

FRS 12



**Retained Duty System:
focusing on the future** pages 4-5

THE FUTURE OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE : AUGUST 2005



Outstanding

Firefighter named Outstanding Public Servant of the Year 2005
page 6



A stage further

How drama is being used to teach the dangers of fire setting
page 7

Tackling firefighter attacks

One attack on a firefighter is one too many. But the number of incidents is rising at an alarming rate.

In the last nine months, there have been over 400 reported attacks on firefighters. However, even this does not tell the whole story: these reports have come from only 18 of the 49 fire and rescue services in England and Wales. This means it is likely that a large number of attacks are going unreported.

In order to find a solution to this problem, HMFSI has created a new system for reporting firefighter attacks as part of its new guidance on 'Fires and Incidents of Special Interest' (FOSIs).

Fire and Rescue Service Circular 5-2005 sets out the criteria that an incident must meet to be classified as a FOSI. Any incident in which a firefighter is attacked automatically satisfies these criteria.

HMFSI has produced new forms to be returned by services when a FOSI occurs. In addition, there is a return that must be completed on a monthly basis even when no FOSIs have occurred. This ensures that all numbers are recorded to give a true picture of events.

Cleveland Fire Brigade alone was subject to 74 attacks in 2004. In one incident, two Stockton firefighters were punched in the face by youths attempting to steal equipment from their appliance. To prevent such attacks, Cleveland Fire Brigade has installed CCTV cameras worth £11,000 in its appliances.



Photo: Cleveland Fire Brigade

Appliances in Cleveland are fitted with CCTV cameras to help combat attacks on firefighters.

Six or eight cameras, giving a 360-degree view, download images on to one digital recording device. A removable cartridge can be used at the fire station to create a DVD of any incident recorded. Recordings are passed on to the police or to local community wardens, who can build up a portfolio of evidence about persistent troublemakers.

Community Safety Director Mark Whelan said: 'It has to stop. Not only are firefighters' lives being endangered in the course of their work, but also the lives and property of the community we serve.'

For more information concerning FOSIs, e-mail Mick Robinson or Jim Mann at HMFSI: fosi@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Six aspects of New Dimension

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM's) New Dimension programme provides high-quality equipment and training to the Fire and Rescue Service to enable it to meet a wide range of emergencies.

Here, *FRS* looks into the programme to see how it all works.

In the beginning

The New Dimension programme was set up after the events of 11 September 2001, which prompted the Government to review and improve the UK's capacity to respond to the increased threats arising from a 'new dimension' of emergency. Such threats include a major incident involving chemical, biological or radioactive materials, which would require mass decontamination of large numbers of people, or rescue from collapsed structures.

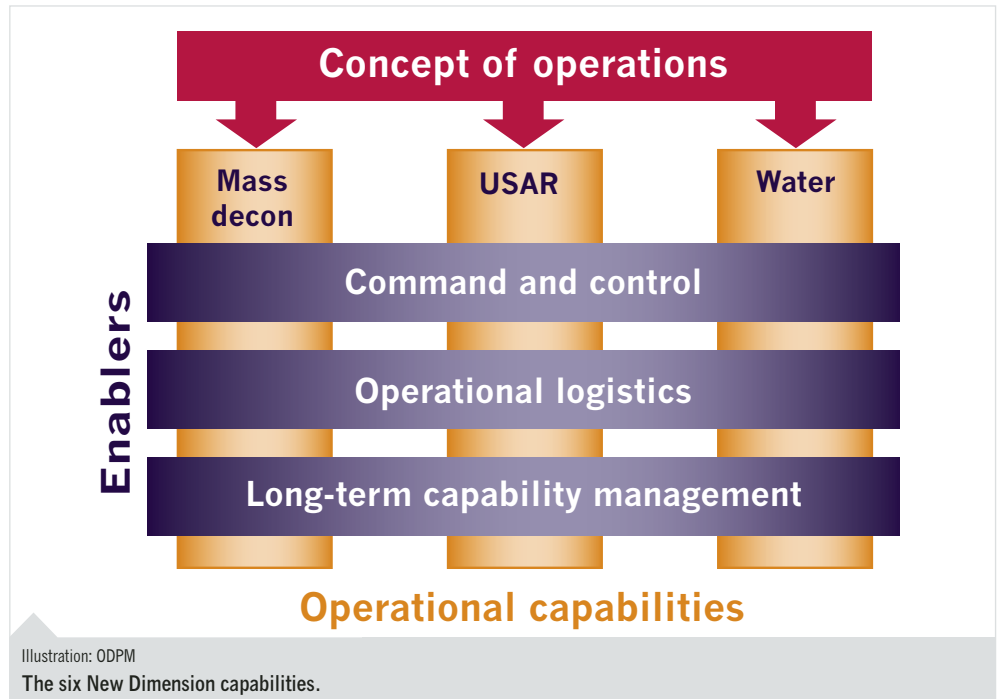
The programme is also a response to increased risks from non-terrorist emergencies, such as major flooding resulting from changing climate patterns.

