireland serving their local communities. The operational command responsibility rests with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mr Louis Jones.



Locations of Fire Stations in Northern Ireland

Principal Officers & Directors' Group

Following a review in 2004, a newly created Chief Executives' Department consisting of the Principal Officers and Directors' Group was formed. This Group supports the Fire Authority and provides the strategic co-ordination and policy advice and development to the Brigade.



Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive - Mr Colin Lammey

The Fire Authority for Northern Ireland appointed Mr Colin Lammey as Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive on 1 August 2003.

Mr Lammey joined the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade in 1977 and served throughout Northern Ireland in various posts including Personnel, Brigade Development and Training and Operations Policy and Performance Review.

In March 1997, he was appointed as an Assistant Chief Fire Officer and in 1999 assumed responsibility for the Brigade's Strategic Planning, Quality Services and Operations.

Colin completed the Brigade Command Course at the Fire Service College in 1995 and holds an MSc in Business Improvement from the University of Ulster. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development and a Fellow of the Institution of Fire Engineers and a graduate of the Federal Executive Institute's 'Leadership for a Democratic Society' Programme at Charlottesville, USA.

Director of Operations - Mr Louis Jones

Louis Jones joined the Fire Brigade in 1978 and has served in various ranks throughout his 27 years' service. He was appointed Brigade Training Officer in 1997 and Area Commander for the Brigade's Southern Area Command in 2000.

Since then he has served as Assistant Chief Fire Officer in Operations before taking up the post of Director of Operations and Deputy Chief Fire Officer with responsibility for operational service delivery across Northern Ireland.



In 2001, he attended the Brigade Command Course at the Fire Service College, England. Louis is a Fellow of the Institution of Fire Engineers and holds a MSc in Fire Command Management and a Master of Business Administration Degree.



Director of Human Resources - Ms Ann Conley

After a career spanning several years in personnel management in industry, Ann joined the University of Ulster in Coleraine in 1978. As Deputy Staffing Officer for the University, she had a broad range of responsibility covering all aspects of Human Resources work. Major areas within her remit were Industrial Relations and Employee Services within a context of national agreements for the various staff groups.

She joined the Brigade in 1987 and was designated Director of Human Resources in July 1993. Her current responsibilities include all Human Resources management and development within the Organisation, and strategic responsibility for the Training function.

She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development.

Organisational Structure



Director of Community Development - Mr Peter Craig

Peter Craig joined the Fire Brigade in the late seventies and has served throughout Northern Ireland in various management positions. He moved to Fire Brigade Headquarters in 1997 as Assistant Chief Fire Officer in the Fire Safety Department. His current responsibilities include the Fire Authority's statutory responsibilities in relation to Fire Precautions, Health & Safety and taking forward the Modernisation Agenda with particular emphasis on Community Fire Safety Development and Education.

Peter has a Masters Degree in Fire Engineering and is a Member of the Institute of City & Guilds Business Management. He is also a Member of the Institution of Fire Engineers.

Director of Finance & Performance Management - Mr Terry McGonigal

Terry McGonigal joined the Fire Brigade in October 2004 as Director of Finance & Performance Management.

He trained as an Accountant with the Health Service and has over 20 years' public sector experience working in both Central and Local Government. Prior to joining the Fire Brigade, he was Director of Finance & Corporate Services for the Lisburn Institute of Further and Higher Education.



Terry is a Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants and a Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development. He also holds a post graduate qualification in Business and Finance and an MBA from the University of Ulster.



Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs - Dr Doros Michail

Dr Doros Michail joined the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade in November 2004 as Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs.

Doros joined the Northern Ireland Civil Service in 1980 as a Lecturer in Communications with the Agri-Food Development Service. Since then, he has held various posts including Training and Development, Equality and Human Rights and Quality and Business Development in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. In 1998 he was Senior Assessor on the Northern Ireland Quality Award.

Before joining the Brigade, he was a member of the Department of Health Team developing a 20 year Strategic Vision for Health and Well-being in Northern Ireland.

Doros is an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, a Chartered Psychologist and an Associate Lecturer with the Open University. He is a graduate of Queen's University, Belfast, and he also holds an MBA from the Open University.

Director of Technical Development - Mr Tom Wright

Tom Wright joined the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade in 1978. Since then he has served in various posts throughout the Province and in 2000 was appointed Assistant Area Commander (Operations) in Eastern Area Command based in Belfast.

In 2002, he was appointed as Assistant Principal Officer in Community Development and subsequently Operations Service Delivery. He took up his current post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Director of Technical Development in November 2004. His responsibilities include the Fire Service's Control Centre, IT and Technological Development, Transport Workshops, Communications and PPE Services.



Tom is a Member of the Institution of Fire Engineers and graduated from the University of Ulster in 2000 with a Masters Degree in Business Administration.

Special Achievements and Awards

During the year, a number of Brigade staff and others were awarded honours and letters of congratulations for bravery in their line of duty and in their conduct.



Firefighter Dean Molloy



**Mr James Mullen
Retired Firefighter**



Firefighter Mark Mullen

Commendations

Firefighter Dean Molloy

For his actions and bravery in rescuing two people from a fire in their house in Strabane on 9 May 2004. This action undoubtedly saved three lives.

Mr James Mullen (Retired Retained Firefighter)

For his action and bravery in rescuing a lady from a fire in her house in Newtownhamilton on 12 May 2004. This action undoubtedly saved her life.

Firefighter Mark Mullen

For action taken to resuscitate a man found lying unconscious at the Bann Bridge in Portadown on 20 October 2004.

Letters of Congratulations

Firefighter Paul Rogers

For his actions at an incident at Kilbroney House, Belfast on 17 September 2004.

T/Leading Firefighter Gary Patterson

For his actions at an incident at Kilbroney House, Belfast on 17 September 2004.

Personnel of Portrush and Coleraine Fire Stations

For their actions at an incident at Beach Road, Portballintrae on 28 November 2004.

Long Service and Good Conduct Medal

On 9 October 2004, 34 Brigade personnel received Long Service and Good Conduct Medals from Her Majesty The Queen, presented by the Duke of Abercorn, the Lord Lieutenant for County Tyrone. This award, one of the most prestigious that a Firefighter or Fire Control Operator can attain, is permitted by Royal Warrant to staff who have served the community for a maximum of 20 years and displayed exemplary service.



Ex-Assistant Chief Fire Officer J Kennedy, Chief Fire Officer C Lammey & Deputy Chief Fire Officer L Jones at Long Service & Good Conduct Medals Ceremony



Staff who received Long Service & Good Conduct Medals

The Year in Progress

The following sections of this report deal with the activities of the Brigade over the past year including our service delivery and how we manage our resources. The sections are outlined as follows:

Responding to Emergencies

If a fire breaks out or you need us for another emergency we want to ensure that we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time. This section outlines our performance over the year and how we want to improve our service in the future.

Developing a Fire Safety Community

Although many people see our job as simply putting out fires, another of our key priorities is to make sure fires don't start in the first place. This section outlines the Brigade's initiatives and partnerships which will ensure that we make the Province a safer place for all.

Supporting our People

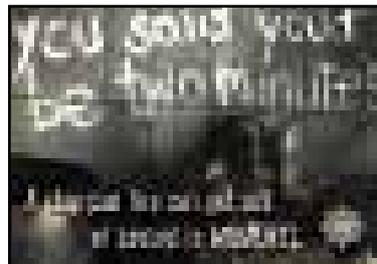
All staff whether operational or support staff must be trained and developed in a way that reflects the requirements of a modern Fire Service. This section highlights some of the major recruitment and training achievements throughout the year, it details our development in relation to equality and disability issues and demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the health and welfare of our staff is paramount in what we do. This section also outlines improvements to our Operational Support Services.

Managing Our Resources

We want to provide best value for money services and operate efficiently and effectively. This section outlines how we intend to plan for the future, how we can improve our communications, how we keep ahead of technology and how we look after our estate.

Protecting the Environment

The Brigade can play an important role in protecting the environment from the adverse impact of a chemical emergency and pollution. This section outlines how we plan for major disasters and how we protect ourselves from the threat of international terrorism.



Responding to Emergencies



“Provide and maintain an efficient and effective Fire and Rescue Service which is responsive to the needs of the Community in Northern Ireland and represents value for money”

Key Objectives

Reduce the number of emergency calls received and mobilised to by the Brigade.

Review and implement a policy on the number and type of appliances that are mobilised.

Begin work on the assessment of fire risk and on the development of a fire risk profile for Northern Ireland and make recommendations for resource allocation.

Develop partnerships with other agencies including the sharing of facilities.

Improve the Brigade’s telephony and communications infrastructure.

Progress the implementation of a digital trunked radio system.

Achievements

9% reduction in incident attendance from 2003/04 year. Resources not mobilised in over 70% of hoax calls received.

Review of 13,031 premises in Belfast completed during the year. Only 165 premises now require more than two appliance attendance at an emergency incident.

An initial assessment of risk from fire throughout the Province completed by Northgate Blue 8. Community Development targeting identified high risk areas.

Shared facilities with Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) at Northland Station, Londonderry, Bangor Station and Knock Station, Belfast.

Downpatrick area currently under consideration.

Mountain Rescue Land Rovers at Crescent Link, Londonderry and Omagh District Headquarters.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreed with the Northern Ireland Regional Medical Physics Agency. MOUs with the Forest Service and the Ulster Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals being developed.

Agreement made to share data with District Councils, NIAS, Water, Police and Forest Services.

Research into improved Breathing Apparatus communications. Command & Control hardware commissioned. Research complete into replacement alerters for Retained firefighters.

Contract awarded to replace Integrated Communications Control System used by Fire Control to access the new radio system.

Responding to Emergencies

Operational Activity

During the year we received 53,838 calls and responded to 33,132 emergency incidents in a wide range of situations requiring assistance to put out fires, rescue people, remove people from cars, pump out water from flooded homes and eliminate harmful effects of chemical spillages.

Emergency Calls

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Received	55,053	58,834	53,838
Mobilised	33,820	36,403	33,132
Mobilised	61.5%	61.9%	61.5%

The Brigade respond to all incidents with a pre-determined number and types of appliance. This accounts for a significant amount of resource deployments and during the year the pre-determined attendances to 13,031 premises in Belfast were reviewed and the policy revised. Now only 165 premises require the automatic deployment of more than two appliances, thereby significantly reducing the number of appliance movements in Belfast.

Of the total emergency calls received, 5,823 (11%) were classified as false alarm malicious calls (hoax calls). During the year, Brigade Control have positively demonstrated the benefits of changes to emergency call mobilising practices and procedures by continually assessing attendance to calls where the origin seems doubtful, ie, a hoax call. This has resulted in non-mobilisation of resources to over 70% of the total hoax calls received for the year 2004/05, a 4% improvement on the previous year.

False Alarms

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
False Alarm/ Malicious Calls	5,726	6,017	5,823
% Non-Mobilised	64.63%	66.8%	70.6%

Portrush Blaze

More than 30 firefighters from Portrush, Coleraine and Portstewart fought a fire in Causeway Street in Portrush in the early hours of Saturday, 12 March 2005 for more than five hours. Strong winds made the fire difficult to extinguish. Although both properties were extensively damaged firefighters succeeded in preventing the fire from spreading further.



Portrush Blaze

Picture supplied by Kevin McCauley

B&Q Warehouse, Sprucefield Park, Sprucefield, Lisburn

It took over 100 firefighters to get the fire started by an incendiary device at the B&Q Warehouse, Lisburn under control. Crews from Lisburn were first to respond in the early hours of Monday, 20 December 2004, and were met by large quantities of smoke billowing from the building. A total of 21 fire appliances from Belfast, Ballyclare, Banbridge, Newtownards, Armagh, Portadown, Kilrea, Lurgan and Dromore arrived to tackle the blaze.

Firefighters had to enter the building wearing breathing apparatus to ascertain exactly where the fire broke out. Firefighters took eight hours to get the blaze extinguished. The very rapid response of the Brigade and the expert containment of the fire meant that the Brigade undoubtedly saved the building.

Responding to Emergencies

Of the total number of incidents attended during the year, 1,632 (5%) were classified as Special Service Incidents. Special Service Incidents are those incidents where risk of fire may or may not exist.

Just over 44% of Special Service Incidents the Brigade attended were road traffic collision incidents, the same as the previous year.

Special Service Incidents

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Road traffic collision incidents	721	697	721
Rescue or release of people	232	236	249
Lift incident	118	142	144
Making incident safe (eg, gas leak, electrical fault)	73	74	97
Animal rescue	93	116	94
Chemical incident	46	37	78
Effecting entry at incident	32	48	64
Flooding	76	52	31
Miscellaneous	133	171	154
Total	1,524	1,573	1,632

Ballykinler Camp, Downpatrick

Over 100 firefighters from across the Province fought around 400 acres of gorse alight adjacent to Ballykinler Camp, Downpatrick on 26 May 2004. The fire spread quickly and threatened base facilities and a residential area. At the height of the incident, the Brigade had committed 16 pumping appliances, one water tanker, two land rovers and a Command Support Unit. The Army committed over 150 personnel including a Helicopter for reconnaissance, JCB and Bulldozer Operators and on-site engineers. The co-ordinated efforts of the two Services resulted in the extensive fire being brought under control within 12 hours without major injury to personnel or damage to property.

Queen's Building, Belfast City Centre

Fire Brigade personnel attended one of the largest fires in Belfast for many years in the early hours of 14 October 2004. Over 90 firefighters, using more than 20 fire appliances fought the blaze at the Queen's Building in Royal Avenue. As the fire spread through the office block, firefighters lay on the roof of Castlecourt shopping mall to fight the fire and prevent it spreading. Firefighters were able to contain the fire and save the 1883 Victorian listed building.

