

Fire and rescue

Consultation

July 2007

Fire and rescue performance assessment 2007 and 2008

Consultation on performance indicator set for the service
assessment treatment and thresholds

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Introduction	2
Responding to the consultation	3
The fire and rescue service assessment	4
The overall approach	4
The performance information score	4
Performance indicator thresholds	5

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Introduction

- 1** Fire and Rescue Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is a tool for improvement developed by the Audit Commission. It assesses how well fire and rescue authorities (FRAs), the local bodies responsible for the fire service, are modernising and delivering services for local people and communities.
- 2** In June 2007 the Audit Commission published the fire and rescue performance assessment framework for 2007 and 2008. The framework comprises of three main elements: direction of travel; use of resources; and service assessment.
- 3** The fire and rescue service assessment is made up of two different elements: the operational assessment of service delivery (OASD) and the performance information element. The overall approach to the service assessment, including how the two elements will be brought together, the methodology for scoring both elements and the set of performance indicators to be used, was confirmed in the fire and rescue performance assessment published in June 2007.
- 4** This document sets out the Commission's detailed proposals for how we will treat and assess performance indicators, as part of the service assessment, in 2007 and 2008. This document is intended to be read alongside the fire and rescue performance assessment for 2007 and 2008.

Responding to the consultation

- 5 We are seeking responses to the following consultation questions.
 - Do you agree with the proposed treatment and thresholds for the new indicators to be included in the 2007 fire and rescue service assessment (F8, F9, F11 and F13)? If not then please state which treatments or thresholds you do not agree with.
 - Do you have any alternative proposals for how thresholds should be set on the new indicators (F8, F9, F11 and F13) to be included in the 2007 fire and rescue service assessment? If so then please state which indicators.
- 6 Please ensure your responses are clearly marked 'Fire and Rescue PI consultation response' and send them to cpa@audit-commission.gov.uk. Alternatively, you may write to us at the Local Government Directorate Hub 4, Audit Commission, 1st Floor Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ.
- 7 This consultation closes on **30 August 2007**. We regret that we will be unable to consider any responses received after 4pm on the closing date.
- 8 Any enquiries should be emailed to cpa@audit-commission.gov.uk. Or telephone **0845 052 2616**, fax **0845 052 2602**.
- 9 We will confirm the final thresholds and treatments for the 2007 fire and rescue service assessment as part of the guide to service assessment document. We intend to publish this in the summer.

The fire and rescue service assessment

The overall approach

- 10 The overall approach to the fire and rescue service assessment is set out in *Fire and Rescue Performance Assessment 2007 and 2008* available at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/fire.
- 11 The service assessment is made up of two elements: the OASD; and the performance information element. Each of these elements is scored separately and brought together to give an overall score for the fire and rescue service assessment. The overall service assessment methodology for 2007 and 2008 was arrived at through consultation with FRAs and other key stakeholders and is **not** the subject of this consultation.
- 12 The set of performance indicators (PIs) to be used to determine the performance information score, which in turn informs the service assessment score, was consulted on and confirmed as part of the overall performance assessment, published in June 2007. This document now sets out the final stage of consultation for the fire and rescue service assessment¹ and details our proposals for the treatment and thresholds for the agreed set of PIs for consultation.

The performance information score

- 13 The Commission will bring together results from the agreed set of PIs to determine the performance information score for each FRA. To distinguish between relative levels of performance the result for each PI is compared against a pre-determined upper and lower threshold. The distribution of PIs around the thresholds determines the performance information score.

¹ The first stage of consultation was set out in our November 2006 report, *Performance Assessment Framework 2007/08 and Proposals for Re-categorisation*.