Welcome to

FRS 12

This edition of *FRS* looks at how the Fire and Rescue Service is changing to meet the new demands of the 21st century. We take a look at the implementation of the New Dimension programme and how it will affect Fire and Rescue Service personnel. We also examine the role played by firefighters on the Retained Duty System and investigate some innovative approaches to tackling youth fire setting.

We are always interested in hearing your views and finding out which issues you would like to see covered in the future. If you have any innovations or good news that you would like to share with the whole of the Fire and Rescue Service, please e-mail us at frs@odpm.gsi.gov.uk



The importance of the New Dimension programme can be judged by the Government's commitment of £56 million for a mass decontamination capability and up to a further £132 million for Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), high-volume pumping and associated work.

The six New Dimension capabilities

The New Dimension programme is structured in six distinct but linked projects (see diagram above and fact boxes on facing page) each led by a project manager in partnership with a lead officer from the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA).

The final delivery of New Dimension equipment

will take place in 2006. The full operational capability will be in service early in 2007.

Partnership

Speaking at a New Dimension seminar held in London in January, Alan Doig, President of CFOA, said that 'the capability and capacity of the UK Fire and Rescue Service is already enhanced and improved as a direct result of New Dimension, and firefighters are safer as a result'.

The outcome of the New Dimension partnership between central government, local government and the Fire and Rescue Service will be a huge asset for the FRS in responding more quickly and more effectively to an increased range of incidents.



Photo: Cambridge Evening News

Mass decontamination equipment in training exercises.

The last few years have seen an unprecedented rise in the number of new threats, both natural and man-made, faced by UK citizens. The world is changing – particularly after the events of 9/11 – and the Fire and Rescue Service is re-examining the role it plays in ensuring public safety.

Operational capabilities

1. Mass decontamination

- New Dimension provides permanent mass decontamination capability through 80 Incident Response Units (IRUs) deployed across England and Wales.
- Equipment for the detection, identification and monitoring (DIM) of contaminants has been supplied to firefighters, and research is under way on a new generation of personal protection equipment (PPE).
- Practical procedures for mass decontamination have been tested by large-scale regional training exercises, such as Exercises Osiris, Horizon and Magpie.

2. Urban Search and Rescue

- USAR involves the ability to search, identify, locate and rescue casualties trapped in unstable or collapsed structures, remove fatalities and provide safe systems of work for USAR technical operators.
- New Dimension has delivered USAR capability to all regions of England and Wales.
- New Dimension has invested over £8 million in a range of new training and teaching facilities at the Fire Service College to ensure that USAR training is available all year round.
- New search and rescue equipment has already been used successfully, most recently to look for victims of the Glasgow factory collapse and after the flash-flooding in Boscastle last year.

3. Water

- The water project delivers three interrelated capabilities:
 - high-volume pumping (HVP) – moving large volumes of water quickly, to deal with natural or deliberate flooding;
 - water rescue – responding to flooding emergencies, which require the rescue of people from water; and
 - water safety – providing a safe system of work for HVP and water rescue, based on a national water safety framework being developed by New Dimension.
- Nine HVP units supplied by the New Dimension programme played an important role during the clean-up operation after the floods in Carlisle in January of this year.