Collapsed Building, Londonderry

On Saturday, 7 August 2004 a restaurant collapsed on Strand Road in Londonderry. On arrival, the Brigade's Specialist Rescue Team (SRT) immediately stabilised the existing structure using wooden shoring techniques and paratech struts to prevent further collapse and to enable a technical search to be conducted. Having stabilised the structure and ensuring that all utilities had been isolated, SRT then conducted a search of the debris using specialised camera and acoustic sound detection equipment. Thankfully, on this occasion no persons were trapped.



Debris of Building Collapse

Responding to Emergencies

Protecting the Public

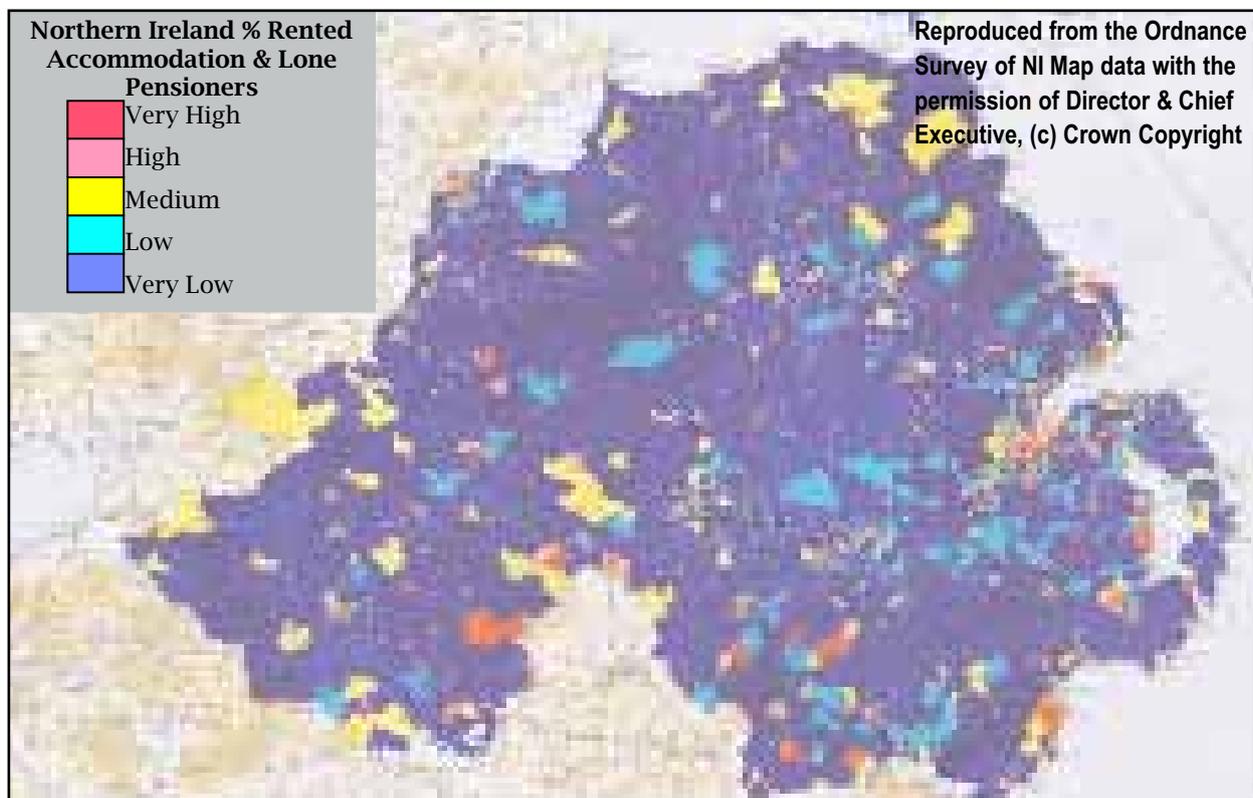
Integrated Risk Management Planning represents the new approach to providing emergency cover in Northern Ireland. The Fire Authority published its second Integrated Risk Management Plan in March 2005 following stakeholder consultation. This Plan which builds on last year's will help us to deliver an even better fire and rescue service for everyone across the Province.

Previously, the Brigade responded to incidents based on the National Standards of Fire Cover which were prescriptively based on property risk and required a specific weight and speed of response to incidents. In April 2004 these Standards were withdrawn by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

We are currently developing local response standards based on risk to life and on the duty to attend non-fire incidents.

In addition to using a four year historical incident database, statistics provided by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) (2001 Census) help us predict areas of greatest risk (see map below). From National research we know that fire is more likely to occur in areas with a high percentage of rented accommodation or with a high percentage of lone pensioners.

The proposed new standards will be developed using a computer modelling system based upon the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) methodology and predictions are now being made regarding Operational Response planning. For example, we can assess the effect of various response times on the number of lives that would be saved and plan to have the right resources, in the right place, at the right time. This will be completed in 2005 and the local standards will be ready during 2006.



Census Data Output Areas Northern Ireland
Map produced by Operations Development Unit with data supplied by NISRA

During the year the Brigade commenced a pilot scheme with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) in relation to co-operation at incidents on the inland waterways of Lough Neagh and Lough Erne. The scheme was tested successfully at an incident at Enniskillen and now covers six stations at Enniskillen, Cookstown, Lurgan, Antrim, Magherafelt and Lisnaskea.

A Memorandum of Understanding was also agreed with the Northern Ireland Regional Medical Physics Agency ensuring a more robust 24 hour means of alerting on duty physicists in the event of a radiation incident. The Brigade is currently progressing MOUs with the Forest Service and the Ulster Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. In addition, work has continued with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and Mountain Rescue on the sharing of facilities.

During the year we have continued to work with the NIAS to introduce a co-responder initiative into the Brigade. The primary clinical reason for co-response is for our firefighters to provide early defibrillation of patients in cardiac arrest at times when we arrive first at the scene of an incident. In conjunction with the NIAS we visited Devon Fire & Rescue Service, Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service and Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority to consider best practice for a co-responder scheme. We have begun work on the necessary training, equipment and support mechanisms required to pilot the initiative.

The Brigade is committed to maintaining and developing new partnerships with the voluntary, statutory and commercial sectors to reduce the number of deaths and injuries as a result of emergency incidents. Our Area Commands are at the heart of the community and are involved in hundreds of initiatives with key stakeholders to make Northern Ireland a safer place for everyone. A more detailed summary of our interagency partnerships, purpose and partners can be found on our website www.nifb.org.uk.

Operational Support

The safety of our firefighters and the public is paramount in everything we do. Our Operational Policies and Standard Operating Procedures are developed to ensure the safety of firefighters and protection of the community and the environment.

During the year a new Standard Operating Procedure was developed to ensure greater safety of firefighters and members of the public, by providing relevant information to the firefighters on the ground at an incident in a timely and efficient manner.

In 2004/05, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer instigated a programme aimed at ensuring an even safer operational environment for our staff when they respond to incidents. The underpinning philosophy of this 'operational reassurance' project are three principles taken from the 'Dynamic Management of Risk at Operational Incidents – Health & Safety – A Fire Service Guide'.

These are:

- 1 We may risk our lives a lot, in a highly calculated manner, to protect saveable lives;
- 2 We may risk our lives a little, in a highly calculated manner, to protect saveable property; and
- 3 We will not risk our lives at all for lives or property that are already lost.

This programme has resulted in the consolidation of our Incident Command System philosophy, Tactical Firefighting Procedures, Dynamic Risk Assessment Processes and Core Skills Training in Life Critical Procedures.

On the Technical Support front, new hardware has been installed to improve the performance and resilience of the Command and Control System used by Fire Control for handling emergency calls. In addition, a review of the wide area network (WAN)

Responding to Emergencies

communications infrastructure has been completed and the upgrading of the network has begun.

We have also carried out extensive research in many areas including the effectiveness of the Breathing Apparatus (BA) communications equipment and the Retained firefighters' alerter (paging) equipment.

Our Radio Project Team is progressing a major project to replace the Brigade's existing radio communications network with digital Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA) technology and provide enhanced voice and data facilities at emergency incidents. This technology will also permit communications between emergency services at multi-agency incidents.

During the year a contract was awarded to replace the Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) which will be used by Fire Control to access the new radio system.

Procurement of radio terminals (portable and fixed radio equipment) has been completed and work on associated ancillary equipment and vehicle installation has progressed. The introduction of the new technology will involve significant changes to equipment and procedures and will require substantial training and careful co-ordination to ensure a smooth 'cut-over' to the new technology.

Operations Support provide accurate data and support services to Operational Crews and Fire Control and work on various hospital sites setting up Special Risk codes. When completed these systems provide firefighters with location mapping and allow Brigade Control to mobilise appliances more efficiently. A trial Mobile Data project is currently underway within the Brigade.



Breathing Apparatus Communications Equipment

The Brigade continue to share data with various outside agencies including District Councils, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Department of Environment Water Service, Forest Service and Cross Border Brigades.



Fire appliance enroute to an incident

Developing a Fire Safety Community



“Reduce the incidence of fire by the provision of an efficient and effective fire safety education, advice and legal enforcement service”

Priorities

Provide inspection, investigation and advisory services.

Identify community risks and hazards, as well as addressing the needs of all vulnerable groups within the community.

Develop and implement effective and targeted community education programmes.

Engage with young people at risk within the community and enhance existing strategies to prevent attacks on firefighters.

Build and maintain working partnerships with other agencies including other emergency services.

Tackle the growing problem of False Fire Alarms in Northern Ireland.

Achievements

Educational and community development activities increased by 15% from 2003/04.

Successful completion of two Local Intervention Fire Education Scheme pilot courses. Establishment and promotion of Community Forum Resource Centre, Westland Road, Belfast.

Home Fire Safety Checks aimed at the elderly, families with young children and families with low income.

‘Firestorm’ educational programme delivered to six Secondary Schools in Northern Ireland.

Working Partnerships with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Youth Conference Service, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, Home Accident Prevention, Ambulance Service, Local Councils developed.

‘Attacks on Firefighters’ campaign in partnership with the Ambulance Service implemented.

New ‘Unwanted Fire Signals’ Policy and ‘Call to Action’ awareness campaign implemented to drive down the number of false fire alarms.

Developing a Fire Safety Community

Building Community Education & Partnerships

In order to achieve our objectives of reducing the number of emergency fire incidents and needless deaths and injuries from fire, we recognise that we must engage in a meaningful and productive way with local communities. Only by involving and encouraging active participation in our initiatives at grass root level will we achieve a safer environment for all. Summarised next are some of the key initiatives undertaken during 2004/05.

During the past year, a total of 3,527 community development initiatives were recorded, an increase of 15% over the previous year (see table below). Such events include fire safety talks to school children Key Stage 1,2,3&4, fire safety demonstrations such as the Chip Pan Unit at various public events and open days and home safety visits giving advice on fire safety arrangements.

‘Firestorm’ – Secondary Schools Programme

An education programme ‘Firestorm’ developed with County Louth Education Service and funded by the European Union’s Peace and Reconciliation Fund was delivered to eight secondary schools, six in Northern Ireland and two in County Louth. The programme forms part of the National Curriculum’s ‘Learning for Life and Work’ strand.

Community Education – Young People

Cadet Firefighter Scheme

In the past year the Cadet Scheme has continued to expand with the addition of a branch in Londonderry bringing the total number of branches to six, Coleraine, Newry, Lisburn, Belfast and Glengormley. The Brigade aims to support three new Cadet Schemes each year and a Cookstown branch is planned to open later this year.

Community Development & Statutory Inspections

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Publicity Events	400	455	695
Talks – General	312	444	555
Talks – Schools	373	977	856
Home Safety Checks/Visits	1,623	1,202	1,421
Total - Community Development	2,708	3,078	3,527
Total - Statutory Legislative Inspections	8,457	9,863	9,719
TOTAL	11,165	12,941	13,246

Community Education – Schools

Safety Team – Primary Schools Programme

The Fire Brigade’s Key Stage 2 initiative continues to be provided in Primary Schools across Northern Ireland. The programme aims to teach P5 children aspects of Fire Safety in the Home including maintenance of smoke alarms, causes of fire in the home, Night-time Fire Safety Check and Fire Escape Plan.



*School's Pack
Leaflet*



*False Alarm
Advertising
Campaign*

Developing a Fire Safety Community

The development of a promotional and informative film aimed at recruiting both Cadets and leaders will assist in the Scheme's future development. In March 2005 Cadets from all branches took part in a youth forum which allowed them to forge links and discuss a variety of Cadet related issues.



Chairman of the Fire Authority meets Cadets

LIFE Scheme (Local Intervention Fire Education)

The LIFE Scheme is targeted at young people aged between 14 and 19 years and specifically, those young people who may be considered 'more challenging' in relation to their attitude and behaviour towards society and in particular the Fire Brigade.

The Brigade has successfully completed two pilot schemes in Belfast and Londonderry and is in the early stages of developing an additional 14 schemes throughout the Province.

Fire Setters Scheme - Arson

The Fire Setters Scheme has now 22 trained volunteers spread throughout the Province who act on referrals from various agencies such as Youth Conference Service.

Our personnel, all volunteers, work in pairs and visit the referred youths or children together with their parents and endeavour to change the child's behaviour. The Scheme

was launched in February 2005 and in the first three months has received 15 referrals equating to 24 visits. A Child Protection Policy that supports all areas of youth work within the Fire Brigade has also been developed to support these initiatives.

Hoax Calls

The Fire Brigade has produced literature, poster displays, a dedicated workbook for staff engaging with young people who make hoax calls and piloted an educational awareness day specifically targeted at 12 to 14 year olds, those most likely to be involved in this type of activity. Some 400 young people, at two separate events, spent the day at the Brigade Training Centre and heard from all of the Emergency Services about the consequences of making malicious or hoax calls.

The Northern Ireland Hoax '999' Calls Partnership which includes the Police Service of Northern Ireland, NIAS and British Telecom launched the 'We Know Who U R' campaign, aimed at discouraging would be hoax callers.

