

A stakeholder says...



'Fire and rescue services must be held to account for their performance on race equality.'
 – Sheila Rogers, Director of Strategy and Delivery, Commission for Racial Equality

than on rank make progress on race equality both easier to achieve and more necessary. There need to be clear strategies for change at local, regional and national levels.

'Further, since the Macpherson Inquiry report was published the public services have recognised how institutional racism can lead to unequal outcomes for people from ethnic minority communities. To bring about a transformation in the public sector, the Government introduced key provisions into the Race Relations Act. All major public bodies now have a duty to factor race equality into all operations. This includes the way they deliver services and how they enforce the law, as well as in their role as employers.

'Fire and rescue services must be held to account for their performance on race equality.

At the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) we aim to increase our monitoring and enforcement role. But it is also crucial that the Audit Commission's new Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process plays an effective part in identifying and improving race equality performance.

'Race equality in the Fire and Rescue Service will not be achieved without joined-up thinking and action through effective partnerships. The National Framework provides the main focus for such development.'

Sheila Rogers
 Director of Strategy and Delivery
 Commission for Racial Equality
www.cre.gov.uk

'There's never been a better time to put race equality at the heart of the agenda for the Fire and Rescue Service.

'Placing risk management and prevention at the heart of the Fire and Rescue Service, getting rid of discriminatory recruitment practices and focusing human resource policies on roles rather

Forget the rumours – get the facts

Although much has been said about IPDS, there's little doubt that mixed messages have been taken from the information that has been available. In order to quash the rumours and give everyone the real facts about IPDS, the IPDS Hub has now launched a comprehensive website so that anyone can access all the information they need at the click of a button.



The new IPDS website provides a wealth of information on the system, IPDS objectives, role maps, modules, skill levels and related standards. PDFs on Training Needs Analysis and the Helix can be downloaded and there is even a chance to win free Nike sports gear. What's more, fire and rescue service personnel can find out how to progress their career, contact their regional IPDS support team, or have their say on IPDS via a 'contact us' link.

Bob Johnston, Director of Marketing Communications at the IPDS Hub, explains:

'Ultimately the website has been designed to encourage the development of an interactive online community within the Fire and Rescue Service. We are to continually build and update the site so that it is in line with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service. After all, this site is designed for them, to provide vital information that is constantly up to date. The more feedback received, the better the site will be – we want the members of the Fire and Rescue Service to feel part of it.'

For more information, visit www.ipds.co.uk

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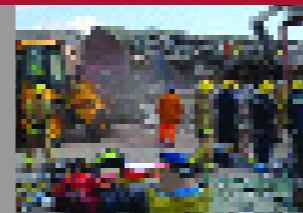
FRS05



The team theme

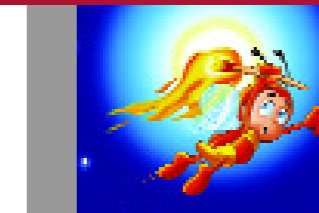
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THE FUTURE OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE : JUNE/JULY 2004



Search and rescue

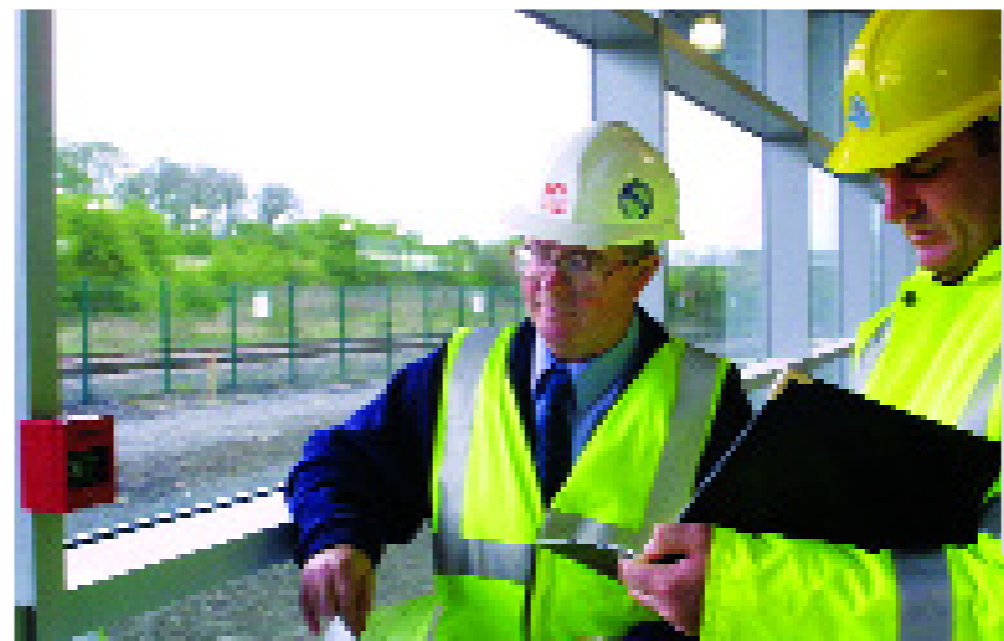
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Fire safety reform Parliament considers changes