Enabling capabilities

1. Command and control

- The command and control project is delivering the capability to manage and co-ordinate people, policies and procedures in a national response to a major emergency.
- The project co-ordinates the deployment of principal New Dimension equipment (such as Prime Movers and Modules) and will develop Fire and Rescue Service roles and responsibilities within a multi-agency response to a major emergency.

2. Operational logistics

- The operational logistics project is delivering the support structures and systems necessary for the mass decontamination, USAR, water and command and control capabilities by:
 - meeting their supply needs;
 - providing incident support for the duration of operations; and
 - recovering their assets after operations.

3. Long-term capability management

- Long-term capability management involves meeting the challenge of maintaining, upgrading and replacing New Dimension equipment over the 20-year lifespan of the programme.
- This project is creating a database to track the location, status and usage of New Dimension assets and identify the best long-term options for maintaining and updating this equipment.

The terrorist attacks of 7 July 2005

Firefighters' response to the London bombings

The events of 7 July in London saw fears of a terrorist attack in Britain become a reality. The Government has condemned the attacks and praised the superb response of all the emergency services, which allowed London to return to 'business as usual' in only four days.

The Fire and Rescue Service played a central

role in the response operation, putting planning and training into action immediately and working with other agencies in Gold Command to ensure a swift and efficient return to normality. Ministers are writing to Chief Fire Officers to thank the 200 firefighters who took part.

Through the ODPM's New Dimension programme, the Fire and Rescue Service has

strengthened its capability to respond effectively to incidents such as the London bombings. The benefit of this work could be seen in the excellence of the emergency response on 7 July and the days that followed. As always, the capital relied upon its firefighters' training and courage and, as always, it was not let down.

Retained Duty System:

The Retained Duty System (RDS) has always been an integral part of the Fire and Rescue Service, and a ne

The Retained Duty System (RDS) has been facing major recruitment and retention challenges for many years. Whereas in some areas there are as many as 40 applicants for every post as a Wholetime Duty System firefighter, there is a 20% shortfall in applications for the RDS. There is also an annual turnover of RDS personnel of 10%.

In December 2003, the Fire and Rescue Service Minister, Phil Hope, announced an in-depth review to identify how these challenges might be overcome. This review was carried out by a Retained Review Team (RRT), comprising representatives from the Local Government Association, Chief Fire Officers' Association, Fire Brigades Union, Retained Firefighters Union and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The review process included a service-wide survey to gather information about local issues affecting the RDS and an invitation to RDS firefighters to submit their views to the RRT. The team's initial findings were presented to the Practitioners' Forum in June 2004, followed by publication of the full report on 25 February 2005. The report, containing a total of 51 recommendations, identifies six key priorities:

Terminology: traditional terms such as 'the retained' can reinforce prejudice against RDS staff. The use of appropriate terminology is an important tool in dismantling cultural barriers.

Recognition: the contribution made by RDS staff should receive prominent acknowledgement, both internally and externally.



Photo: Staffordshire FRS

RDS firefighters do the same job and take the same risks as wholetime firefighters.

Modernisation: firefighters working on the RDS are in a position to make a key contribution to the modernisation programme. For example, their close links with the local community could make a significant difference to Community Fire Safety work.

Integration: RDS personnel do the same work as Wholetime Duty System firefighters – the only difference is in their working patterns. The two duty systems should be integrated, not separated.

Recruitment and retention: tackling all the challenges and removing barriers.

Process: guaranteeing the delivery of change by, for instance, ensuring that RDS issues are integral to policy-making, and appointing stakeholder groups to monitor the implementation of the report's recommendations.

As a consequence of the RRT's report, the Practitioners' Forum and the Business and Community Safety Forum agreed to set up the RDS Task and Finish Group, which will produce a plan for the implementation of the report's recommendations early this summer.