False Fire Alarms

Reducing false fire alarms generated by automatic fire alarm systems continues to be a key priority for the Fire Brigade. A staggering 98% of these fire alarm signals are false alarms. They are depleting valuable Fire Brigade resources and putting lives at risk by robbing communities of vital resources in the event of a real emergency.

A 'Call Challenge Policy' and a revision of the Brigade's 'Unwanted Fire Signals Policy', coupled with working very closely with Northern Ireland's public and private sector organisations and the professional suppliers of fire alarm systems, has had a significant impact on service delivery and operational response. This was highlighted in the 'Responding to Emergencies' section. The initiative has also been supported by a high profile 'Call to Action' awareness campaign including radio, poster displays

Developing a Fire Safety Community

and dedicated advice literature, all of which have been designed to help the community to manage out the problem. Early indications from the pilot scheme, which ran in February and March 2005, indicate that the revised policy is working. This will allow the Brigade's resources to be used more appropriately to enhance public safety.

Attacks on Firefighters

Attacks on firefighters continues to be a serious problem and the Fire Brigade has worked closely with the emergency services, other partner agencies and the community at a grass roots level to drive down the number of attacks. The joint public awareness campaign with the Ambulance Service continued to run in the media throughout the year. The Fire Brigade works with community groups and local politicians in hot spot areas and has also developed targeted educational strategies to engage with young people, eg, Firestorm, Fire Setters, LIFE Scheme, etc.

The Brigade will continue to give the highest priority to reducing these attacks including asking the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety our parent organisation to consider the introduction of heavier penalties for those convicted.

Community Development – General Initiatives

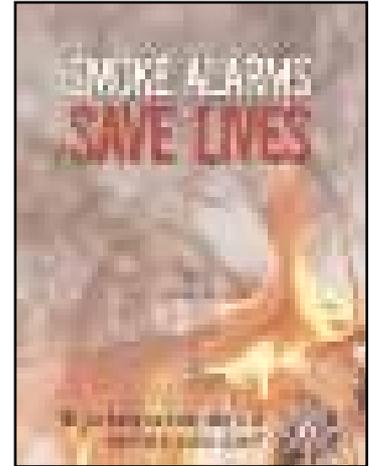
Public Awareness Campaigns

The 'Touch for Life' television advertisement was shown every Monday throughout the year promoting smoke detector maintenance.

A series of TV advertisements aimed at themes such as escape plans, chip pan safety and candle safety were shown at the optimum times to reach the target audience identified as most at risk.

Outdoor 48 sheet and adshel posters supported TV and radio to reach as many people as possible with the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade fire safety messages.

Targeted advertising awareness campaigns in areas identified as having high levels of fire deaths and injuries aimed at adult males over 40, eg, 'washroom posters' and 'beer mat' ambient advertising.



Smoke Alarm Leaflet

A new Community Development website has been developed and linked to the main Fire Brigade website to support our initiatives using new technology.

Leaflets on several themes (Countryside Safety, Arson, Attacks on Firefighters) have been developed to allow each District and Area to localise the material for the first time has proved very successful.

Targeted safety advice for students has also been provided through mall displays and student information magazines delivered to every student campus in Northern Ireland.

Smoke Alarm Ownership

A report from 2004 from the Research and Evaluation Service has once again indicated that smoke alarm ownership is at 96% in Northern Ireland. The Brigade will continue, through Community Education, to encourage smoke alarm ownership as well as emphasising the importance of regular testing and maintenance of existing smoke alarms.

Multi-Lingual Fire Safety Campaign

The Fire Brigade launched a first of its kind multi-lingual fire safety campaign targeting minority ethnic groups within our community. The outreach initiative was launched as part of the third joint North-South Fire Safety Week - a joint initiative between the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade and the National Safety Council of Ireland.

Developing a Fire Safety Community

The leaflets which are produced in Chinese, Arabic, Russian, French, Irish and Portuguese have been widely circulated in the local communities. In addition, Cantonese fire safety posters developed with the Chinese Welfare Association were produced and publicised.

A further partnership initiative 'Smart-water' with the Police Service to highlight arson in schools was also launched during Fire Safety Week and generated extensive national and local media coverage.

Local Arson Task Forces - Arson

Officers in each of our 14 District teams, working closely with other agencies and organisations within their local Community Safety Partnerships, have established local arson task forces to reduce the number of deliberate fires, jointly finding local solutions to deal with local problems.

Operation Clean Up – Arson

'Operation Clean-up' (car clearance scheme) is an excellent example of inter-agency working with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council and Belfast City Centre Management. The Scheme has already removed over 1,000 vehicles from our streets, all of them potential fire targets.

Partnership Initiatives

Throughout the year the Brigade has worked continuously with its many partner agencies such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (achieving a 23% reduction in fire calls at Halloween); Northern Ireland Prison Service in schools; Youth Conference Service (dealing with young offenders); Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents/Home Accident Prevention and Local Councils to deliver home safety checks; the BBC and Simon Community developing training video material.

Fire Safety Legislation

The Fire Brigade is committed to achieving a high standard of fire protection in buildings throughout Northern Ireland. Between April 2004 and March 2005 the

Fire Brigade carried out 9,719 inspections.

The Brigade has also contributed to:

- * The pending review and update of Building Regulations Technical Booklets;
- * Legislation for Safety at Sports Grounds in Northern Ireland;
- * The review of Health Technical Memorandum 84 (HTM 84) regarding fire safety regulations in residential care premises; and
- * The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order.

The management and implementation of The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (NI) remained a key objective of the Brigade with an emphasis being placed throughout the year on the proper provision and management of automatic fire alarm systems in premises. The Brigade has continued to work with other key stakeholders to ensure the safety of the community while at work or at leisure.



Example of Multi-Lingual Fire Safety Leaflets

Supporting our People



“Secure and develop a workforce to meet current and future organisational needs, reflecting equality and diversity requirements and national training and development recommendations. Progress the Modernisation Agenda and provide an environment that will promote the health & welfare of all staff”

Priorities

Secure a workforce to meet current and future needs:

Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Firefighter Recruitment - Retained

Train and develop our workforce.

Take forward the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) to the Brigade

Ensure our workforce reflects equality and diversity

Support technical development, modernisation and innovation

Achievements

54 Trainee Wholetime Firefighter Graduates.

322 applications, 153 proceeding to interview stage and 35 recruited to the Brigade.

Brigade Training Centre provided 12,324 training days during the year.

The BTC achieved 'Approved Centre Status' from the NVQ awarding body EDEXCEL for:

- * Operations in the Community level 3;
- * Control Operations level 3; Assessor Award;
- * Internal Verifier Award; and
- * 36 Watch-based workplace assessors were trained with a further 58 assessors identified and registered with EDEXCEL.

- * Family Friendly and Attendance Management Policies developed and implemented;
- * Equality Screening on Age 55 retirement and Brigade Area map completed; and
- * Multi-lingual fire safety leaflets produced.

- * Ten fire appliances, two Rescue Pumps, two Command Support Units and 20 Flexi-Officer cars commissioned into service;
- * Computerised hydrant testing regime has been successfully piloted in the Western Area Command;
- * Improved Road Traffic Collision equipment purchased; and
- * New wildland fire boot introduced to the Service.

Recruit, Train and Develop our Workforce

During the year, an extensive Firefighter Recruitment programme resulted in 23 Wholtime Trainees beginning their training on 5 July 2004, and a further 31 on 15 November 2004. All of them successfully completed their training and graduated as Trainee Firefighters and are now posted to their Stations.

The Brigade depends on having an effective part-time Retained Firefighter service to provide fire and rescue cover in 52 Stations throughout Northern Ireland. Last year, a recruitment campaign involving 37 of these Stations resulted in 322 applications with 153 proceeding to the interview stage and 35 recruits being appointed.

Although our approach to recruitment and retention of women is comparable to that of other Brigades and emergency services organisations, we realise that still more needs to be done in this area of our work. We are currently exploring a number of new initiatives to attract women into the profession and work towards achieving our strategic target of 10% women recruits by 2010.

The Organisation now employs 11 Wholtime and four Retained female firefighters. Firefighting as a career option for women has been championed by our female firefighters through attendance at Careers Fairs and at schools to give fire safety talks. Links with the voluntary organisation 'Networking Women in the Fire Service' have been established and members of staff participated in conferences and events held at the Fire Service College during the year.



*Top Graduate 2004
P J McKeag*



*Top Graduate 2005
B O Kirwan*

A number of senior non-uniformed appointments were also made during the year, designed to strengthen the strategic and operational support capability of the Brigade including a new Director of Finance & Performance Management, a Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs and a Strategic Planning Manager. Appointments in the Human Resources Department were made in Policy Research, Recruitment & Promotions, Attendance Management and Statistics.

Progressing the Integrated Personal Development System

Staff at the Brigade Training Centre (BTC) delivered a range of training courses designed to meet the core training needs of the Brigade and address the growing importance of the Integrated Risk Management Plan as the key driver of future training needs. Overall, the Brigade Training Centre provided 12,324 training days for the period April 2004 to March 2005.

In order to provide the necessary training and development to take forward modernisation in the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service, we are currently developing options for the relocation of our training facility to a more suitable site.

Supporting our People

Training Courses

Administration and Management	328.5
Aerial Appliance	335
Breathing Apparatus & Compartment Fire Behaviour	1,673
Driving	856
Fire Safety and Occupational Health	1,539
First Aid and Trauma	1,398
Information Technology	480
Initial Trainee and Induction Programmes	3,947
Integrated Personal Development System	1,420.5
Special Services	347
Total - Brigade Training Centre Courses	12,324
Total - Fire Service College Courses	1,074
TOTAL	13,398

Trainee Days

The BTC continued to address the challenge presented by the need to deliver a high level of core training to staff while also implementing the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS). IPDS presents a significant challenge for the Fire Service as it impacts on all areas of training and development.

The Brigade has adopted National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) as the mechanism for assessing competence in the workplace and delivering IPDS. During the year the Brigade's IPDS Team:

- * Achieved 'Approved Centre Status' from the NVQ awarding body EDEXCEL for Operations in the Community level 3; Control Operations level 3; Assessor Award; and Internal Verifier Award;
- * Trained 36 Watch-based workplace assessors with a further 58 assessors identified and registered with EDEXCEL.
- * Mapped the Trainee Firefighter course to the IPDS aims and objectives. This ensured that each of the new firefighters, who graduated during the year was placed on a development programme and will be assessed against the NVQ 'Operations in the Community' level 3 by their Watch assessors; and
- * Developed a database to record all candidates registered with EDEXCEL, track their progress and claim units when completed.

Some of the key areas of training delivered during the year were:

Breathing Apparatus (BA)

The ability to work effectively while wearing BA is a core element of a firefighter's role. This year students were introduced to the Bodyguard II Distress Signal Unit which provides an enhanced level of health and safety for BA wearers when used in conjunction with the BA telemetry system.

Driving and Appliance Training

A range of courses for Brigade emergency appliance drivers and specialist appliance operators were delivered during the year and driver training facilities enhanced by the purchase of a 'skid cradle' which is used to improve driver skills in skid avoidance and control. "Train the Trainer" courses were also held for Hydraulic Platform (HP) and Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) operators to increase the number of Watch-based aerial appliance trainers.

"Safe to Manage" Course

A 10 day pilot course for newly appointed Junior Officers was evaluated alongside a five day pilot course for newly appointed Officers who had also previously attended the Fire Service College. As a result, the

10 day course was restructured into two Modules providing Officers firstly with input on a broad range of key skills, including for the first time training on Equality and Dignity, and then on operational safety and command and control using the Vector Command incident command simulator.

Road Traffic Collision (RTC)

Advances in motor vehicle technology and the growing demands placed upon the Service through its attendance at RTCs have increased the importance of providing initial and refresher training in this area. All Trainee Firefighters are now trained in RTC work and a refresher course in the latest equipment and techniques was delivered during the year.

Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE)

The Brigade is committed to providing training up to 100 staff on the Brigade's statutory powers when dealing with the public and the necessary skills to allow them to gather evidence which may subsequently be used in legal proceedings.

Trauma Awareness

180 staff received training in Trauma Awareness to increase their understanding of issues associated with psychological trauma and how it affects staff at work.

Lifelong Learning

The Fire Brigade is committed to lifelong learning and actively encourages ongoing professional development in both uniformed and non-uniformed staff through internal training and also through external training policies, for example, many of our staff are studying courses in Personnel and Business Management, Multimedia and Chartered Certified Accounts, etc.

Developing Policy and Taking Forward Equality

Policy development this year has focused on two major issues for the Organisation, the effective management of attendance and the promotion of the Authority as a family friendly employer. This has resulted in the existing Attendance Management Policy being completely re-drafted to bring it into line with both legislative requirements and best practice and prepare the way for the implementation of an Attendance Management programme to reduce absence from the current 12.19 days per year to 8 by 2010.

A suite of family friendly policies to support a positive work-life balance has been promulgated throughout the Brigade. These include the right to request flexible working, which the Authority has extended to include all employees, and the introduction of a career break scheme. The Policy Unit has already trained managers on the policies and is providing additional guidance to managers on flexible working practices. Guidance is also available to staff presenting applications to work flexibly. The initiative has been welcomed by all employees as a visible commitment by the Authority to work-life balance.

The Equality Unit, in addition to its core activities of monitoring employee information and ensuring the proper consideration of equality during policy development and consultation, has continued to make progress with its



Breathing Apparatus Training



Road Traffic Collision Training

Supporting our People

outreach programme. This includes measures designed to address workforce community and gender representation and the equality screening and assessment of policies.

Over a five year period, the number of staff who are Catholic has increased from 34.4% to 36.9% and this is reflected in an increase in applications and appointments to non-operational as well as operational posts. The Equality Commission has noted this improvement in performance. Also noted is the proportion of women securing senior managerial roles.