'The proposed law would make the person responsible for the premises also responsible for the safety of everyone present.'

photo: County Durham and Darlington FRS

Legislation covering fire safety will become clearer following proposals in the form of a draft Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order which was laid before Parliament on 10 May. The proposals have been developed with stakeholders and the Fire and Rescue Service.

The core elements of the proposals are to:

- reduce the burdens on business and enforcers by reducing the amount of legislation

- ensure public safety
- make prevention of fire a core element of general fire safety, and
- verify the position of the Fire and Rescue Service as the principal enforcer of general fire safety requirements.

The proposed law, which will bring about an end to fire certification, would make the person

responsible for the premises also responsible for the safety of everyone present, or in the close vicinity. It would also maintain existing measures provided for use by, or for the protection of, the Fire and Rescue Service.

The proposals are currently being considered by Parliament. The draft and accompanying documents are available on the ODPM website www.odpm.gov.uk

Encouraging input from all



photo: Hampshire FRS
Delivering safer communities for all

Making our communities safer requires the active participation of everyone in the Fire and Rescue Service community.

We will only be successful in driving down fire deaths and injuries if our policies are informed by those with knowledge and expertise at all levels.

That is why the Government has established a new framework of advisory and consultative bodies to give advice and ideas on how the modernisation programme should progress. These bodies are:

- **The Practitioners' Forum** which enables those who represent the employees, managers and employers of the Fire and Rescue Service to give their input
- **The Business and Community Safety Forum** which brings together representatives from industry, business and community

groups representing the most vulnerable in society

- **The Central Local Partnership Sub-Group** which brings together central and local government politicians
- **The Fire and Rescue Service Sounding Board** which provides new ideas, drawing on members' expertise from inside and outside of the Service.

This framework is now complete and each of the groups has met at least once to discuss the key issues and challenges facing the Service today. These new arrangements encourage input from all those involved with the Fire and Rescue Service: the 'producers', the 'users' and the politicians, as well as expertise from outside of the Service. This kind of engagement is fundamental to the successful implementation and continuation of the modernisation programme and, ultimately, in delivering safer communities for all.

New resources aid search and rescue

One of the major developments within the New Dimension programme is the expansion of Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capacity for the Fire and Rescue Service. This is just one part of the government investment of up to £132 million over the next two years.



photo: Gordon Goldsmith, New Dimension Training and Procedures Team
The recent plastics factory explosion in Glasgow utilised USAR personnel, equipment and training.

Vehicles and specialist tools and training for USAR have been delivered to a number of fire and rescue services throughout the UK as part of the New Dimension programme to provide a national rescue capability.

Following the events of 11 September 2001, the 13 services with international search and rescue teams expanded their remit to respond to incidents involving collapsed buildings and other structures within the UK.

To support this specialist capability, these services received interim Urban Search and Rescue (SAR) units with new tools and equipment. A further six temporary SAR vehicles have been delivered to additional services to provide national coverage.

The units provide an interim resource while procurement of extra equipment and specially designed permanent SAR vehicles progresses, with roll out to fire and rescue services expected next year.

The new equipment carried on the vehicles is designed for demanding and sustained use and includes:

- technical search cameras

- listening devices and communication probes
- cutting, drilling and breaking equipment
- timber cutting work stations
- propping and shoring equipment
- lighting and power generation
- hand tools, and
- heavy capacity air bags.

Specialist training

To support this new capability, ODPM sent 408 UK firefighters to 'Disaster City' in Texas, USA, to take part in the specialist collapsed structure course. London Fire Brigade also funded 96 additional London personnel to attend. The specially designed centre enabled firefighters to practise rescue techniques in a safe, realistic environment and provided them with an enhanced range of specialist skills.

The Texas training formed the foundation of courses now provided at the Fire Service College, which have been fully funded by the Government. They include the ongoing development of procedures and training packages, as well as the building of training rigs and centres to provide all levels of USAR training from 'hands-

on' frontline response, to senior Gold and Silver command in a multi-agency emergency scenario.