- 14 The Commission uses a consistent approach to setting thresholds. Where there are national expectations that have been determined or endorsed by the relevant government department, achievement or progress towards the requirement, standard or target, will be used to set the thresholds. In other cases where there are no such requirements the default thresholds will be linked to quartiles from a previous year of data.
- 15 We will include the most up-to-date data available for each PI in the fire and rescue service assessment. In 2007 the most up-to-date data will be from the 2006/07 financial year.
- 16 For a number of the PIs included in the service assessment results show significant variations between years that may not reflect real changes in performance. The potential impact of these variations could lead to unintended volatility in the service assessment scores. Where the Commission believes this to be the case we will calculate a result for the PI based on an average of more than one year of data where possible.
- 17 For a number of PIs included in the service assessment a significant correlation exists between performance and the extent of deprivation locally. Where this is the case and thresholds are based on quartiles we will adjust the PI results for deprivation before we compare performance against the thresholds. Thresholds will also be based on the adjusted results. More information on deprivation adjustments was set out in *Fire and Rescue Performance Framework 2006/07 Guide to Service Assessment* available at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/fire/downloads/FireServiceAssessmentGuide.pdf.

Performance indicator thresholds

- 18 The proposed treatment and thresholds of the PIs to be used in the 2007 fire and rescue service assessment are set out in **Table 1**. We are not making any changes to the treatment or thresholds of those PIs that were used in the 2006 fire and rescue service assessment and will continue to be used in the 2007 fire and rescue service assessment.
- 19 As there are no national targets, standards or expectations associated with the new indicators we are proposing to set thresholds based on quartiles from previous year's data. There are two indicators we are including in 2007 where we are proposing that the overall indicator is made up of two composite indicators. Our proposed approach to these two indicators is set out in the following paragraphs.

F8 False alarms

- 20** Indicator F8 measures false alarms caused by automatic fire detection (BVPI 149). We will use two parts of this three-part indicator: (F8a) false alarms caused by automatic fire detection, per 1,000 non-domestic properties (BVPI 149 i), and (F8b) percentage of false alarms which are to a property with more than one attendance (BVPI 149 iii). It is important to include the two parts of this indicator as they measure different aspects of performance. However, we do not want to give disproportionate weight to this area in the overall service assessment so we will combine the two separate thresholds into one overarching set of thresholds. Performance against the overall thresholds (F8) will count towards the overall distribution of PIs, rather than the component indicators (F8a and F8b). The proposed methodology for combining the two separate thresholds is set out in Table 1. Greater weight is placed on F8a (the number of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection) in determining performance against the overall threshold for F8 as we believe this is the most important aspect of performance in this area.

F9 Calls to malicious false alarms

- 21** Indicator F9 measures calls to malicious false alarms (BVPI 146). We will use both parts of this indicator, combined to give us an indication of: (F9a) total number of malicious false alarms (BVPI 146 i + ii) and (F9b) proportion of malicious false alarms attended (BVPI 146 ii / BVPI 146 i + ii). It is important to include these two different parts. F9 will measure how well the FRA is working to reduce the number of malicious false alarms and how well it is screening out and not attending malicious false alarms. We will combine the two separate thresholds into one overarching set of thresholds, as set out in Table 1. Greater weight is placed on F9a (total number of malicious false alarms) in determining performance against the overall threshold for F9 as we believe this is the most important aspect of performance in this area. We will adjust F9a for deprivation as there is a significant correlation between deprivation and performance.

Table 1
Thresholds for the fire and rescue service assessment 2007

Ref.	Description of PI (Measurement of ...)	Source and ref.	Treatment notes	Lower threshold	Upper threshold	Comment
Existing PIs – confirmed treatments and thresholds NOT SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION						
F1	Primary fires per 10,000 population (Fire prevention)	BVPI 142 (ii)	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the average of the data from 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05, adjusted for deprivation	15.2	7.5	Adjusted for deprivation
F2	Accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 dwellings (Fire prevention)	BVPI 142 (iii)	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the average of the data from 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05, adjusted for deprivation	9.9	5.2	Adjusted for deprivation

Ref.	Description of PI (Measurement of ...)	Source and ref.	Treatment notes	Lower threshold	Upper threshold	Comment
Existing PIs – confirmed treatments and thresholds NOT SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION						
F3	Deaths arising from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population (Operational response)	BVPI 143 (i)	<p>Thresholds based on floor target that every authority should be within 1.25 x the national average, based on results over five years</p> <p>Results for each authority are calculated as the average of the data from 2002/03 to 2006/07</p> <p>The upper threshold is based on the national average of the data from 2000/01 to 2004/05</p> <p>The lower threshold is based on 1.25 x national average of the data from five years 2000/01 to 2004/05</p>	0.625	0.5	Measurement of improvement towards national target