Following a recommendation by the Equality Commission, two equality screening exercises were carried out on 'Standby Area for Flexible Duty Officers at Brigade Headquarters' and 'Retirement at Age 55 Station Officer and Below' and submitted to the Commission. The Brigade has adopted the revised Commission Guidance on Section 75 which advocates consultation at the screening.

Taking Forward Disability Discrimination Actions

Work has continued to ensure that the Brigade complies with the Disability Discrimination Act. At the start of 2004, an access audit of three typical Station types showed that wheelchair access was available at all Stations via the appliance room. Over the year, the Brigade has provided disabled toilet facilities at Southern and Northern Area Headquarters and ramped or level access for wheelchair users. A lift to allow wheelchair access was installed at Southern Area Headquarters in Portadown and one is planned during the refurbishment of Enniskillen Fire Station in 2005.

Permanent loop hearing systems have been fitted in the main lecture theatres, Authority Boardroom and Committee room, receptions and classrooms at Brigade Headquarters and the Brigade Training Centre, and all Area and District Headquarters have disabled parking bays

and portable loop hearing systems. All new redecoration colour schemes take account of the needs of the visually impaired with contrasting colours between doors and door frames and all new signage includes upper and lower case lettering.

A new policy is now in place in respect of the recruitment and retention of employees who are, or become disabled. The impact of this for serving members will be the opportunity to remain in post if reasonable adjustments can be made to allow their employment to continue and so prevent early retirement. For new applicants, reasonable adjustments can be made to the recruitment process to allow people with disabilities the opportunity of a career in the Fire Service.

Preventing Accidents at Work

During the year under review, the number of accidents and injuries to personnel continued to drop with a 15% reduction in 2004/05 compared with the previous year. The improvement means that there has been a 43% decrease in accidents at work in the past two years.

The Brigade will make every effort to ensure this downward trend continues by introducing and reviewing existing policies and ensuring the necessary training courses are provided. During 2004/05 the following policies were reviewed and any recommendations arising implemented:

- * Reporting and investigation of accidents, personal injury, dangerous occurrences and near misses – reporting procedures amended, report forms modified, new accident book introduced;
- * Workplace Health, Safety & Welfare – Workplace inspection system improved and revised systematic Workplace audit system introduced; and
- * Pregnant women and women of child bearing age – greater emphasis on regular review of associated risk assessments, greater role for Brigade Medical Advisor.

The Northern Ireland Fire Brigade also hosted the annual two day FireFit Conference in June 2004, which brought together fellow professionals from Fire Services right across the UK and Ireland to discuss the major issues facing them in keeping their firefighters fit for duty.

Helping Staff with Welfare Problems

The Occupational Health & Welfare Unit manage long-term sickness cases within the Brigade providing support to those people being medically retired and assisting with the rehabilitation of those who have undergone corrective surgery. During the past year, Unit officers visited more than 100 staff dealing with issues as diverse as addiction, financial and marital, stress and death problems in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Fire Services National Benevolent Fund activities maintain a high profile with contributions of approximately £38,000 towards the Fund and a further £45,000 being raised by 15 persons who went on the New Zealand Trek. The Jubilee Therapy Centre offers the highest care available to personnel in need of rehabilitation 18 persons attended with eight families availing of the Fund's convalescent centres.

Monitoring Staff Fitness

As the Brigade moves towards compulsory fitness testing, as recommended in the "Fit for Duty" report produced by HM Chief Inspector of Fire Services, the provision of fitness monitoring equipment linked to specific training programmes for firefighters becomes ever more important. The recent purchase of state of the art cardiovascular testing apparatus will allow for the accurate measurement of fitness levels and provide an assessment of the kind of exercise needed to achieve an agreed minimum fitness level.

Supporting Service Delivery

Road Traffic Collision Technical Improvements

A review in 2004 of the Road Traffic Collision equipment carried on operational appliances has led to the Fire Brigade commissioning the latest generation of Heavy Duty Kits for its Rescue Tenders and New Concept Rescue Pumps, 'Enhanced First Response' Kits including a dedicated cutter, combi-tool, ram and new super-silent hydraulic power generator, which also enables two rescue tools to be operated simultaneously, Driver Air Bag Restraint Kits to protect both rescuers and casualties against unexpected air bag deployment and adjustable Ram Sill Supports to accompany the new kits on appliances.

Improving Personal Protective Equipment

Continuing research and development has resulted in the provision of a new rescue fire boot being issued to all firefighters. The new boot is designed to increase protection to the feet, especially over a long period such as a wildland fire incident at which firefighters may be required to walk over several miles of rough terrain and to work for longer than normal periods of time. We would expect the new boot to significantly reduce injuries to feet such as friction burns.

Continued development within the Brigade in partnership with Grampian Fire & Rescue Service has led to the production of a prototype rescue suit which is presently undergoing wearer trials by the Specialist Rescue Team. It is anticipated that the results of these trials will greatly enhance the final design.

Improving Water Supplies

The Brigade has recently developed a computerised hydrant testing system which has been successfully piloted in Western Area Command and will be rolled out to the other three Areas in the future. The

Supporting our People

Brigade's planned use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) will enable Fire Crews to identify the location of hydrants much faster through the use of Mobile Data Systems on their appliances.

Improving the Brigade's Fleet

In 2002, the Authority agreed a Fleet Replacement Programme with the aim of introducing regular purchasing that will raise the overall standards of the operational fleet by increasing the number of new vehicles.

The Brigade's 173 strong operational fleet includes all vehicles necessary to support firefighting operations including operational and training appliances, and Flexi Officer vehicles.

During the year the Brigade received delivery of 10 fire appliances, two Rescue Pumps, two Command Support Units and 20 Flexi Officer cars.

Overall, 48% of the current fleet is 11 or more years old and are therefore due for replacement.



'Holmatro' High Performance Road Traffic Collision Kit installed on new Rescue Pumps



Command Support Unit



New Fire Appliance

Managing our Resources



“Provide a service committed to quality and continuous improvements in all aspects of Fire and Rescue provision including support arrangements”

Priorities

Develop and implement an enhanced Strategic Planning Process.

Develop and maintain a risk register.

To develop and implement a Corporate Communications Strategy.

Achieve the Citizen Charter Standards.

Improve information systems.

Achievements

An Integrated Strategic and Operational Planning Model was introduced and Organisational strategies were developed in key areas such as:

- * Integrated Risk Management Plan;
- * Business Continuity Management Plan;
- * New Dimension;
- * Communications Strategy; and
- * Strategic Development Plan for capital investment in estate, fleet and specialist equipment for the next 5-10 years.

Revised risk registers for each Department have been produced.

A Corporate Communications Strategy 2005/08 has been produced covering all aspects of internal and external communications.

99% of customers surveyed are satisfied with the service provided by the Brigade.

New Unix servers have been purchased to replace the existing server.

Managing our Resources

Planning for the Future

The Northern Ireland Fire Brigade is in the process of extensive organisational and operational change. Strategic planning can enhance the Brigade's preparedness, by taking a pro-active approach in identifying issues and developing strategies to become an even better Fire & Rescue Service.

During 2004/05, the Brigade implemented the following initiatives to enhance strategic planning:

An Integrated Strategic and Operational Planning Model was introduced to guide a review of existing procedures, systems and processes within the Brigade and strategic objectives have now been agreed for inclusion in a new Corporate Plan for 2005/08.

Organisational strategies were developed in key areas such as:

- * Integrated Risk Management Plan;
- * Business Continuity Management Plan;
- * New Dimension;
- * Corporate Communications Strategy; and
- * Strategic Development Plan for capital investment in estate, fleet and specialist equipment for the next 5-10 years.

During 2004/05, a Project Team was set up to develop a Strategic Development Plan to enhance the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland's infrastructure. This included the development of an Outline Business Case to support the re-development of the estate, fleet and specialist equipment in line with modernisation of the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade. The Strategy considers the requirements across the region and identifies the need for appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of our people, our appliances and our specialist equipment.

During 2005/06, we will continue to work in partnership with the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety, Strategic Investment Board and other agencies to agree to take forward a phased

implementation plan that will meet the capital requirements of the Brigade over the next 5-10 years.

Evaluating Our Systems & Processes

Internal Audit

During 2004/05, the following Internal Audit Reports were completed:

- * Audit of Absentee Management;
- * Review of the application of the Return to Work Policy;
- * Payroll;
- * Training & Development Health Check;
- * Internal Financial Control Audit;
- * Contracts;
- * Payments;
- * Budgetary Control Systems Review;
- * Information Technology and E Governance Audit;
- * Fixed Asset Management;
- * Review of Media Service Provision;
- * Equality and Fairness Audit;
- * Occupational Health Audit; and
- * Vehicle Logbook Review.

None of the audits highlighted any significant problems, which would fundamentally undermine the overall effectiveness of the internal control mechanism within the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland.

However, the audit work carried out did highlight a number of common problems, which have been addressed by senior management to ensure continuous improvement within internal control systems. These include:

- * Policy omissions resulting from or highlighted by changes in legislation and/or internal practices;
- * Minor failures in the application of procedures;
- * The focus of internal planning mechanisms;
- * The ability of current data management systems to meet organisational needs; and
- * The Organisation's ability to maintain a healthy workforce.

Value for Money

During the year 2004/05 the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety funded £61.3 million of the Fire Authority's Revenue Expenditure.

The utilisation of this funding was broken down as follows:

Staff & Pension Costs	£51,901m
Other Running Costs	£9,648m

In addition the Department provided funds for £5.105 million Capital Expenditure.

Insurance Settlements

With an annual target saving of 10% on reserve figures the settlements in the year under review we have, once again, exceeded. This represents a (notional) saving of £269,099 for the year.



Insurance Settlements in 2004/05

	<i>Employers</i>	<i>Public Liability</i>	<i>Motor Liability</i>
Claims	15	5	30
Total Cost	198,904	25,692	128,858
Reserve	281,750	59,043	281,760
% Saving	29%	57%	54%

Managing our Resources

Information and Communications

Following an extensive internal and external Communications Audit, a Corporate Communications Strategy 2005/08 has been developed for the Organisation, detailing a three year vision for all aspects of internal and external communications. Key actions this year will be the development of a Media Policy and a Crisis Communications Plan, as well as developing new internal communications channels such as Team Briefing, etc.

Freedom of Information

The year 2004/05 saw the implementation on 1 January 2005 of the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Investigations Regulations Act. Both of these Acts give the general public the right to request information from all public authorities and are designed to encourage more openness, transparency and accountability amongst Public bodies. In the period 1 January 2005 to 31 March 2005 the Authority received a total of three requests for information under Freedom of Information.

Freedom of Information also aims to create a better public understanding of:

- * how we carry out our duties;
- * why we make the decisions we do; and
- * how we spend public money.

Delivering an Excellent Service to the Public

Throughout the year, we employed a range of quantitative and qualitative methods of consultation to enable us to inform the decision making process and to fully understand the opinions and requirements of our staff and the communities we serve. To help us monitor and measure the public's perception of the service we provide, the Brigade carried out two public satisfaction surveys during the year. The results of these surveys, and an Independent Survey carried out by Research Evaluation Services, indicated that 99% of the public were

satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided by the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade and its staff.

During the year, the Brigade carried out a major public consultation exercise on the contents of the Fire Authority's Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2005/06. This Draft Action Plan was issued for consultation on 1 December 2004 with consultees invited to respond by 25 February 2005. The IRMP consultation document was published on the Fire Authority's website (www.nifb.org.uk) inviting comment electronically and was also made available to all staff on the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade Intranet site. A total of 158 responses were received during the consultation period.

Between April 2004 and March 2005, the Brigade received 73 expressions of appreciation, 55 relating to operational matters, 11 regarding fire safety matters, four and one relating to charity and hospitality events, respectively, and two letters of thanks concerning Brigade visits.

Achieving the Citizen Charter Standards

The Brigade's Charter Statement clearly defines standards of service the public can expect. These standards can be translated into targets and the Brigade's performance against these targets is constantly monitored to ensure a quality service is maintained at all times. This Charter Statement is produced in the form of a leaflet which can be obtained on our Website (www.nifb.org.uk). The Brigade's performance against these targets is illustrated in the table opposite.

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister has recently introduced a "Guide to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Customer Service Principles". We will review the guide and the nine standards of customer service and develop our own service targets following public consultation. The Brigade has a clearly defined

Brigade's Citizen Charter Standards Performance

<i>Charter Standard</i>	<i>2002/03</i>	<i>2003/04</i>	<i>2004/05</i>
Arrive at all emergency incidents in accordance with guidance laid down by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister*	93.4%	92.75%	90.6%
Inspect premises on request and issue written reports, making recommendations to bring the Fire Safety measures to a satisfactory standard within 60 days of the initial request	84%	83%	83%
Issue Fire Certificates within 90 days following satisfactory completion of the Brigade's requirements	90%	77%	80%
Written acknowledgement within 7 days of the Brigade receiving any Fire Safety enquiry	99%	99%	99%
A suitable date for a talk on Fire Safety matters agreed in 14 days	99%	99%	99%

* With the introduction of IRMP these National Standards of Fire Cover have been removed and will be replaced with local standards (see *Responding to Emergencies*). The ODPM target is an average figure of three measures used to derive it and the Brigade achieved an appliance attendance rate of 95.65% at each incident.

complaints system as part of its Charter Statement. We are committed to investigate all complaints received whether verbal or in writing. The table shows the number of formal and informal complaints dealt with over the past three years. The complaints were mostly concerned with driver behaviour whilst attending emergency incidents.

*Number of Complaints received**

	<i>2002/03</i>	<i>2003/04</i>	<i>2004/05</i>
Formal	21	20	17
Informal	60	44	51
Total	81	64	68

* Further information can be obtained from the Brigade's Freedom of Information Officer

Improving Our Information Systems and Technology

The Internet and e-mail systems installed over the last two years currently provide over 450 users with this facility. The procurement of new Unix servers at a cost of £800,000 will enhance user productivity and also support organisational growth and change within the Fire Authority and the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade.