A dedicated building at the college provides a year-round tool skills training area. Custom-built training rigs and simulated collapsed structures will provide scenario-based training. Ninety weeks of USAR training courses are scheduled over the next two years, with 30 places available per course.

Saving lives

USAR equipment and training have already been used to help save lives in major emergencies. The United Kingdom Fire Service Search and Rescue Team (UKFSSART) response to the earthquake in Bam, Iran utilised the New Dimension tools, and firefighters who attended had received specialist training in Texas.

More recently, the plastics factory explosion in Glasgow utilised USAR personnel, equipment and training. A large number of firefighters from Scotland and England who had undertaken the collapsed structure course were able to assist in the rescue effort, along with interim SAR units and search teams from a number of services.

Welcome to FRS05

This is the fifth edition of *FRS*, a news magazine for people in the Fire and Rescue Service. These are exciting times for the Fire and Rescue Service. In this and future editions we will bring you up to date with key developments in the change programme and at the same time highlight some of the excellent cutting-edge work being undertaken by fire and rescue service personnel.

Feedback

We would like to thank those readers who have given us feedback following the first four editions of *FRS*. We are always interested in hearing your views and in finding out which issues you would like highlighted in future editions.

You can email *FRS* direct at frs@odpm.gov.uk

FiReControl: Progress

The FiReControl Project will deliver an efficient, resilient and comprehensive national system of nine interconnected regional control centres.

The project has two main drivers: the requirement that the Fire and Rescue Service respond to the changed environment since 11 September 2001, and the need for more efficient and effective delivery of the service.

The regional control centres are so significant nationally that they will form part of the 'Critical National Infrastructure'. That means that operational continuity of fire control is vital to the well being of the country, and as such, regional control centres will have to meet demanding security and resilience requirements.

FiReControl has made significant progress in the last four months, both within the national project team and in each of the regions. In particular, there has been good progress on accommodation

and technology. The procurement process for the new regional control centre buildings and for the technology solutions is under way.

Progress has also been made, in close consultation with the regions, in defining the activities that new regional control centres will carry out. Work is beginning on the national fire control centre function that will be required to sit alongside the new control centres.

The national FiReControl project team has held a number of events to keep the regions up to date and involved in the progress of the project. These have ranged from the fourth national seminar in early May, which was attended by senior fire and rescue service personnel, to a series of control staff workshops in each of the regions designed to allow control staff to share their hopes and fears about the project.

Future events will include further national seminars every six to eight weeks, a second round of control staff workshops and a number of regional planning workshops.

The team theme



‘Modernisation is about re-evaluating the way we work and who with. We all have a stake in building safer communities.’ – David Monks

photo: West Yorkshire FRS

Fire and rescue services around the country are creating original ways to work in partnership, reaching more people in diverse communities, and building on the success of community fire safety.

Partners for life

West Yorkshire’s Director of Fire Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer David Monks explains why partnership working must be the secret to longer-term success.

‘We have a community fire safety record second to none, but there’s a limit to what can be done on our own.

‘Ten years ago the annual fire-related death toll was a frightening 40, so community fire safety work has undoubtedly had spectacular success. However, the figures are beginning to level out, indicating that our efforts must become increasingly sophisticated to influence harder-to-reach audiences such as schools and public buildings.’

West Yorkshire firefighters now aim to carry out 10,000 fire safety checks in the homes of the over-65s, installing smoke alarms where necessary. They will also consider installing sprinklers in the homes of the most vulnerable. ‘Domestic sprinklers could have saved 10 of the 25 lives lost to fire in West Yorkshire last year,’ believes Monks. ‘Alarms give a vital early warning but sprinklers will actually fight a blaze before it can get out of control. We are particularly keen on sprinklers where there are larger numbers of people and potential evacuation problems.’

West Yorkshire’s targets for 2006/7 are:

- 40% fewer accidental dwelling fire deaths than 2001/2 (to just 9)
- 20% cut in accidental fire injuries (to 271).

Regenerating Bradford

A £3 million community fire station is the planned next step in regenerating eastern Bradford.

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service teamed up with Regen 2000 a year ago to help regenerate the eastern side of the city. Steve Fealy, Station Officer and Regen link project manager, and his three fire safety advisers visit local businesses, schools, voluntary groups and homes (often after contacts made through multi-agency links).

‘The multi-agency approach helps us to concentrate our efforts,’ says Fealy. ‘For example, following a safety check, the regeneration partnership funded a smoke detection and sprinkler system in the home of an individual identified as vulnerable.’

By 2006, the team aims to make the community self-sufficient in fire safety, with a small group of officers providing back-up support.