The RRT's report can be accessed on the ODPM website: www.odpm.gov.uk

The retained champion

One of the issues identified by the report was the lack of a central focus to represent the interests of RDS staff. To remedy this, the report recommended that a senior member of the Fire Service Inspectorate be appointed as national champion for the RDS.

This recommendation has already been met with the appointment of Gerry Goldsack, a former Chief Fire Officer and currently one of Her Majesty's Fire Inspectors with responsibility for the RDS. Gerry will be representing the interests of RDS personnel at the central strategic level. He can be contacted at: gerry.goldsack@odpm.gsi.gov.uk



Photo: Wiltshire FRS

There is a 20% shortfall in applications for the RDS.

focusing on the future

new review looks to build on that position. FRS examines the review and the experiences of RDS personnel.



Photo: Oxfordshire County Council

Amanda Reading: 'We were cutting metal away an inch at a time for two and a half hours before we could get him out safely.'

Mum's the word!

Oxfordshire FRS has recently been taking a new approach to the recruitment of RDS personnel, by targeting mothers in West Oxfordshire.

County Councillor John Farrow, Executive Member for Community Safety, said: 'Being a retained firefighter can fit in well with family life. Mums who want to ease back into work, people who work shifts or are self-employed, or anyone with time on their hands – I would encourage them all to think about becoming a retained firefighter.'

One mum who has already risen to the challenge is Amanda Reading, who's been a firefighter on the RDS for seven years.

'I had a friend whose husband joined the RDS,' she recalls. 'He mentioned that they were looking for more recruits and, before I knew it, I was down at the station taking the entrance tests!'



Photo: Staffordshire FRS

RDS firefighters can be called to attend any kind of incident – at any time.

As well as the training, which former aerobics teacher Amanda particularly enjoys, she says: 'There's a tremendous sense of achievement in the job. It's very satisfying, for instance, going to someone's house to install a smoke alarm that you know could later save their life.'

Amanda also has a husband and two daughters back home. 'Of course, if it wasn't for their support I wouldn't be able to manage,' she says. 'My husband Nigel is fantastic, and our two daughters are also very proud of their mum, so that helps keep me going as well.'

After seven years as a firefighter, Amanda has seen plenty of action and has responded to all

kinds of emergency calls. Is there an incident that stands out as a particular highlight?

'A while ago we had a road traffic collision involving a motorist who'd mounted a roundabout at 70 mph and crashed into a tree – roof first,' she recalls. 'The only part of the car we could get to was the chassis, and we had to be very careful to avoid catching him with our cutting tools while we were trying to get him out.'

'We were cutting metal away an inch at a time for two and a half hours before we could get him out safely – and he later made a full recovery. The feeling of achievement afterwards was fantastic!'

Council firefighters score a double first

One of the key recommendations in the report was that public sector employers take a lead in releasing employees to work on the RDS. Two officers at South Norfolk Council who recently qualified as firefighters are already well ahead!

Benefits Officer Steph Whyte and Licensing Officer Julie Tovee-Galey are now fully qualified firefighters attached to the station at Long Stratton, which is just 100m away from their

offices at the council. This proximity enables them to be on call both at work and at home. In addition, the two new recruits co-ordinate their duties so that, for example, if one of them is speaking to a customer when an emergency call comes in, the other can mobilise in the first instance while her colleague on the phone explains the situation and makes alternative arrangements for dealing with the call.

Following Steph and Julie's successful

completion of the assessment process, the council now has four firefighters on its staff. Julie said: 'It's been a tough two years but an enjoyable, challenging and rewarding time. We could not have achieved this without the support of our employers at South Norfolk Council, and the Norfolk Fire Service.'

'We really enjoy the job because it enables us to assist those in need in the community where we live and work.'

Outstanding

Firefighter named Outstanding Public Servant of the Year 2005.

Ken Hunter, a Watch Manager at West Yorkshire FRS, is celebrating after being named the UK's Outstanding Public Servant of the Year 2005.

Ken beat off competition from over 400 other entrants to win the award, which was presented to him at a ceremony in London in April. The Public Servant of the Year Awards, which are in their fifth year, are the most prestigious awards for individuals and teams in the public services throughout the UK.