During 2004/05, the Information Technology Department has facilitated widespread user training in IS/IT Security. To date, 250 users have been trained and this training is still ongoing. The focus and objective of this training is on the promotion of positive and professional behaviour and communication within the workplace through the appropriate use of Information Technology.

Managing our Resources

In the year ahead, the focus of the Information Technology Department will be on the procurement of “Thin-Client Technology”, a server-based computing solution specifically suited to organisations with a wide geographical spread. This technology will satisfy the increasing demand for access to electronic corporate systems and overcome issues with regard to the management, performance and security of these systems.

Managing our Estate

The Brigade's real estate consists of 67 Fire Stations plus six ancillary locations including a Training Centre in Belfast, Brigade Headquarters in Lisburn, four Area Commands in Belfast, Portadown, Ballymena and Crescent Link in Londonderry and associated District Offices located throughout the Province. The table below shows some of the key improvements to our estate, which have been completed or will be completed by the end of 2005.

<i>Station</i>		<i>Cost</i>
Enniskillen	Refurbishment of Station	£365,000
Glengormley	New District Headquarters	£218,000
Lisnaskea	New drill yard with tower and internal improvements	£105,365
Ballymena	Improvements and redecoration	£56,000
Southern Area HQ	Disability Discrimination and energy efficiency improvements	£107,000
Brigade HQ	Refurbishment of IT suite/General improvements.	£27,000
Brigade TC	Temporary ladder workshop	£28,000
All premises	Risk assessment and testing for Legionella disease	£19,000

In line with Government policy on energy efficiency, £35,000 was spent on measures in the Southern Area Headquarters scheme, £28,000 on the installation of an energy efficient heating scheme at Bangor which received a £20,000 grant from the Central Energy Efficiency Fund. Cavity wall insulation was completed at Maghera, Magherafelt, Ballycastle, Ballyclare, Ballymoney, Carnlough, Crumlin, Kilrea, Larne and Whitehead Fire Stations.

Protecting the Environment



“Protect the people and the environment of Northern Ireland from the adverse impact of chemical emergencies and pollution”

Target

Ensure our activities cause least possible harm to our environment

Provide ‘first responder’ environmental protection equipment on all frontline appliances

Achievements

Major Incident Plan produced.
Business Continuity Plan produced.
Exercises and scenarios carried out during the year to test our effectiveness in dealing with chemical emergencies and pollution improvements introduced.

Environmental protection kits on all front line appliances provided.

Planning for Major Incidents

During the year our Major Incident Plan was revised and issued. The Plan is updated on a regular basis and will be tested by means of an emergency enactment to analyse the effectiveness of its procedures during 2005.

In December 2004 we issued our Business Continuity Management Plan. Business continuity management is an ongoing process of risk assessment and management with the purpose of ensuring that the Fire Brigade’s core business can continue in the event of any number of possible disruptions.

The Brigade’s Specialist Rescue Team (SRT) established at Central Fire Station in Belfast in 2003 has considerably enhanced our contribution to public safety and the safety of firefighters. SRT provides operational capability for Water Rescue, Rope Rescue and Urban Search and Rescue incidents.

SRT maintain their specialist skills by attending incidents and training. Simulated exercises were carried out during the year, most notably in July 2004 at a collapsed structure in Victoria Square, Belfast. Beam breaching and breaking and rope rescue techniques were used during the incident.

As a result of the risk profile associated with the Port of Belfast, a dedicated Marine Response Team has been established at Whitla Fire Station to provide a specialist response capability for incidents involving hazardous materials and shipping within the Port of Belfast. The personnel have all been trained in marine operations at the Fire Service College and have access to specialist equipment including fire tugs.

During the year the Fire Brigade received 78 calls to chemical incidents (a 111% increase from the previous year). These incidents range from domestic leaks of gas and oil, to chemical spillage of chlorine crystals and mercury. Continued liaison

Protecting the Environment

with the Environment and Heritage Service has ensured the provision of environmental kits on all our frontline fire appliances. These can be used to carry out emergency containment at the scene of an incident involving hazardous materials, thereby limiting the damage to the environment.

Planning for Major Disasters - New Dimension Initiative

The New Dimension project commenced work in the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11 2001, by evaluating the Fire Brigade's capabilities and resilience towards dealing with catastrophic, chemical, radiological, nuclear, biological and conventional terrorist incidents.

In light of this, the Brigade aimed to strengthen Northern Ireland's resilience against the threat of International Terrorism, through the procurement of specialist equipment and development of operational procedures (in co-operation with our partner agencies). During the year we procured specialist equipment at a cost of £578,000. This equipment allows our staff to carry out large-scale decontamination of the public in the event of an accidental or uncontrolled release of harmful substances.



Specialist Rescue Team at Exercise



Marine Rescue Team

Simulated incidents help Brigade develop better emergency planning arrangements

In December 2004 an inter-station Hazardous Materials (HazMat) exercise was held in Larne Port. The scenario involved a container lorry leaving a ship via the ramp, jack-knifing and a container lorry colliding into it. Dangerous chemicals onboard one of the containers ruptured and leaked over the ship deck. Personnel onboard the ship were injured in the accident and from the fumes of the leaking chemicals.

Firefighters from Larne and Carnlough Stations attended the incident and on arrival, Larne's Emergency Support Unit was set up as the control point. Crews from Larne in chemical protection suits and a breathing apparatus crew entered the ship to assess the casualties and to ascertain the chemical involved. Carnlough's personnel set up a decontamination area to decontaminate crews after dealing with the incident.



In November last year we tested our emergency procedures during a large multi-agency exercise at the Belfast International Airport. This was the largest UK Airport exercise for some time and involved approximately 500 people. Appliances and crews from Antrim, Crumlin, Ballyclare, Glengormley and Lisburn Stations participated in the exercise and Cadet firefighters from Lisburn and Glengormley also attended volunteering as casualties on the crashed aircraft.

Statement of Accounts

Index	Pages
Foreword	44-47
Certificate of Chief Fire Officer	48
Statement of the Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer's Responsibilities	49
Fire Authority Board Members	50
Statement of Internal Control	51-53
The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller & Auditor General to the House of Commons and the Northern Ireland Assembly	54-55
Income and Expenditure Account	56
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2005	57
Cashflow Statement for the year ended 31 March 2005	58
Statement of Recognised Gains and Losses for the year ended 31 March 2005	59
Notes to the Accounts	60-75
Analysis of Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2005	76
Certificate of Chief Fire Officer and Chairman	77
Accounts Direction	78-80

Foreword

1. Statutory Basis

The Fire Authority for Northern Ireland (the Fire Authority) is a body corporate which was established on 1 October 1973 by the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1973, to take over responsibility for Fire Services from two existing bodies, the Belfast Corporation Fire Brigade and the Northern Ireland Fire Authority. The Fire Authority is a Non-Departmental Public Body.

The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety became the sponsoring Department on 2 December 1999.

These Accounts have been prepared in accordance with Article 12 of the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 and cover the year ended 31 March 2005. The Accounts have been prepared in a form directed by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety with the approval of the Department of Finance & Personnel in accordance with Article 12 (1) of the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984.

The accounting policies adopted follow UK generally accepted accounting practice (UK GAAP) to the extent that it is meaningful and appropriate to the public sector. The accounting policies are selected in accordance with the principles set out in FRS 18 "Accounting Policies" as the most appropriate for giving a true and fair view. The accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the accounts.

2. Results

For the year ended 31 March 2005 there is a deficit, on ordinary activities excluding a notional negative cost of capital, of £17,467,000 (see page 56).

The Fire Authority is funded substantially by grants under the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety. For 2004/2005 we received £61,300,000 of revenue funding (see Note 2, Page 64).

To comply with FRS 17, the Fire Authority received its Actuarial Valuation of the liabilities of the Firemen's Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 1973 as at 31 March 2005. This resulted in an increase in the provision of £45,513,000 (see Note 14(b), Page 71). The Department currently funds the pension cost annually. As this cost is increasing at a rate well in excess of inflation, the Authority is dependent upon the Department securing extra funds year by year.

The pension deficits to date have resulted in the Fire Authority having net liabilities of £237,147,000, (see page 57). As the Fire Authority is adequately funded on a cash basis, it is not regarded as being operationally insolvent.

3. Business Review

A full review of the objectives and activities is contained in the Fire Authority's Annual Report. In accordance with Article 16 and 12 of the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 the report is to be submitted to the Head of the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety and is to be laid before Parliament.

4. Research and Development

A number of Research and Development activities have been carried out during the year and the details are included in the Annual Report.

5. Post Balance Sheet Events

There were no post Balance Sheet events.

6. Charitable Donations

There were no Charitable Donations made during the year.

7. Fixed Assets

The movement in fixed assets during the year is set out at Note 8, Page 69 to the Financial Statements. The Fire Authority is of the view that there is a material difference between the market and book value of its land and buildings. This is because the valuation of its Fire Stations shown in the accounts is on the basis of depreciated replacement cost. The price that could be achieved if the premises were sold on the open market is approximately 39% of the existing depreciated replacement cost which is shown on the balance sheet. This could amount to a difference of approximately £45,873,220.

8. Future Developments

Under the proposed Fire & Rescue Service's legislation, the Fire Service will have enhanced statutory responsibilities and we will need to re-deploy resources to new areas of work such as new dimensions and community safety.

The Northern Ireland Fire Brigade will begin to use its new name "Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service" from the 1 April 2005 as a first step in a phased re-branding of the whole Organisation. We are currently working on a strategic development plan to enhance our infrastructure to ensure that the future accommodation and equipment needs to reflect the new risk based (IRMP) service approach.

9. Board Members

The Fire Authority consists of 17 Members appointed by the Minister for the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety. Of the 15 Ordinary Members, eight are elected representatives (Councillors) appointed from nominations made by the 26 District and Borough Councils. The remaining seven Members are appointed as representatives of the general public. The two non-ordinary Members are the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. A full list of Members who served during the year 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 is set out on page 50.

10. Statement of Board Members' Responsibilities

Members of the Fire Authority have corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Authority complies with any statutory (or other) requirements for the use of public funds. Other important responsibilities of Authority Members include:

- * establishing the overall strategic direction of the Authority within the policy and resources framework agreed with the Minister;
- * formulating a strategy for implementing the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, including prompt response to public requests for information;
- * ensuring the Authority operates sound environmental policies and practices in accordance with practices set out in the 1990 White Paper "This Common Inheritance" (a copy of which is available in the Library at Fire Brigade Headquarters) and other relevant guidance;
- * ensuring that the high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times;
- * overseeing the delivery of planned results by monitoring performance against agreed strategic objectives and targets;
- * ensuring that, in reaching decisions, the Authority has taken into account any guidance issued by the Department; and
- * ensuring that the Authority operates within the limit of its statutory authority; within the limits of the Authority's delegated authority agreed with the Department; and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds.

11. Employee Involvement

The Fire Authority encourages employee participation and considers staff communication and involvement as a key success factor within the Organisation. The relevant Representative Bodies are involved in the development of policy within the Authority through informal consultative processes such as Joint Working Parties and also the more formal negotiating committee framework. In particular, they have had an integral role in the development of employment practices and procedures, including appointments and promotions and, with the Authority, they continue to review these to ensure compliance with legislation and Codes of Practice.

12. Disabled Employees

The Fire Authority operates the following policies:

- (i) All job advertisements for non-operational posts carry a Welcoming Statement in line with Departmental policy which confirms that the principle of equal treatment will apply to all applicants irrespective of disability;
- (ii) For each post, disabled applicants are monitored under the Fire Authority's Equal Opportunities Monitoring procedures; and
- (iii) A Textphone system has been installed at Fire Authority Headquarters so that those with a hearing impairment can obtain Fire Safety advice and audio tapes on Fire Safety are also available on request.

13. Health and Safety

The Fire Authority is committed to adhering to all existing legislation on health and safety at work to ensure that staff and customers enjoy the benefits of a safe environment.

14. Prompt Payment Policy

The Fire Authority is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the Confederation of British Industry's Prompt Payers Code. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days of the receipt of the goods or services, or presentation of a valid invoice or a similar demand, whichever is later.

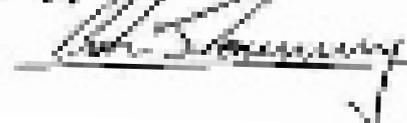
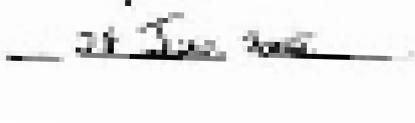
Regular reviews conducted to measure how promptly the Fire Authority paid its bills found that 95.12% of bills were paid within this standard.

The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Regulation 2002 provides small businesses with a statutory right to claim interest on the late payment of commercial debt. During the year, the Authority incurred no interest payments.

15. Auditor

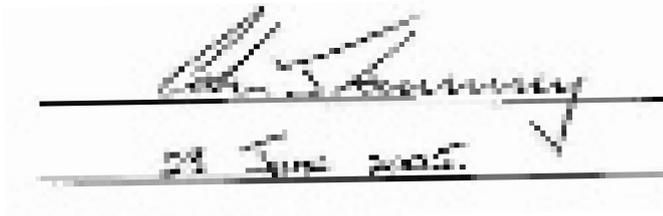
The Comptroller & Auditor General was appointed the statutory Auditor from 1 April 2003 following the Audit & Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. He is the Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and he and his staff are wholly independent of the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland and reports his findings to Parliament.

Details of the external audit fees are highlighted in Note 7 to the Accounts.