Ref.	Description of PI (Measurement of ...)	Source and ref.	Treatment notes	Lower threshold	Upper threshold	Comment
Existing PIs – confirmed treatments and thresholds NOT SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION						
F4	Injuries arising from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population (Operational response)	BVPI 143 (ii)	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the average of the data from 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05	6.0	2.0	
F5	Percentage of accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin (Operational response)	BVPI 144	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the average of the data from 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05 Note – BVPI 144 was previously split into parts a, b, c and d – data for each part will be added together for previous years	89.6	91.3	

Ref.	Description of PI (Measurement of ...)	Source and ref.	Treatment notes	Lower threshold	Upper threshold	Comment
Existing PIs – confirmed treatments and thresholds NOT SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION						
F7	Number of deliberate primary fires (including vehicles) per 10,000 population (Fire prevention)	BVPI 206 (i+ii)	<p>Thresholds based on the progress towards the national target of 10% reduction in baseline figure from 2001/02 by 2010</p> <p>A reduction of 1.25% from baseline would be required each year over eight years to meet this target</p> <p>Note – BVPI 206 is split into parts i, ii, iii and iv in 2005/06 but parts i and ii can be added together to give the same data as BVPI 206 from previous years</p>	No change or increase from 2005/06 to 2006/07	Net reduction of 7.5% from 2001/02 to 2006/07 (1.25% each year for six years)	Measurement of improvement towards national target

Ref.	Description of PI (Measurement of ...)	Source and ref.	Treatment notes	Lower threshold	Upper threshold	Comment
New PIs for 2007 – proposed treatments and thresholds SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION						
F8	False alarms caused by automatic fire detection	BVPI 149 (i) & BVPI 149 (iii)	Overall thresholds for F8 are based on performance against the thresholds for F8a and F8b	(F8a and F8b both score lower) OR (F8a scores lower and F8b scores below upper)	(F8a and F8b both score upper) OR (F8a scores upper and F8b scores above lower)	
F8a	False alarms caused by automatic fire detection per 1,000 non-domestic properties	BVPI 149 (i)	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the data from 2005/06	110.1	74.9	

Ref.	Description of PI (Measurement of ...)	Source and ref.	Treatment notes	Lower threshold	Upper threshold	Comment
New PIs for 2007 – proposed treatments and thresholds SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION						
F8b	Percentage of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection which are to a property with more than one attendance	BVPI 149 (iii)	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the data from 2005/06	74.9	53.6	
F9	Calls to malicious false alarms	BVPI 146 (i) & BVPI 146 (ii)	Overall thresholds for F9 are based on performance against the thresholds for F9a and F9b	(F9a and F9b both score lower) OR (F9a scores lower and F9b scores below upper)	(F9a and F9b both score upper) OR (F9a scores upper and F9b scores above lower)	

Ref.	Description of PI (Measurement of ...)	Source and ref.	Treatment notes	Lower threshold	Upper threshold	Comment
New PIs for 2007 – proposed treatments and thresholds SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION						
F9a	Total number of malicious false alarms per 1,000 population	BVPI 146 (i+ii)	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the data from 2005/06, adjusted for deprivation	0.3	0.0	Adjusted for deprivation
F9b	Proportion of total malicious false alarms attended	BVPI 146 (ii) / BVPI 146 (i+ii)	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the data from 2005/06	72.4%	41.3%	

Ref.	Description of PI (Measurement of ...)	Source and ref.	Treatment notes	Lower threshold	Upper threshold	Comment
New PIs for 2007 – proposed treatments and thresholds SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION						
F11	Fires in non-domestic properties per 1,000 non-domestic properties	BVPI 207	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the data from 2005/06	15.2	10.9	
F13	Percentage of fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted	BVPI 209 (iii)	Result is calculated as the average of the data from 2005/06 and 2006/07 Thresholds based on 25th and 75th percentile points of the data from 2005/06	54.1	40.3	

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