



THE INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS

Founded 1918 • Incorporated 1924

Young Professionals' Network Information and Guidance Document.

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1. Introduction:

This document has been produced to deal with a number of issues. Those issues have included:

- Enquiries from Institution of Fire Engineers local branches on how they can increase their contribution to the Young Professionals' Network activities.
- Enquiries from individuals about the work of the Young Professionals' Network.
- A demand for more information on the work of the Young Professionals' Network and how it is run.

It is hoped that the information goes some way to answering those queries and gives a clearer picture of how anyone, irrespective of role or position, can contribute to the Young Professionals' Network and the Institution as a whole. If you have any questions, suggestions or offers of assistance after you have read this document, then there is a feedback section included along with the appropriate contact details in appendix 3.

2. The origins of the Institution of Fire Engineers Young Professionals' Network:

The Institution of Fire Engineers Young Professionals' Network was formed as a result of a joint presentation given by Tracey Bowley and Andrew Brown at the IFE AGM and Conference in Manchester in 2003. The presentations were about the needs of young fire engineering professionals and the importance of them having IFE membership.

The network was formed to further the development of younger IFE members and to attract other fire engineers to the institution who were not yet members. Main points that were outlined in the presentations included:

- **What was currently available to assist someone develop their membership?**
- **What could be done immediately to improve on those arrangements?**
- **What should be put in place to secure this new position in the future?**

3. Organisation of the Institution of Fire Engineers Young Professionals' Network

The YPN is governed by a steering group of three people drawn from the main areas of fire engineering. They are:

- Educational Sector
- Private Sector
- Public Sector

In addition to the steering group, another member administers our internet based message board – where all members can communicate through e-mail where the posted message is automatically transmitted to the addresses of all the members. This is especially useful for informing the membership of events that would be useful in their development and also for members who wish to ask questions or share best practice as the person posing the question can draw on the experiences of all those registered with the group and invite their comments where necessary. The site that this newsgroup is attached to also logs all messages in a virtual library where messages can be accessed for reference purposes, should a member wish to refer back to a subject that was previously discussed. As the group members are spread across the globe, it is also the most cost efficient method of sending communication to all members in all countries. The issue of whether it is the most *effective* is still, however, debatable as the site requires members to sign up to a free e-mail account with Yahoo Groups.

The structure of the Young Professionals' Network has been kept particularly small to enable decision making to take place quickly and to enable members to devote the maximum amount of their time to their own development and learning.

Members of the Network should be members of the Institution of Fire Engineers to avail themselves of the opportunities provided by the Network. It does not matter what grade of membership the person holds.

4. Aims and objectives of the Young Professionals' Network.

- To encourage more members into the Institution by informing as many different groups involved in fire engineering about the Institution of Fire Engineers, the Young Professionals' Network and the benefits of membership.
- To provide support and guidance to newer members of the Institution.
- To carry forward views of our membership and provide feedback to the General Assembly for consideration.
- To provide advice to newer members by referring them to appropriate people within the organisation should they have a query regarding an area within fire engineering or a query about their membership.
- To pass on information about texts, organisations, web sites, links or persons that have proved useful and/or helpful in a person's professional development.
- To provide information regarding study for the Institution's examinations.
- To provide guidance to members wishing to progress through the varying grades of membership.
- Provide information and contacts to inform our members about the Engineering Council Division.

5. Young Professionals' Network Activities.

Activities undertaken by Young Professionals' Network members on a largely ad-hoc basis include the following:

- A presentation given to the Scottish Branch of the IFE at the Scottish Fire Service College in Gullane, Lothian and Borders on the Young Professionals' Network and its aims and objectives.
- A seminar organised at the UCLAN bringing the Young Professionals' Network to the attention of students studying engineering and informing them of the opportunities available to them through fire engineering and being IFE members and also the support structure that is now in place.
- Representatives attending the Graduate Lectures to inform those attending that the Young Professionals' Network exists and can provide support, both during study and when graduates enter the fire engineering arena as professionals.
- Producing simple yet informative flyers on various key aspects of IFE membership.
- Working on the production of literature for wider publicity of the IFE and in particular the younger sector.
- Providing members with contact details of specialists in certain fields of fire engineering willing to give advice and guidance on specific queries.
- The provision of succinct materials to aid study for the IFE examinations.