Chairman:		Date:	
Chief Fire Officer:		Date:	

Certificate of Chief Fire Officer

I certify that the Annual Accounts set out in the Financial Statements and Notes to the Accounts (pages 56 to 76) of the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland have been compiled from, and are in accordance with, the accounts and financial records maintained by the Authority and with the accounting standards and policies for Non-Departmental Public Bodies approved by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety.

A scanned image of a handwritten signature and date. The signature is written in black ink on a horizontal line. Below it, the date '21 June 2005.' is also written in black ink on another horizontal line.

Chief Fire Officer

Date

Statement of the Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer's Responsibilities

Under Article 12 of the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984, the Fire Authority is required to prepare Financial Statements for each financial year in the form and on the basis determined by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety with the approval of the Department of Finance & Personnel. The Financial Statements are prepared on an accruals basis and must present a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Fire Authority, of its income and expenditure, total recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the Financial Statements, the Fire Authority is required to:

- * observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety including relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- * make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- * state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
- * prepare the Financial Statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Fire Authority will continue in operation;
- * keep proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Authority; and
- * pursue and demonstrate value for money in the services the Authority provides and in its use of public assets and the resources it controls.

The Permanent Secretary for the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety, as Accounting Officer for health and personal social services in Northern Ireland, has designated the **Chief Fire Officer** as the Accounting Officer for the Fire Authority. His relevant responsibilities as Accounting Officer, including his responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which he is answerable and for the keeping of proper records, are set out in the Accounting Officer Memorandum, issued by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety. The Accounting Officer is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Authority and hence for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Fire Authority Board Members 1 April 2004 - 31 March 2005

Chairman

Mr William F Gillespie OBE TD MBA JP DL FCIQB FSCA

Vice-Chairman

Mr P Bradley CBE MA

Members

Mr J Beattie MCIPD

Mrs M Black

Mr J Campbell BA MBA FAIA FCIS FInstAM FCMI

Mr J Clarke

Mrs S Dixon

Mrs B Gilliland

Mr K Harper MIFireE

Mr G A Hatch TFA

Mr J Hughes

Mr A M McAleenan

Mr J F McKeever

Mr O P Molloy LLB

Mr S Montgomery BSc MSc MCIOB MRICS MBEEng

Mr R Pollock

Mr J Ross FCA ATII

1 SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of Fire Authority for Northern Ireland policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and the Fire Authority assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Government Accounting Northern Ireland.

The Fire Authority agrees with its sponsoring Department, after extensive public consultation, a Corporate Plan which sets out objectives over a three year period and a Business Plan which details the business objectives for the first year of the Corporate Plan, together with appropriate targets and performance measures. Results against targets on performance measures are reported monthly and in the annual report at the year end.

The Fire Authority for Northern Ireland has established a Business Risk Register which monitors and records the control of risk within the Fire Authority. The Business Risk Register has been designed using recommended Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety guidance.

The Authority's Business Risk Register is then forwarded to the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety where its data forms part of the Department's Business Risk Register.

2 THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Fire Authority for Northern Ireland policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2005 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts, and accords with Department of Finance & Personnel guidance.

3 CAPACITY TO HANDLE RISK

I have carried out appropriate procedures to ensure that I have identified the Authority's objectives and risks and determined a control strategy for each of the significant risks. As a result, risk ownership has been allocated to the appropriate staff and the Authority has set out its attitude to risk to the achievement of the Authority's objectives. Each Principal Officer and Director has completed a Management Assurance Statement which is designed to highlight important issues. To facilitate this exercise, the Quality Services Unit conducted a training initiative during 2003/2004 and refresher training was provided on request prior to the 2004/2005 risk assessment exercise.

My Management Team has ensured that procedures are in place for verifying that aspects of risk management and internal control are regularly reviewed and reported on. There has been a full risk and control assessment prior to reporting on the year ending 31 March 2005. Risk management has been incorporated more fully into the corporate planning and decision-making processes of the Authority.

Additionally, the Quality Services Unit recently completed a risk assessment exercise using the Risk Management Assessment Framework (RMAF). This is a tool developed by HM Treasury for assessing the standard of risk management in public organisations, and the result of this exercise have helped provide additional assurance on our risk management strategy.

4 THE RISK AND CONTROL FRAMEWORK

Key Organisational objectives are set by the Authority and my Management Team. Risks associated with the non-achievement of these objectives are identified and appropriate mechanisms to control these risks are established. The likelihood and impact of the risk upon the Authority is calculated and the appropriate risk response is determined by my Management Team using experience and national best practice.

Furthermore, risk management is an agenda item on each Principal Officers and Directors monthly management meeting, to enable reporting and review of new risks, the effectiveness of controls over risks identified, the progress of action plans and to facilitate early corrective action.

The Fire Authority's risk priorities during 2004/2005 included:

- * Making sufficient progress in the key areas for improvement identified as part of the resolution of the Firefighters' pay dispute;
- * Successful implementation of critical tasks established in the Integrated Risk Management Action Plan;
- * Continuing progress in the roll-out of the Integrated Personal Development System; and
- * Greater progress in management of the levels of Absenteeism in Fire Authority personnel.

5 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers within the Authority, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their Management Letter and other reports.

I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Board, the Audit Committee, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

The Board receives periodic reports concerning internal control. The appropriate steps are being taken to manage risks in significant areas of responsibility and monitor progress on key projects.

Due to the operational procedures of the Fire Brigade, there is a culture of risk awareness and risk assessment within the Organisation. The Fire Authority has a Safety Committee, which is responsible for monitoring and developing policies to ensure that it is meeting its statutory obligations in relation to all aspects of safety. It also has an Audit Committee, which is responsible for ensuring that all of the Authority's financial and operating systems reflect best practice and ensure adequate safeguards against fraud and theft.

The Fire Authority has an Internal Audit Unit, which operates to standards defined in the Government Internal Audit Manual. The Unit submits regular reports which include the Head of Internal Audit's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Organisation's system of internal control together with recommendations for improvement.

A Management Assurance Statement is submitted by each Principal Officer/Director which is based on the work of each Directorate in relation to approvals given, risks identified and controlled, and on regularity and compliance action.

6 INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

It should be noted that during the incoming financial year, the Authority will continue its drive to improve the management of sickness absence. A target of eight days sickness absence per employee has been set. This goal is very challenging given the 2003/2004 outcome, which averaged 13 days sickness absence per employee. As a result of the utilisation of additional resources during 2004/2005, substantial improvement was noted with regard to the management of sickness. At the year end, actual average sickness equalled 12.2 days sickness absence per employee, and was reflected in a decreasing notional cost of sickness absence.

Chief Fire Officer:



Date:



The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller & Auditor General to the House of Commons and the Northern Ireland Assembly

I certify that I have audited the financial statements on pages 56 to 76 under the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984, as amended by the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of certain fixed assets and the accounting policies set out on pages 60 to 63.

Respective responsibilities of the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland, Chief Fire Officer and Auditor:

As described on page 49, the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland and the Chief Fire Officer are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 and the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety directions made thereunder, and for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions. The Fire Authority for Northern Ireland and Chief Fire Officer are also responsible for the preparation of the other contents of the Annual Report. My responsibilities, as independent auditor, are established by statute and I have regard to the standards and guidance issued by the Auditing Practices Board and the ethical guidance applicable to the auditing profession.

I report my opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984, and directions made thereunder by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety, and whether in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. I also report if, in my opinion, the Foreword is not consistent with the financial statements, if the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland has not kept proper accounting records, or if I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. I consider the implications for my certificate if I become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements.

I review whether the statement on pages 51 to 53 reflects the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland's compliance with the Department of Finance & Personnel's guidance on the Statement on Internal Control. I report if it does not meet the requirements specified by the Department of Finance & Personnel, or if the statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information I am aware of from my audit of the financial statements. I am not required to consider, nor have I considered whether the Accounting Officer's Statement on Internal Control covers all risks and controls. I am also not required to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's corporate governance procedures or its risk and control procedures.

Basis of Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with United Kingdom Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes an examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts, disclosures and regularity of financial transactions included in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of significant estimates and the judgements made by the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland and the Chief Fire Officer in the preparation of the financial statements and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by error or by fraud or other irregularity and that, in all material respects, the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. In forming my opinion I also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In my opinion:

- * the Financial Statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland at 31 March 2005 and of the deficit, total recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 and directions made by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety; and
- * in all material respects, the income and expenditure have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities that govern them.

I have no observations to make on these Financial Statements.



J. M. Dowdall CB
Comptroller & Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
100 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU

Date: 1st July 2005

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2005

	Note	2005 £'000	2004 £'000
<u>GROSS INCOME</u>			
Grant Income from Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety	2	61,300	57,700
Income from Fees and Charges	3	98	92
Other Income	4	<u>366</u>	<u>419</u>
		<u>61,764</u>	<u>58,211</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
Staff Costs	5	51,901	46,791
Other Operating Expenses	7	10,078	9,023
Notional Cost of Capital		<u>(7,660)</u>	<u>(5,575)</u>
		54,319	50,239
Surplus On Ordinary Activities Before Provisions and Interest		<u>7,445</u>	<u>7,972</u>
Provisions for Future Obligations	14(a)	<u>(215)</u>	<u>(267)</u>
Surplus on Ordinary Activities Before Interest Payable		7,230	7,705
Interest Payable	14(b)	(17,037)	(17,500)
Notional Cost of Capital		<u>(7,660)</u>	<u>(5,575)</u>
(Deficit) on Ordinary Activities excluding Notional Cost of Capital	15	<u>(17,467)</u>	<u>(15,370)</u>

All amounts relate to continuing activities.

The notes on pages 60 to 76 form part of these accounts.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2005

	Note	£'000	2005 £'000	£'000	2004 £'000
<u>FIXED ASSETS</u>					
Tangible Assets	8		88,313		79,780
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>					
Stock	9	650		961	
Debtors	10	2,048		1,849	
Cash at Bank and in Hand	11	497		905	
		3,195		3,715	
<u>CREDITORS</u>					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	2,017		3,154	
<u>NET CURRENT ASSETS</u>					
			1,178		561
<u>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>					
			89,491		80,341
<u>CREDITORS</u>					
Amounts falling due after more than one year	13		-		-
<u>PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES</u>					
Insurance Provision	14(a)		1,838		1,623
Pension Provision	14(b)		324,800		279,287
<u>NET (LIABILITIES)</u>					
			(237,147)		(200,569)
<u>CAPITAL AND RESERVES</u>					
General Fund	15		(325,461)		(280,350)
Government Grant Reserve	16		88,314		79,781
Revaluation Reserve			-		-
			(237,147)		(200,569)

I certify that the Annual Accounts set out in the Financial Statements and the Notes to the Accounts (pages 60 to 76) have been submitted and duly approved by the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland.

Chairman: 

Chief Fire Officer: 

Date: 

Cashflow Statement for the year ended 31 March 2005

	Note	Year Ended 31 March 2005 £'000	Year Ended 31 March 2004 £'000
Net Cash (Outflow) from Operating Activities	19a	<u>(207)</u>	<u>(910)</u>
<u>RETURNS ON INVESTMENT AND SERVICING OF FINANCE</u>			
Interest Receivable		23	22
<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>			
Payments to acquire Tangible Fixed Assets		(5,343)	(2,441)
Capital Grants Received		5,105	2,135
Proceeds from sale of Fixed Assets		<u>14</u>	<u>5</u>
Net Cash (Outflow) from Investing Activities		(224)	(301)
<u>MANAGEMENT OF LIQUID RESOURCES</u>			
Net Cash Inflow/(Outflow) from management of Liquid Resources			-
Net Cash (Outflow) before Financing	19b	<u>(408)</u>	<u>(1,189)</u>
<u>FINANCING</u>			
Capital Funding		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Cash Inflow/(Outflow) from Financing		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
(Decrease) in Cash and Bank Balances	19c	<u>(408)</u>	<u>(1,189)</u>

The notes on pages 73 & 74 form part of this statement.

Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses for the year ended 31 March 2005

	Note	2005 £'000	2004 £'000
(Deficit) for the Financial Year	15	(17,467)	(15,370)
Unrealised Surplus on the Revaluation of Fixed Assets	16	6,863	1,042
Actuarial (Loss) - Pension Provision	14(b)	<u>(27,645)</u>	<u>(68,700)</u>
Total Recognised (Losses) for the year		<u>(38,249)</u>	<u>(83,028)</u>

Notes to the Accounts

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Authority

The Accounts have been prepared in a form determined by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety with the approval of the Department of Finance & Personnel in accordance with the requirements of Article 12 of the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984.

(b) Accounting Convention

The Accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention (as modified to reflect changes in the cost of fixed assets, see (d) below).

(c) Basis of Preparation of Accounts

Without limiting the information given, the Accounts comply with the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, the accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board and accounting and disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance & Personnel, insofar as those requirements are appropriate.

At the year end liabilities exceed assets due to the pension provision. The Board and Chief Fire Officer are satisfied that the Fire Authority remains a going concern on the basis that pension costs, as they arise, continue to be met by employee contributions and through funding by the Department.

The Accounts are prepared in accordance with the principles set out in the Financial Reporting Standard 18 (FRS 18) "Accounting Policies" as the most appropriate for the purpose of giving a true and fair view.

(d) Tangible Assets

(i) Land and Buildings – including Depreciation

The Fire Authority has three types of buildings:

- (i) Specialised, which are valued at depreciated replacement cost;
- (ii) Non-specialised, which are valued at existing use value; and
- (iii) Non-operational, which are valued at open market value.

Land and buildings acquired since the last valuation are initially included in the balance sheet at cost. Full valuations are carried out at five yearly intervals by the Valuation & Lands Agency, the last valuation being at 31 March 2003. At 31 March 2005 a desktop exercise was carried out by the Valuation & Lands Agency where appropriate indices were applied to arise at a current value. Valuations were also amended to account for any significant works of improvement undertaken in the year. Freehold land is not depreciated. Freehold and leasehold buildings are depreciated over their expected useful economic life to the Fire Authority of up to 50 years.

