

# Fire Cadets Progress Report – October 2014

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## Summary

The City of London Community Safety Partnership awarded the London Fire Brigade £25,000 in March 2014 to support the introduction of three new Fire Cadets units in London. This report provides information relating to these funded units running in Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham since April 2014 ov.

## Evaluation information

### 1. Fire Cadet units update

Unit	Young People recruited at start	Retention as of Oct 2014
Hackney	10	12
Tower Hamlets	14	14
Newham	16	13

**Hackney** – It was decided to restart this unit from September 2014 and extend it until the end of the academic year in July 2015 (rather than end in March 2015) due to the initial difficulties with recruitment of cadets in this borough. A change in the unit's Coordinator and a different approach to recruitment has since improved and numbers of cadets have increased significantly since August. Fire Cadets nationally has also adopted an 'open door' policy to cadet recruitment where interested young people are able to apply to join themselves and don't have to be referred by agencies/schools. This integrates young people that may not normally engage with each other and is working well as peer influence has shown a marked improvement in behaviour across the whole unit. Cadets at this unit are mainly female which is very unusual and brings a completely different dynamic to the group.

**Tower Hamlets** – Recruitment has ended at this unit now as the established cadets are now two-thirds of their way into their BTEC coursework and new cadets would not be able to catch up. These cadets are due to graduate in March 2015. Cadets have gelled extremely well as a team and are working very hard each week and there is a good mix of male and female cadets.

**Newham** - Recruitment has ended at this unit now as the established cadets are now two-thirds of their way into their BTEC coursework and new cadets would not be able to catch up. These cadets are due to graduate in March 2015.

### Overview of impact

- Behaviour and discipline has improved cross all three units which was significantly noticed when uniform was issued to each of the cadets. A sense of belonging and pride emerged and this has been built upon over the recent weeks by ensuring that each week a uniform inspection is completed as standard drill. A 'behaviour contract' has been signed by each cadet and volunteer and is placed on the wall at each venue to remind all of the standards of behaviour that are always expected.
- Low self-esteem/confidence - overall confidence in leading activities is improving particularly amongst the female cadets. The quieter young people are given encouragement to lead and this has built confidence in them and helped the other cadets to understand patience and tolerance towards difference cadets personalities.

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- There have been no issues with any severe or disruptive behaviour or discipline at any of the units. Normal expected challenges with young people have arisen around chatting and being silly but these have been addressed easily.
- Attendance and lateness is improving across all units. Cadets are very rarely late without a reason or informing the units coordinator in advance.
- All cadets are fully engaged with the programme and are working hard towards their BTEC supported by the volunteers. Motivation isn't an issue.
- Volunteers are supporting individual cadets that struggle with the written aspects of the BTEC and effective mentoring is happening naturally where cadets gravitate towards volunteers they feel they can trust or relate to.
- There is no bullying at any of the units. Cadets have mixed well and many new friendships have been made integrating such a diverse mix of young people at each unit.
- Some cadets are expressing an interest in other roles within the fire service as well as some wanting to become a firefighter.
- All cadets are working towards the completion of the BTEC Award and have started completing the necessary assignments..
- All cadet units have been invited to attend the Brigade's very formal annual Carole Service in Westminster Cathedral December and will be ushers for all the dignitaries that attend.

## **2. Young people update**

### **Hackney**

- Hackney cadets have one female cadet who is deaf and wears two cochlear implants. She attends regularly and although shy and lacking in confidence she is encouraged to join in all the activities even when it involves wearing a fire helmet which obviously makes it harder still for her to hear. The other cadets accept her disability without exception and are keen to help when she needs it.
- Cadets will be designing and painting a mural with fire safety messages that they will then paint in the community hub of the fire station to encourage any other visitors to learn from their messages.
- A fundraising activity outside Shoreditch fire station will be carried out shortly and cadets have chosen to bake cakes and sell them on the fire station forecourt to raise money for the Firefighters Charity.
- Hackney cadets have been invited to attend the boroughs Memorial Service on the 9<sup>th</sup> November to parade alongside all the other uniformed youth organisations.

### **Tower Hamlets**

- One Cadet (Louis) has been awarded a 'Certificate of Excellence' in recognition of his contribution to his school – this is part of the Mayors Education Achievement Awards in Tower Hamlets.
- One Cadet (John) that there were concerns about his behaviour initially has matured dramatically and has now taken this opportunity with both hands and is completely committed to Cadets.
- The units currently has 2 cadets that through personal circumstances have not set themselves off on the best path, one of which has been in trouble with the police.

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Although they have only been with cadets since September they both have attended every week and are showing signs of improvement. A volunteer has been assigned to each of these young people (as we have with the others cadets) and we will be setting short terms and long term goals for each of them.

- Cadets have been invited to attend and carry out a Guard of Honour at the prestigious Massey Shaw Dinner in London's Insurance Halls in March 2015.

### **Newham**

- A young man who is painfully shy was referred to the programme by his school. He is always the first cadet to arrive at the venue and after working on a one to one with a designated trainer has made fantastic progress, not only has he made new friends but his confidence has grown to the point where he recently felt confident enough to take role call. This involved him standing at the front of the group giving orders and duties for the evening activities.
- A female cadet has been going through some tough times which has involved several moves between family members. Throughout this turbulent time she has attended cadets ever week. She has literacy issues which we are working with but she is doing extremely well and is expected to pass her recent BTEC assessments.
- The cadets have been selected to attend the prestigious Worshipful Company of Fire Fighters City Dinner event being held in the City of London In November 2014.
- Some Newham cadets will be representing Fire Cadets at a formal brigade memorial service in Lambeth on the 9<sup>th</sup> November.

### 3. Volunteer Cadet Instructor (VCI) update

#### **Current position:**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>LFB volunteers</b>	<b>Community Volunteers</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Tower Hamlets</b>	4	6	10
<b>Hackney</b>	1	12	13
<b>Newham</b>	2	6	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>

- All VCI's across all units are taking more of an active roll in the delivery of the sessions and finding their strengths and weaknesses. The quality and calibre of the volunteers that have been working with the cadets is exceptional and the commitment admirable over all.
- Each unit's VCIs have jelled as a team and are very supportive of each other and happy to lead where appropriate. They support the unit Coordinator well and contribute to lesson plan ideas and delivery/assessment of the cadets for their BTEC

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- One VCI from Hackney has just attended an event on behalf of the unit at Hackney Town Hall for a Speakers reception to be thanked for volunteering within the uniformed services. As a local resident who was previously involved in local gangs and youth crime he has committed completely to the Fire Cadets and is a very positive role model for the young people.
- Another VCI (and former Fire Cadet) applied for a job with the LFB as a Cadet Unit Coordinator for new units opening in Lewisham and Greenwich. He was successful and will be starting next month.
- All VCIs have been offered additional training opportunities in addition to the initial induction training they received and some have completed a course in Drill Yard Supervision and others in Firesetters Intervention Training.
- VCIs are all being offered the opportunity to attend events with the cadets and as they are usually local residents this has encouraged them to
- One VCI in particular has undergone past issues around homelessness and is organising taking the cadets to a local homeless people's shelter around Christmas to carry out some community/charity work.