It is hoped that the Young Professionals' Network can hold a conference such as those held at the University of Central Lancashire and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on at least an annual basis – however in order to cater for the membership of the Network, they must usually comply with the following two essential criteria:

- They must be free for members of the Network to attend.
- They should be relevant to as many members as possible.

Other plans for the future include the representation of the Young Professionals' Network at all General Assembly Meetings – irrespective of location and especially at all events held in the U.K.

6. A guide for local Branches for developing Young Professionals' Network activities in their areas.

The representatives of the Young Professionals' Network are often asked by local branch officials about how best to establish Young Professionals' Network links in their own branches. The points put forward in this section are designed to help local branches decide how they wish to proceed and the level of involvement that they are happy with at branch level.

- The branch can contact businesses in their area involved in fire engineering business and inform colleagues or employees about the benefits of membership and encourage them to gain the extra qualifications available.
- Contact educational establishments in the area that provide engineering or fire related courses and inform students and/or lecturers on the wealth of opportunities and information available to them through membership of the IFE.
- Delegate individuals to return to the member brigades and pass on the information about the benefits of membership and development to trainees and trainers and encourage both groups to obtain more qualifications relevant to their subject area. This is advantageous immediately before or during phase I training.
- Contact youth liaison officers and cadet instructors in member brigades and talk to them about the benefits of membership and the support available for younger members through the YPN. It is here that the value of additional formal qualifications could have the most impact – especially if the individual is already interested in the fire sector.
- The local branch could appoint a local group member as area representative to help co-ordinate YPN events in the branch area. This would allow for more people to be involved in the branch and help to tailor events to specific groups or areas of interest. It can also equip branch members with skills to prepare them for other, senior roles in the branch. This member may also be required to attend meetings of the Young Engineers' Forum which is a national forum comprised of younger representatives from all engineering disciplines in the U.K.

7. Benefits for the Public Sector.

- The idea of Continuing Professional Development and life-long learning are not new to the Institution of Fire Engineers but have only recently been formalised in the public sector Fire and Rescue Service. The systems employed with regard to CPD in the Institution of Fire Engineers will prove most useful and a CPD folder, incorporating a log of activity and its use, has been developed to assist people to record and evaluate the experiences they have.
- Training both theoretical and practical, equip members from the public sector with an ideal knowledge base to gain additional formal qualifications that allow comparison on a local, regional, national and international basis.
- Membership can allow people to interact from different disciplines and gain tips and receive guidance on subject areas that they may have little understanding of, but may be useful to them in their current position.

8. Benefits for the Private Sector.

- The hours gained through CPD will ensure that employees will always be kept informed of technological and research developments.
- Employees can be more motivated as a result of being treated as “resources” rather than “tools” of the organisation, gaining extra formal, transferable qualifications in the process.
- The organisation will have a platform to bring their achievements to the attention of the rest of the fire engineering community, be that through the development of new products, research into related subjects or by gaining of prestigious contracts or awards.
- There is a better support network in place to facilitate the meaningful development of employees in their position, to encourage career progression and exchange of ideas.

9. Benefits for Education.

- Extra qualifications are available – some of which may be obtained automatically as a result of prior experience and learning.
- Membership can provide a route to registration with the Engineering Council Division which will allow for additional recognition in a professional career.
- Support is available from graduates and other qualified professionals to provide guidance before, during and after further education.
- There is an opportunity to gain knowledge of the opportunities available in fire engineering when looking for a position post – study.

Appendix I

Published articles in the Fire Engineers Journal that may be referred to in order to obtain more information about the Young Professionals' Network include:

- Article on progress of Young Professionals' Network and forthcoming projects. November, 2003.
- Article on progress of Young Professionals' Network and 2005 conference. October, 2005.

Appendix II

Information that may prove useful in planning and implementing YPN activities:

Delegated YPN representative and contact details:

Contact details for local Chamber of Commerce link:

Appendix III

Address for correspondence:

The Institution of Fire Engineers,
London Road,
Moreton in Marsh,
Gloucestershire.
GL56 0RH
United Kingdom.

Contact at I.F.E. Headquarters:
Helen Bird

Young Professionals Network message board:
www.IFEYPN@yahooroups.com

Young Professionals' Network website:
<http://www.ife.org.uk/about/about/youngprofessionals>