Grants in aid received for specific capital expenditure on depreciable assets are credited to the Government Grant Reserve on the Balance Sheet. The same proportion of the amount of the revaluation that the amount of grant bears to the asset's acquisition cost is also credited to the Government Grant Reserve. The remainder of the revaluation relating to the proportion of assets not financed by grant is credited to the Revaluation Reserve.

(ii) Assets other than Land and Buildings

Assets costing less than £1,000 per individual item are written off to the income and expenditure account in the period of acquisition. Assets acquired prior to 31 March 2000 are included in the balance sheet at valuation. All other assets are capitalised at cost. An appropriate index is applied annually in order to arrive at a current value.

(iii) Depreciation on Assets other than Land and Buildings

Depreciation is calculated to write off the valuation of tangible fixed assets less their estimated residual values on a straight line basis and straight line accelerated basis over the expected useful economic lives of the assets concerned.

Assets are depreciated over their useful economic lives, which are as follows:

*	Fixtures, fittings and equipment	5 to 20 years
*	Computers	3 to 7 years
*	Vehicles	5 to 15 years

(e) Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Where necessary, provision is made for obsolete, slow moving and defective stocks.

(f) Government Grants

A cash limited grant system is in operation. Under this, amounts can be drawn to finance payments made during the year which are properly chargeable against the grant, provided that in total they do not exceed the cash limit.

(g) Income

Income from contracts and other services provided is included to the extent of the completion of the contract or service concerned. All income from short-term deposits is credited to the income and expenditure account in the period in which it is earned. The annual grant from the Department is credited to the income and expenditure account.

(h) Pensions

The Fire Authority operates a Pension Scheme which, is governed by the provisions of the Firemen's Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) Order 1973 as amended.

The Scheme is a final salary scheme providing a combination of pension and lump sum benefits on a range of contingencies and is unfunded. These benefits are related to each individual's salary on leaving the Scheme and are increased annually in line with the rise in the Retail Price Index after leaving service.

Scheme members contribute to the Scheme at the rate of 11% of pensionable pay and may also elect to pay additional contributions to purchase added years of service.

An actuarial valuation was carried out on 31 March 2005 in accordance with FRS 17 and Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Guidance 2003/2004 and the results of valuation is detailed in Note 14(b). The next full actuarial valuation is scheduled for 31 March 2007.

The charge to the income and expenditure account consists of the Current Service Cost¹ (included within staff costs) and interest costs² (shown on the Income & Expenditure Statement). Actuarial gains and losses³ are taken to reserves and shown in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses.

The liabilities under the Scheme have been valued using the standard actuarial technique known as the Projected Unit Method for all groups of staff.

The principal financial assumptions for valuing the liabilities were:

	31 March 2005 % per annum
Rate of inflation	2.5
Rate of increase in salaries	4.0
Rate of increase in pensions	2.5
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	6.1

The total net pension deficit as at 31 March 2005 is £325 million, representing the sum of the liabilities at that date. The current Service Cost for 2004/2005 has been calculated as 26.5% of pensionable salaries and the additional costs to meet the expected future benefits for Retained Firefighters and injury awards are approximately 1.5% and 3% of pensionable salaries respectively.

1 Current Service Cost: is the increase in the present value of the scheme liabilities expected to arise from employee service in the current period

2 Interest Cost: The expected increase during the period in the present value of the scheme liabilities because the benefits are one period nearer to settlement.

3 Actuarial Gains and Losses: Changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses that arise because events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains and losses) or the actuarial assumptions have changed.

The Fire Authority also participates in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee Scheme for the majority of its Non-Uniformed and Control Room personnel. This is a defined benefit scheme. NILGOSC is neither able to identify the associated assets and liabilities nor details of any surplus or deficits in the Scheme which apply directly to the Fire Authority. The valuation showed the fund to be in deficit at 31 March 2004 with the value of its assets representing 85% of the value of its liabilities for service to the valuation date.

Assuming that a funding level of 100% is to be targeted over a period of 20 years on the ongoing basis the 'common' employers' contribution rate is 17.3% of pensionable pay.

This is a significant rise on the contribution levels in 2004/2005. NILGOSC has proposed a series of minimum contributions rises over the next three years with the funding position being reassessed in 2007.

The employer contribution rate for 2005/2006 is set at 8.5%.

(i) Foreign Currency Transaction

Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded using the rate of exchange ruling at the date of the transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rates of exchange ruling at the end of the financial period with all resulting exchange differences being taken to the income and expenditure account in the period in which they arise.

(j) Taxation

The Fire Authority benefits by being exempt from corporation tax on income it receives from fees and interest. VAT incurred by the Fire Authority is reclaimed.

(k) Operating Leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to the income and expenditure account on an accruals basis over the terms of the lease.

(l) Notional Cost of Capital

The income and expenditure account bears a non-cash credit for interest relating to the use of capital by the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland. The basis of the charge is 3.5% of the average capital employed during the year, (defined as total assets less all liabilities).

	2005	2004
	£'000	£'000
2. GRANT INCOME		
Grant from Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety		
Grant Received	66,405	58,435
Less transfer to/from Deferred Income - Revenue	<u>0</u>	<u>1,400</u>
Grant Receivable	66,405	59,835
Less transfer Government Grant Reserve	(5,166)	(1,958)
Less transfer (to)/from Deferred Income - Capital	<u>61</u>	<u>(177)</u>
Grant credited to Revenue Account	<u>61,300</u>	<u>57,700</u>
3. INCOME FROM FEES AND CHARGES		
Provision of Fire Cover – Other Bodies	27	30
Fire Reports/Certificates	38	43
Trade Union Deduction Service	27	17
Sundry Income from Fees and Charges	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
	<u>98</u>	<u>92</u>
Sundry Income includes amounts received for special services, hire of equipment and course expenses.		
4. OTHER INCOME		
Loss Prevention Council	192	191
Insurance Claims	75	37
Telephone Calls	12	21
Interest Receivable	23	22
Miscellaneous Income	<u>64</u>	<u>148</u>
	<u>366</u>	<u>419</u>
5. STAFF COSTS AND MEMBERS' REMUNERATION		
5.1 Staff Costs		
(a) The costs of employing staff – whether recorded in the statement of financial performance or capitalised - are as follows:		
Salaries and Wages	40,695	38,145
Social Security Costs	3,076	2,850
Pension Costs - NILGOSC	228	205
Agency/Temporary Staff	345	358
Unfunded Pension Costs - Current Service Costs	10,446	7,870
- Pensions Contributions	(3,279)	(2,755)
- Transfers In	390	163
Less Recovered Staff Costs Re: Secondees	<u>(0)</u>	<u>(45)</u>
	<u>51,901</u>	<u>46,791</u>

	2005	2004
	£'000	£'000
(b) Total Costs can be analysed as follows:		
Members	72	70
Firefighters (Full-Time)	36,733	32,249
Firefighters (Part-Time)	8,608	8,592
Control Room Personnel	1,718	1,656
Administrative/Manual Personnel	4,425	3,866
Agency/Temporary Staff	<u>345</u>	<u>358</u>
	<u>51,901</u>	<u>46,791</u>

(c) The average number of full-time equivalents (including Members) employed by the Fire Authority during the year was as follows:

	No	No
Members	17	16
Firefighters (Full-Time)	896	878
Firefighters (Part-Time)	962	888
Control Room Personnel	56	59
Administrative/Manual	182	177
Agency/Temporary	<u>26</u>	<u>38</u>
	<u>2,139</u>	<u>2,056</u>

There are four Principal Officers included within Firefighters (Full-Time) and four Directors included within Administrative/Manual.

(d) The average number of pensioners paid by the Fire Authority during the period was:

No	No
711	670

(e) The number of Board Members in receipt of remuneration falling within the range below was:

	No	No
£0,000 to £4,999	<u>15</u>	<u>19</u>

5.2 Chairman, Principal Officers and Directors' Emoluments

The following shows the salary and pension entitlements of the most Senior Members of the Fire Authority for the year ended 31 March 2005.

Name & Title	Salary including Perform Pay	Benefits in Kind	Real increase in Pension & Related Lump Sum at Age 60	Total Accrued Pension at Age 60 & Related Lump Sum	CETV at 31.03.04	CETV at 31.03.05	Real Increase in CETV after adjustment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
W Gillespie Chairman	20-25	0	0	0	0	0	0
P Bradley Vice-Chairman	10-15	0	0	0	0	0	0
C Lamme Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive	110-115	0	35	302	617	755	123
L Jones Deputy Chief Fire Officer	85-90	0	27	221	460	581	110
P Craig Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Development)	80-85	0	1	224	552	600	34
J McDermott Head of Corporate Services "Retired 30/09/04"	30-35	0	1	112	491	515	9
Ms A Conley Director of Human Resources	50-55	0	11	67	226	289	60
T McGonigal Director of Finance & Performance Management "Commenced 25/10/04"	20-25	0	7	41	97	124	25
D Michail Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs "Commenced 15/11/04"					Consent to disclosure withheld		
J Kennedy Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Technical Development) "Retired 01/11/04"					Consent to disclosure withheld		
T Wright Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Technical Development) "Commenced 01/11/04"					Consent to disclosure withheld		
K Gibson Director of Finance					Consent to disclosure withheld		

Pension benefits for the Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officers are provided through the Firemen's Pension Scheme. This is a statutory scheme which provides benefits on a "final salary" basis. The compulsory retirement age for senior Fire Service Officers is 60, but Officers may retire on full pension once they have attained 50 years of age and have 30 years' service. The Chief Fire Officer requires the approval of the Fire Authority to retire before he has attained 55 years of age. Benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of pensionable salary for each year of service up to 20 years and at 2/60th for each year of service thereafter. The maximum attainable is 40/60th. Members may commute up to 25% of their pension in return for a lump sum of up to 15 times the commuted amount, subject to age. Members pay contributions of 11% of pensionable earnings. Pensions increase in payment in line with the Retail Prices Index.

On death, pensions are payable to the surviving spouse at a rate of half the member's pension. On death in service, the scheme pays a lump sum benefit of twice pensionable pay and also provides a service enhancement on computing the spouse's pension. The enhancement depends on length of service and cannot exceed 10 years. Medical retirement is possible in the event of serious ill-health. In this case pensions are brought into payment immediately without actuarial reduction and with service enhanced as for widow(er) pensions.

The pension benefits of the Directors are provided through the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Scheme. This is a funded scheme which provides benefits on a "final salary" basis at a normal retirement age of 65. Benefits accrue at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years' pension is payable on retirement. Members pay contributions of 6% of pensionable earnings. Pensions increase in payment in line with the Retail Prices Index. On death, pensions are payable to the surviving spouse at a rate of half the member's pension. On death in service, the scheme pays a lump sum benefit of twice pensionable pay and also provides a service enhancement on computing the spouse's pension. The enhancement depends on length of service and cannot exceed 10 years. Medical retirement is possible in the event of serious ill-health. In this case pensions are brought into payment immediately without actuarial reduction and with service enhanced as for widow(er) pensions.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are not members of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee Pension Scheme.

6. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Fire Authority for Northern Ireland is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety.

The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety is regarded as a related party. During the year the Fire Authority has had various material transactions with the Department.

7. OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES

	2005	2004
	£'000	£'000
		<u>As Restated</u>
Vehicle Running Costs	1,191	1,177
Operational Equipment Maintenance Costs	333	408
Communications Equipment Maintenance Costs	839	570
Premises	3,015	2,753
Training	765	760
Uniforms	927	433
Medical Expenses, Subsistence and other Allowances	419	384
Contract Catering and Kitchen Equipment Maintenance	346	321
Insurance	252	289
Fire Safety Publicity	669	565
Office Equipment Running Costs	387	350
Postage and Telephones	162	182
Auditors' Remuneration - External Audit	31	30
Hire of Plant and Machinery - Operating Leases	0	18
Government Grant Reserve Release (Note 16)	(3,673)	(3,454)
Profit on Disposal of Fixed Assets	(14)	(3)
Depreciation (Note 8)	3,673	3,454
Other Miscellaneous Expenses	756	786
	<u>10,078</u>	<u>9,023</u>

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Land and Buildings	Fixtures and Fittings	Vehicles	Computer Equipment	Operational and Communication Equipment	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Cost/ Valuation</u>						
At 1 April 2004	69,604	455	21,384	1,280	10,017	102,740
Movement in Categories						0
Assets under Construction			271	5		276
Indexation		36	107	(130)	91	104
Revaluation	5,191					5,191
Additions	407	123	2,543	660	1,334	5,067
Disposals			(726)			(726)
At 31 March 2005	<u>75,202</u>	<u>614</u>	<u>23,579</u>	<u>1,815</u>	<u>11,442</u>	<u>112,652</u>
<u>Depreciation</u>						
At 1 April 2004	0	280	15,310	835	6,535	22,960
Indexation		24	77	(98)	49	52
Revaluation	(1,620)					(1,620)
Charge for the year	1,620	48	1,225	177	603	3,673
Disposals			(726)			(726)
At 31 March 2005	<u>0</u>	<u>352</u>	<u>15,886</u>	<u>914</u>	<u>7,187</u>	<u>24,339</u>
<u>Net book value</u>						
At 31 March 2005	<u>75,202</u>	<u>262</u>	<u>7,693</u>	<u>901</u>	<u>4,255</u>	<u>88,313</u>
At 31 March 2004	<u>69,604</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>6,074</u>	<u>445</u>	<u>3,482</u>	<u>79,780</u>

	2005	2004
	£'000	£'000
9. STOCKS		
Firefighting Equipment	107	114
Uniforms	244	516
Transport	208	251
Fuel	75	67
Stationery, etc	<u>16</u>	<u>13</u>
	<u>650</u>	<u>961</u>
10. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN 1 YEAR		
Trade & Other Debtors	29	84
Prepayments and Accrued Income	890	724
VAT Debtor	<u>1,129</u>	<u>1,041</u>
	<u>2,048</u>	<u>1,849</u>
11. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND		
Bank Current Accounts	490	898
Cash in Hand	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
	<u>497</u>	<u>905</u>
12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN 1 YEAR		
Trade Creditors	565	528
Other Creditors	1,359	2,263
Bank Overdraft	-	-
Taxation and Social Security	154	186
Deferred Income - Capital	(61)	177
Deferred Income - Revenue	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>2,017</u>	<u>3,154</u>
13. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN 1 YEAR		
Trade Creditors	-	-
Other Creditors	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

14. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES

14(a) Injury Benefit/Insurance Claims

	2005 £'000	2004 £'000
At 1 April 2004	1,623	1,356
Arising during the year	810	810
Utilised during the year	(326)	(337)
Reversed Unused	(187)	(147)
Unwinding of Discount	<u>(82)</u>	<u>(59)</u>
At 31 March 2005	<u>1,838</u>	<u>1,623</u>
Expected timing of Cash Flows:		
Within 1 year	1,197	962
1 - 5 years	641	661
Over 5 years	-	-
Total	<u>1,838</u>	<u>1,623</u>

The charge to the Income and Expenditure Account is as follows:

	£,000	£'000
Arising during the year	810	810
Utilised/Reversed, Unused and Unwinding of Discount	<u>(595)</u>	<u>(543)</u>
	<u>215</u>	<u>267</u>

The provision relates to outstanding Employer's Liability, Public Liability and Vehicle Insurance Claims together with Employment Law Claims.