Campaign’s first-year results:

- dwelling fires – 10% reduction (to 43)
- hoax calls – 23% fall (to 560)
- vehicle fires – 37% reduction (to 171).



photo: Bucks & Milton Keynes FRS

How does your garden grow?

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service helped a Prince’s Trust Team succeed in a 12-week project raising funds for – and building – a sensory garden at Park School in Stocklake, Aylesbury.

The Service provided free accommodation for the 12-strong team in spare offices at county fire headquarters and see this link with the Prince’s Trust as just one way of raising young people’s awareness of community fire safety. ‘We want to continue to be involved,’ said Divisional Officer John Kelley. ‘One of our firefighters, Sub Officer Will Roots, hopes to join the next group’s team-building exercise.’

Helper Shelter

Teamwork between the Fire and Rescue Service and its partners helps people on land, on water **and** in fires – as a recent incident in Milton Keynes shows.

The Red Cross Fire Victim Support Vehicle (FVSV), manned by Red Cross volunteers, provided shelter when a boat sinking in the Grand Union Canal left a dozen cold, wet people far from home – while fire crews pumped out the craft. The FVSV’s work was recognised when the group received a Milton Keynes Volunteering Award. Although the Red Cross volunteers are trained first aiders, they are not an alternative to the ambulance service but a vital back-up.



photo: Bucks & Milton Keynes FRS

Assistant Divisional Officer, Station Commander Mick Carson is a supporter: ‘I have called out the FVSV in the middle of the night when you have a woman and children standing in the rain watching their home go up in flames. Firefighters are controlling the blaze and ambulances take the injured to hospital, but what happens to those left standing in the street? In the FVSV people can sit in the warm, have a hot drink and phone family or friends. They can shelter from the situation and think what to do. In the meantime, Red Cross volunteers are catering to their needs with food, drink and other essentials, like nappies and even a cat basket!’

The Red Cross FVSV, based at Bletchley, can be reached through the Fire and Rescue Service and – just like them – is available night and day.



photo: Greater Manchester FRS

TV personality Bruce Jones supports the launch of Manchester’s ‘Target Fire’

On target in Manchester
TV personality Bruce Jones (*Coronation Street’s* Les Battersby) supports the launch of Manchester’s ‘Target Fire’ – a new, teamwork-based initiative.

With £1.5 million Government funding, 25 two-person Home Fire Risk Assessment and Community Safety teams will operate from a fire station central to each Metropolitan Borough. Barry Dixon, County Fire Officer and Chief Executive says: ‘We are recruiting a diverse mix as project members, including experienced fire and rescue service staff, young people and members of the local community. This is a real opportunity for local

people to deliver local solutions to local problems. We hope to find people with communications skills who can help make communities safer.

‘Where necessary, they will supply and install smoke alarms, provide fire-retardant smoker’s aprons and bed-packs and (in cases of extreme risk) will talk to specialist community fire safety officers about appropriate protection solutions such as sprinklers.

‘Target Fire teams will work with health, housing and social services agencies, not only on fire prevention but also crime and disorder issues such as abandoned cars, arson, hoax calls, attacks on firefighters and other anti-social behaviour.’ Bruce Jones (formerly a retained firefighter at Marple) says: ‘I have witnessed the devastation caused when a fire happens in someone’s home. I support any initiative which reduces the risk.’



photo: West Yorkshire FRS

Working together to combat local problems

Family-friendly flexibility

Avon Fire Brigade has had a flexible approach to the usual 224 whole-time shift system for firefighters for over a year. Shirley Hurdle, Business Services Manager in Human Resources, explains how one employee's personal circumstances led a whole organisation to change the way it looked at flexible working.

'In February 2003 we had a request from an existing whole-time firefighter to move onto a part-time contract – days only on the shift system – as, under tragic circumstances, he had become responsible for childcare. We were aware that the new legislation due to start in April 2003 on

flexible working would allow the consideration of requests for changes to working routines for childcare responsibilities, and his request was agreed in March 2003.

'Brigade managers agreed with the Fire Authority and Union to maintain his inclusion in the pension scheme by giving him unpaid leave for night shifts, adjusting his pension contributions pro rata to his working time, and ensuring he understood the corresponding impact on his pension. He accepted this interim solution, with three-monthly reviews, pending the changes to the pension scheme, which are currently being finalised.

'Other employees have since come forward and we have accommodated their requests for more flexibility under the 224 shift system, for example, night shifts only.