Ken, who has been a firefighter for almost 27 years, won for his work in helping to educate and counsel young people with fire setting behaviour issues. He was prompted to act in 1995 when a mother came to him in desperation because her seven-year-old son was starting fires at home and no professional agency could help her.

Ken developed an age-related programme of work that involved fire safety tasks for both the child and his or her carer. To further the aims of the programme, he also studied counselling and

A-Level psychology in his free time. In 2004, over 300 referrals were made to the initiative. In addition, Ken has developed two fire education programmes for young offenders charged with arson or vehicle offences; these have resulted in an almost zero rate of reoffending in and around Leeds.

Responding to the award, West Yorkshire's Chief Fire Officer, Phil Toase, said: 'I'm delighted that Ken's efforts and devotion have been recognised at this level. His work in the community of East Leeds has made an enormous difference in helping to reduce the number of arson-related incidents, which has made the community feel safer in their homes.'

Ken himself said: 'It's such an honour to win this award. It's nice for people to be recognised and rewarded for doing their everyday work, especially when they do go the extra mile. The awards are a testimony to that and I'm lucky that I do a job I really enjoy.'



Photo: West Yorkshire FRS
Ken's work has made the community safer in their homes.

Doing the job Popley!

Hampshire FRS is taking its fire safety commitment into the centre of the community – literally!

As part of its IRMP commitment to reduce risk to the community and respond to emergency calls faster, a fire engine has been moved to a local community centre during peak call-out times for the next six months.

After a public consultation in the Basingstoke area, it emerged that more fires occur around Popley Fields between 3pm and 11pm than at any other time or in any other location in the area.

In response to these findings, Hampshire FRS has relocated a fire engine to Popley Fields Community Centre during this period each day, to be immediately available for emergency calls.

The relocation of the appliance has been achieved using existing resources, without any adverse impact on the emergency response across the rest of the county.

The presence of fire crews at the centre opens up huge opportunities for community fire safety work when the firefighters are not responding to emergency calls. Basingstoke Station Manager,



Photo: Hampshire FRS
Hampshire FRS: part of the community.

Jerry Leonard, points out that the informal interaction firefighters enjoy with visitors to the centre helps to raise the profile of fire safety issues and represents an excellent method of generating referrals for Home Fire Safety Checks.

Jerry says: 'This will give us a base from where we can work to improve safety in the community. By preventing fires, protecting property and responding to emergencies in the most effective manner, we can make Basingstoke a safer place to live and work.'

A stage further

Over the last year or so, the number of Fire and Rescue Service initiatives using drama to communicate key messages to communities has grown considerably. FRS takes a closer look at two of these innovative projects.

Hundreds of secondary school children in Hampshire have recently been treated to a touring production of *Arson About*, a hard-hitting play dealing with the dangers of fire setting.

A partnership project between Hampshire FRS and Stopwatch Theatre Company, the production has targeted the areas in the county with the highest arson rates.

Hampshire's Education Adviser, Donna Smith, explains that 'this initiative supports one of our key corporate aims: to reduce the number of deliberate fires by ten per cent in the next five years.' The initiative has already been taken up by other fire and rescue services, including Sussex.

In a similar vein, hundreds of young people in South Derbyshire have been shown the horrific consequences of mixing alcohol and fire through another play. *A Lethal Mix* examines the aftermath of a firework being pushed through a letterbox by drunken schoolmates, killing a toddler and scarring the babysitter for life.

The play was the brainchild of Swadlincote firefighter Paula Fern, who drove the project to realisation in partnership with Derbyshire Police, Trading Standards, the RSPCA, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and East Midlands Ambulance Service.

The play tackles youth issues such as peer pressure, as well as alcohol abuse and arson, and includes safety information about smoke alarms. These two projects show the range of tactics that many fire and rescue services are employing in their bid to create safer communities. As Donna Smith says: 'It's important that we educate children and young people about the consequences of fire setting.'