14(b) Pensions relating to Staff

	2005 £'000	2004 £'000
Scheme Liability at 1 April 2004		279,287
Current Service Cost	10,445	
Past Service Cost	0	
Interest on Pension Scheme Liability	<u>17,037</u>	27,482
Enhancements	0	
Pension Transfers In	<u>390</u>	390
Benefits Paid	<u>(7,375)</u>	
Pension Payments to and on Account of Leavers	<u>(2,629)</u>	(10,004)
Actuarial Loss		<u>27,645</u>
Scheme Liability at 31 March 2005		<u>324,800</u>

The provision relates to the outstanding liability to pensions, deferred pensions and active members of the Firemen's Pension Scheme.

2005	2004
£'000	£'000

15. MOVEMENT ON THE GENERAL FUND

Balance at 1 April 2004	(280,350)	(196,280)
Actuarial Loss on Pension (See Note 14(b))	(27,644)	(68,700)
(Deficit) for year (See page 56)	(17,467)	(15,370)
	<u>(325,461)</u>	<u>(280,350)</u>

16. MOVEMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT GRANT RESERVE

2005	2004
£'000	£'000

Capital allocations not yet released to the income and expenditure account:		<u>As Restated</u>
Balance at 1 April 2004	79,781	78,261
DHSSPS Grant (Note 2)	5,166	1,958
Transferred from Deferred Income	177	483
Revaluation in year	6,863	2,533
Released to Income and Expenditure Account (Note 7)	(3,673)	(3,454)
Balance at 31 March 2005	<u>88,314</u>	<u>79,781</u>

All grants credited to this reserve are UK grants.

17. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

There were no post balance sheet events at date of signature of these accounts which would materially affect the figures.

18. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

2005	2004
£'000	£'000

Capital expenditure that has been contracted for but has not been provided for in the financial statements	<u>3,369</u>	<u>381</u>
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19. NOTES TO CASH FLOW STATEMENT

(a) Reconciliation of Operating Surplus to Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities

	Year Ended 31 March 2005 £'000	Year Ended 31 March 2004 £'000
Operating Surplus	7,230	7,705
Adjustments for Non-Cash Transactions		
Depreciation on Fixed Assets	3,673	1,963
Impairment	-	-
Profit on Disposal of Fixed Assets	(14)	(3)
Interest Received	(23)	(22)
Notional Costs	(7,660)	(5,575)
Increase in Insurance Provisions (Note 14a)	215	267
Current Service Cost	10,446	7,870
Deferred Grant Release	(3,673)	(1,963)
Adjustment for Cash Pension Transactions		
Pensions	(10,004)	(8,946)
Transfers In	390	163
Adjustments for movements in working capital		
Decrease/(Increase) in Stock	311	(225)
Decrease/(Increase) in Debtors	(199)	(743)
Decrease/(Increase) in Creditors	(899)	(1,401)
Net Cash (Outflow) from Operating Activities (See page 58)	<u>(207)</u>	<u>(910)</u>

(b) Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds

Increase/(Decrease) in Cash in the Period	(408)	(1,189)
Cash Inflow from New Debt		-
Cash Outflow from Debt Repaid		-
Cash (Inflow)/Outflow from (Decrease)/ Increase in Liquid Resources		-
Change in Net Funds resulting from Cash Flows	<u>(408)</u>	(1,189)
Non-Cash change in Debt		-
Net Debt at 1 April 2004	<u>905</u>	<u>2,094</u>
Net Funds at 31 March 2005 (See note 11)	<u>497</u>	<u>905</u>

(c) Analysis of changes in net funds/debt

	At 1 April 2004 £'000	Cash Flows £'000	Non-Cash Changes £'000	At 31 March 2005 £'000
Cash at Bank and in Hand	905	(408)		497
Bank Overdrafts	0	0		0
Debt due within 1 year	0			0
Debt due after 1 year	0			0
Finance Leases	0			0
Current Asset Investments	<u>0</u>			<u>0</u>
	<u>905</u>	<u>(408)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>497</u>

20. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

Insurance

The Fire Authority operates a policy of limited self insurance and has detailed at Note 14(a) a provision of £1,838,000 in respect of Public Liability, Employer's Liability, Vehicle Liability and Employment Law claims which were unsettled at 31 March 2005. While this is the anticipated sum to meet the liability there is potential for a further £922,000.

Pensions

In September 2000 numerous Retained Firefighters in Northern Ireland lodged claims with the Office of Industrial Tribunals in respect of access to pension schemes and the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations.

The Hearing of the claims has been stayed pending the outcome of a lead case on similar multiple claims lodged throughout the rest of the United Kingdom which is being contested by Fire Authorities nationally.

The FBU have been granted leave to appeal the Court of Appeals decision to the House of Lords.

If the claims were successful and all those eligible took up the opportunity of joining the Firemen's Pension Scheme, it is estimated that the Fire Authority's contribution to this pension liability would be around £9,214,000. This assumes that the effective date of eligibility to join would be 1 July 2000.

21. SUMMARY OF LOSSES AND SPECIAL PAYMENTS

(i) Cash Losses

Total losses were below £100,000 and under Government Accounting rules need not be disclosed.

(ii) Special Payments

	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>£,000</u>
Compensation Payments/Legal Obligations		
Ex-Gratia Payments -	-	-
- Extra-Contractual	-	-
- Compensation Payments	61	326
- Other Payments	-	-
Extra Statutory Payments	-	-

22. PRIOR YEAR ADJUSTMENTS

Depreciation

In the 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 Accounts, no depreciation/revaluation was included for buildings. The 2003/2004 Accounts have subsequently been restated. There is neither an impact on the closing balance sheet account balances nor the cash flow figures for last year. However, the breakdown analysis of the prior year analysis of Notes 7 and 16 have been changed to reflect the depreciation charge and matching grant release.

Name Change

The Northern Ireland Fire Brigade will begin to use its new name "Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service" from the 1 April 2005 as a first step in a phased re-branding of the whole Organisation.

23. PERFORMANCE AGAINST KEY FINANCIAL TARGETS

The available revenue budget from the Department in respect of the 2004/2005 financial year was £61,300,000 which, together with budget income of £3,327,000, totalled £64,627,000. This compares with a cash expenditure out-turn of £64,456,552.

The underspend related mainly to pensions due to higher than anticipated transfers in and lower than anticipated levels of retirement.

Analysis of Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2005

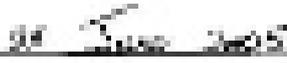
The figures for the year ended 31 March 2005 shown on the attached schedule cover the 12 months 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005.

	2005	2004
	£'000	£'000
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Staff Costs (Note 5)	51,901	46,791
Vehicle Running Costs	1,191	1,177
Operational Equipment Maintenance Costs	333	408
Communications Equipment Maintenance Costs	839	570
Premises	3,015	2,753
Training	765	760
Uniforms	927	433
Medical Expenses, Subsistence and Other Allowances	419	384
Contract Catering and Kitchen Equipment Maintenance	346	321
Insurance	252	289
Fire Safety Publicity	669	565
Office Equipment Running Costs	387	350
Postage and Telephones	162	182
Audit Fees	31	30
Hire of Plant and Machinery - Operating Leases	0	18
Profit on Disposal of Fixed Assets	(14)	(3)
Depreciation	3,673	1,963
Government Grant Reserve Release	(3,673)	(1,963)
Miscellaneous	756	786
Provisions for Future Obligations (Note 14(a))	215	267
Interest Payable	<u>17,037</u>	<u>17,500</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>79,231</u>	<u>73,581</u>
<u>Income</u>		
DHSSPS Grant (Note 2)	61,300	57,700
Fees (Note 3)	98	92
Other Income (Note 4)	<u>366</u>	<u>419</u>
TOTAL INCOME	<u>61,764</u>	<u>58,211</u>
(Deficit)	(17,467)	(15,370)
Balance of General Fund		
1 April 2004	(280,350)	(196,280)
Actuarial Loss on Pension Scheme	(27,644)	(68,700)
Balance of General Fund		
31 March 2005 (Note 15)	<u>(325,461)</u>	<u>(280,350)</u>

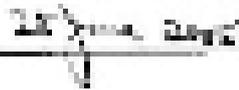
Certificate of the Chief Fire Officer and Chairman

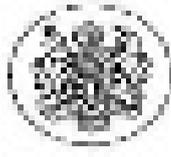
I certify that the Annual Accounts set out in the Financial Statements and the notes to the Accounts (pages 56 to 75) have been submitted to and duly approved by the Authority.


_____ Chief Fire Officer


_____ Date


_____ Chairman


_____ Date



Accounts Direction

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY(a), IN EXERCISE OF THE POWERS CONFERRED BY ARTICLE 12(1) AND (2)(a) OF THE FIRE SERVICES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1984(b) AND NOW VESTED IN IT(c) AND WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL HEREBY DIRECTS AS FOLLOWS:

The annual Accounts of the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland shall give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year, and the state of affairs as at the year end. Subject to this requirement, the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland shall prepare accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2002 and subsequent financial years in accordance with:

- a. Non-Departmental Public Bodies Annual Reports and Accounts Guidance;
- b. Other guidance which the Department of Finance and Personnel may issue from time to time in respect of accounts which are required to give a true and fair view; and
- c. Any other specific disclosures required by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety;

except where agreed otherwise with the Department of Finance and Personnel, in which case the exception shall be described in the Notes to the Accounts.

The Fire Authority for Northern Ireland Accounts Direction (Northern Ireland) 2001 is hereby revoked, but without prejudice to anything done or suffered or to any right, privilege, obligation or liability required, accrued or incurred thereunder.

Senior Officer of the Department of Health,
Social Services and Public Safety
Dated 30 May 2002

- (a) See S.I. 1999/283 (N.I. 1) Article 3(6)
- (b) S.I. 1984/1821 (N.I.11)
- (c) See Article 6(c) of S.R. 1999 No 4S1



SCHEDULE 1

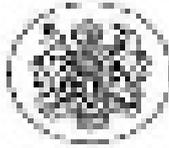
APPLICATION OF THE ACCOUNTING AND DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMPANIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1986 AND ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986

1. The disclosure exemptions permitted by the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 shall not apply to the Fire Authority unless specifically approved by the Department of Finance and Personnel.
2. The Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 requires certain information to be disclosed in the Director's Report. To the extent that it is appropriate, the information relating to the Fire Authority shall be contained in the foreword.
3. When preparing its income and expenditure account, the Fire Authority shall have regard to the profit and loss account format 2 prescribed in Schedule 4 to the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.
4. When preparing its balance sheet, the Fire Authority shall have regard to the balance sheet format 1 prescribed in Schedule 4 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. The Balance Sheet totals shall be struck at "Total assets less current liabilities".
5. The Fire Authority is not required to provide additional information required by paragraph 33(3) of Schedule 4 to the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.
6. The foreword and balance sheet shall be signed by the Accounting Officer and dated.

Accounting Standards

7. The Fire Authority is not required to include a note showing historical cost profits and losses as described in FRS 3.



SCHEDULE 2

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

1. The foreword shall, inter alia:
 - (a) State that the Accounts have been prepared in a form directed by the Department with the consent of the Department of Finance and Personnel in accordance with Article 12(1) and (2)(a) of the Fire Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1984; and
 - (b) Include a brief history of the Fire Authority and its statutory background.
2. The Notes to the Accounts shall include details of the key corporate financial targets set by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, together with the performance achieved.

Internal Audit Validation Certificate

In accordance with Best Practice the Chief Fire Officer is required to make arrangements for the independent validation of the performance levels being reported by the organisation against its published targets.

The organisation's Internal Auditors have completed an exercise to validate the organisation's performance against its targets for 2004/05.

The indicators examined were as follows:

- * Fire Appliance Attendance Times;
- * Number of Incidents Attended;
- * Number of Injuries per 100,000 population;
- * Number of Malicious False Alarms per 1,000 population;
- * Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by all staff;
- * Number of Deaths per 100,000 population.

Opinion

On the basis of the data provided by the relevant departments within the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade, Internal Audit can confirm that the performance against key targets for 2004/05, has been accurately reported by the organisation in the Annual Report.



JOHN McVEIGH
QUALITY & AUDIT MANAGER
FIRE AUTHORITY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Date:



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