'So what are the benefits? Well, there are plenty. Family-friendly options take pressure off staff and in some cases have resulted in improved attendance. Employees' morale is enhanced as they balance home and work life. It has also changed the way we approach other issues on the change programme for the Fire and Rescue Service. Now, instead of saying *We can't do this because...*, we ask *How can we do this?*

Learning the drill

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service's work with young people has been recognised as an example of best practice by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Services. The Service's Young Firefighters Association is an example of their successful approach.



photo: Warwickshire FRS
The YFA provides valuable experience and an insight into career opportunities.

Warwickshire's Young Firefighters Association (YFA) was originally launched at Bedworth Fire Station in 1997. Now Young Firefighter Groups have been established at 13 of the county's 19 stations. More than 240 young people aged between 11 and 17 – and over 90 voluntary instructors – form the Groups at whole-time, day crewed and retained stations.

Members attend a drill night each week covering topics such as fire education, first aid and operational procedures. Extra events include national and local summer camps and local community ventures such as installing smoke alarms in the homes of vulnerable people.

Valuable experience

The successful programme has been accredited by the Open College Network for Central England. The resulting 'Young Firefighters Competence Scheme' leads to a qualification over a three-year period equivalent to NVQ Level 3. In addition, there is an Instructor Competence Scheme for those over 17 years old.

Whilst the YFA does not guarantee members a position in the Service, it provides them with valuable experience and an insight into the career opportunities available. Several members have gone on to become retained firefighters.

In recognition of such work, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service was recently presented with an 'Investing in Young People' award. William Brown, Temporary County Fire Officer said: 'We will continue to develop youth initiatives which contribute towards reducing the risk of fire and incidents in Warwickshire.'



News from the NCFSC

FRS takes a look at initiatives from the National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC).

In this issue...
child safety.

'Get Firewise' safety net for kids

The National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC) has launched a new children's area 'Get Firewise' within the FireKills website.



'Get Firewise' communicates core fire safety messages to children in a fun and educational way. The kids' area is divided into two different age ranges – junior (3–7 year olds) and senior (8–14).

The junior site uses the familiar character of Frances the Firefly to show younger children how to stay safe at home and keep away from fire. The senior site introduces Flynn and his fire busting crew Joe and Bex. There is also valuable information from firefighters Mick and Maya. Both sites are packed with fire safety messages and fire facts, as well as interactive games, quizzes and comic strips.

'Get Firewise' can be accessed from the 'FireKills' homepage (www.firekills.gov.uk) or viewed directly at www.getfirewise.gov.uk

New strategy for Fire Safety Education

The National Community Fire Safety Centre works in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Service, and education and community organisations to raise awareness of fire safety. To take this work further, the Centre has developed a national strategy for community fire safety education.

A key feature of the strategy has been the establishment of a steering group of fire and rescue service educationalists to provide specialist input into the development of online teachers' resources. The steering group will also develop guidelines on the relevant messages for children, as well as identifying and promoting good practice.

The NCFSC is also looking at how fire safety messages can be integrated within risk education more generally. Supported by the Fire Service Research and Training Trust, the Centre commissioned a pilot project to test the US National Fire Protection Association *Risk Watch* programme.

Risk Watch is a school-based safety education programme that links teachers with community safety experts and parents. It caters for children aged 3 to 14 and is designed to be delivered by teachers in a classroom setting. Eight topics are covered: water safety, motor vehicle safety, bike and pedestrian safety, fire and burn prevention, choking suffocation and strangulation prevention, poisoning prevention, falls prevention and firearms injury prevention. The pilot project took place in Nottinghamshire and the Highlands and Islands. The findings will be an important contribution to the longer-term development of safety education.

The Centre also continues to support the delivery of safety education through LASER (Learning About Safety through Experiencing Risk) in conjunction with RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) and other agencies.

For further information contact
Karen.Haestier@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Annual Child Safety Week: 21–27 June

Fire is the number one cause of accidental deaths among children in the home. The Child Accident Prevention Trust's (CAPT) annual Child Safety Week highlights the key issues.

Forty young people under 16 years old (20 under the age of five) die in house fires each year and 1,600 (600 under the age of five) suffer injuries caused by exposure to fire, flames and smoke. Almost two thirds of accidental house fires – over 30,000 every year – are caused by carelessness in the kitchen, with chip pans the most common source.

Many of these accidents could be prevented by simple safety checks. This year, the CAPT annual Child Safety Week theme is 'Check it don't chance it!', promoting the message 'Don't leave safety to chance'. The week coincides with the ODPM National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC) Fire Action 'Escape Plan' campaign – featured in FRS04 – which commenced on 15 June.

A free resource pack is available from CAPT by calling the charity's hotline on 020 7689 4535. Alternatively, you can e-mail csw@capt.org.uk or fax your details to 020 7608 3674.

For further information visit the CAPT website at www.capt.org.uk