For more information on *Arson About*, please contact Keren Eales, Hampshire FRS, on 02380 626 729 or keren.eales@hantsfire.gov.uk

For more information on *A Lethal Mix*, please contact Paula Fern on 01283 217688.



Photo: Hampshire FRS
Arson About, a hard-hitting insight into the dangers of fire setting, has been a huge success in schools across Hampshire.

Fire safety success in London



Photo: London Fire Brigade
Aiming high: Community Fire Safety work is paying dividends in London.

Community Fire Safety work makes Londoners safer at home.

Figures released by the London Fire Brigade show that Londoners are safer from fire in their homes thanks to Community Fire Safety work carried out by firefighters.

Between April 2004 and February 2005, fire deaths more than halved compared with the same period in 2003–04. In this period in 2003–04, there were 71 fatal fires, whereas the latest figures show that this year there were only 34.

The Brigade has increased its Community Fire Safety activity in all London boroughs. In Southwark, for instance, over 44,000 smoke

alarms were fitted in a two-year partnership initiative with the local council.

Val Shawcross, Chair of London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, praised firefighters in the capital for their success: 'This dramatic reduction is excellent news and a tribute to the efforts of staff.

'One of our top priorities is to reduce fires in the home through community-based preventative work and through partnerships with other agencies. Working closely with the local community gets the fire safety message to those who need it most and helps to create a safer London.'

A stakeholder says...



'We recognise that the Service is best served by choice.'
– Gill Newton,
Chief Executive,
Fire Service College.

The Fire Service College, based at Moreton-in-Marsh, provides unique facilities for firefighting, fire safety and accident emergency training. It also plays a major role in Urban Search and Rescue training. Since its establishment in 1968, the College has built its reputation as the premier fire training institution in the world.

However, along with the rest of the FRS, the role of the College is changing. To meet the needs of a modern Fire and Rescue Service, the College must be responsive to the needs of all its stakeholders, regardless of role or location.

For example, courses are becoming more accessible to retained firefighters and those with domestic or other commitments limiting the time they can spend away from home. Although a good deal of training will remain at the College's Moreton-in-Marsh base, delivering services regionally and locally through outreach and e-learning is increasingly important in widening access.

We also recognise that the FRS is best served by having a choice of training providers available to it. Therefore, our future role will involve more emphasis on facilitating learning and

development opportunities, rather than maintaining a monopoly on training provision. To take this forward, we are developing a national training and development strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service in England. We are currently consulting stakeholders on what this should cover. The result will be a strategic document that signposts the training infrastructure required at national, regional and local level, and promotes equality and diversity.

Developing a strategy to suit all FRS stakeholders will present considerable challenges, but the benefits of a common understanding cannot be denied. We are committed to achieving this, while ensuring that we become a modern College for a modern Fire and Rescue Service.

Gill Newton
Chief Executive
Fire Service College

CPA and improvement planning

Driving the Service forward

The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) review of all fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in England continues to move forward, with FRAs having received their final reports on 28 July. The CPA process itself was described in *FRS 11*.

To assist with the next stage of improvement planning, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has published guidance on this and on the round-table process. This is available on the fire pages of the ODPM website.

Now that the final reports have been received, FRAs will be looking to move on to the next stage of the process – using the outcomes of the CPA to plan improvement by reviewing their self-assessment priorities as indicated by the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report.

The ODPM and the Audit Commission will be working with authorities to support the improvement process. Once an FRA has reviewed its plans for improvement, they

will meet with the authority in a round-table discussion to:

- offer advice, guidance and 'what works' examples to help with improvement priorities
- look to identify new examples of innovation and good practice in areas of strong performance, which can help other FRAs
- consider how future assessment and audit can support improvement
- look at what support is available in terms of training, development and other resources available through the Local Government Capacity Building Programme to meet the needs of the FRA.

Depending on the priorities identified in improvement plans, this may provide new opportunities for staff training and development. Further details of all aspects of Comprehensive Performance Assessment will be included in the next issue of *FRS*.

CPA



Photo: West Yorkshire FRS

CPA is now well under way in England.

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