

FRS 11



The FiReControl project

The first in a series of three special pull-out features on resilience projects

THE FUTURE OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE : MARCH 2005



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Driving forward diversity and equality

The progress of the Fire and Rescue Service towards greater equality and diversity has received a boost with the publication of a new online toolkit.

As of February, the Service can obtain information, practical tips and support on equality and diversity issues from an online toolkit developed by the ODPM.

The toolkit, which was showcased at the Fire 2004 Conference, will also offer an opportunity to share good practice and experience in an online discussion forum. The toolkit will be available at www.frstoolkit.odpm.gov.uk

The toolkit forms part of a general drive towards greater equality and diversity in the Service that began with the publication of the White Paper *Our Fire and Rescue Service* in 2003.

The White Paper highlighted that a career in the Service was generally not attractive to women or enquirers from minority ethnic backgrounds. Service stakeholders, in collaboration with the ODPM, took up the challenge to work towards a more diverse workforce.

To encourage people from a wide variety of backgrounds to consider the Service as a career, the ODPM published new recruitment literature in 2004. This was designed to show the wide range of opportunities on offer in the Service in order to attract groups who might not previously have considered applying.

Another example of recent equality and diversity work is the new guide which has



Photo: West Yorkshire FRS

Creating an equal and diverse Service.

just been released to complement the medical evidence document published by the ODPM last September. The new guide, *Disability Discrimination Act – Part II – Employment Guidance to FRS Managers* was developed by CFOA, the Disability Rights Commission and Service stakeholders. Launched in Birmingham on 27 January 2005, it aims to help managers make objective decisions about applicants and staff with disabilities.

On the back of last year's changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (which had a direct impact on the Service), this guide encourages managers to think creatively about simple measures that might help staff with disabilities remain active and effective even within the operational side of the Service. The guide can be found online at www.cfoa.org.uk

Meanwhile, Diversity Happens!, the Service's equality and diversity programme board, is working with a variety of stakeholder groups to support services in dealing with equality and diversity issues. Among the board's initiatives for 2005 will be measures by which the Service can assess their own equality and diversity performance. These will include a customised version of the Local Government Equality Standard intended to highlight areas of specific importance to the Service, peer review and cultural audit.

Through these initiatives, and others being developed nationally and locally, 2005 promises to be a significant year for equality and diversity within the Fire and Rescue Service.

For more information about equality and diversity in the Service, please contact Sharone Collins at sharone.collins@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

A stakeholder says...



'The unique ability of the FRS to quickly put in place containment actions... can prove vital in protecting the environment and public.'
Bruce McGlashan,
Environment Agency

'The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) plays a central role in protecting the environment. This was first recognised over 14 years ago, when discussion began on creating a working arrangement between the Service and the National Rivers Authority (NRA), one of the predecessors of the Environment Agency (EA).

'There were a number of drivers but the key one was the recognition of the unique ability of

the FRS to quickly put in place containment actions such as blocking drains at fires and spillages involving environmentally harmful substances. Such a rapid response can prove vital in protecting the environment and public water supplies.

'A working partnership developed which aimed to mitigate the impact of environmental events. This was formalised in 2002 with the signing of a protocol between the Local Government Association (LGA) and the EA on Fire and Rescue Service issues. This set out the working arrangements between the two parties and described areas of mutual interest.

'Since then the partnership has strengthened further and the EA now considers the partnership to be one of its most successful pollution prevention initiatives contributing to its aim of protecting and improving the environment.

'One of the most recent examples of this success involved a road traffic accident on the

M62. The FRS succeeded in containing over 20,000 litres of fuel oil using Agency-supplied materials, preventing a serious pollution incident.

'The consolidation of this partnership received a recent boost with fire and rescue authorities required to include environmental consideration in their Integrated Risk Management Plans. The EA is therefore working with HMFSI to provide guidance on identifying environmental priorities.

'Recently I have been lucky enough to be appointed as the EA's lead for Fire and Rescue Service issues. My key task is to develop the partnership in a nationally consistent manner. I will also be involved with a number of specific initiatives including updating the protocol and looking to secure long-term funding for the pollution equipment the EA supplies to the Service.'

Bruce McGlashan

Technical Advisor – Fire Service and Major Stakeholders, Environment Agency

IPDS – new interactive website

During February the team at the IPDS Hub put the final touches to a number of significant changes to the IPDS Website – www.ipds.co.uk

Since the launch of the initial website almost a year ago, members of the Fire and Rescue Service have shown a huge amount of interest, logging around 30,000 hits per month. However, it has become clear following research and conversations within the Service that the website was in need of update and expansion. That work has been undertaken and during February the new website quietly replaced the old.

www.ipds.co.uk has become much more interactive and user friendly. Site users can now take part in discussion forums and message boards, give opinions on live issues through an online market research area, have access to an expanding information bank and document library, and view regional as well as national news via the IPDS Support Team and IPDS Regional Co-ordinators.



Access to some website sections has been retained: the Emergency Fire Service Database containing National Occupational Standards and Role Maps is in the process of update, as are 'Frequently Asked Questions'. And naturally there is a simple 'contact us' connection to the IPDS Hub and hyperlinks to other sites.

Though administered by the IPDS Hub, this site belongs to the Fire and Rescue Service. It is there to reflect the needs of the entire Service, so if you have any stories, information or queries relating to IPDS, simply access the site, contact the Hub, and you will get a response.

For more information contact Bob Johnston of the IPDS Hub on 01608 812105, 01344 311384 or 07789 561186 or via email at bobj@jandass.com

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Pump up the volume

During the weekend of 8 and 9 January, northern England, Wales and Scotland were hit by torrential rain and gales. Situated at the junction of several rivers, Carlisle was one of the worst affected areas. At one point severe flooding forced the closure of all routes into the city, and power to thousands of homes and businesses was cut when the main electricity substation was flooded.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service worked together with police, lifeboat crews and RAF helicopters to rescue people trapped in flooded homes.

The ODPM's Regional Resilience Team was in action on Saturday 8 January and moved to join Gold Command. The New Dimension operation team swung into action the following day. Nine of the new High Volume Pumping (HVP) units, purchased as part of the ODPM's New Dimension programme, were deployed to help in the clean-up operation that followed the floods in Carlisle.

Welcome to

FRS 11

In this issue we look at how the Fire and Rescue Service has responded to the challenge of diversity in working with different communities, as well as internally. We also look at how the Service has developed its role through partnership work at local, regional and national level as seen in the flooding crisis in Cumbria.

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

HVP incident log

FRS goes behind the scenes with the help of Chris Arculeo, New Dimension Operations

Sunday 9 January

- 10.40 Request received from Gold Command in Cumbria for High Volume Pumping (HVP) capability to protect the electrical substation providing power to Carlisle.
- 10.42 Mobilisation agreed for New Dimension HVPs based at the Fire Service College.
- 13.30 The proposed road route of the HVP convoy is agreed, after consultation with the Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordinating Committee (FRSNCC), Lancashire and West Midlands Motorway Police and the Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.
- 14.48 Four HVP units and one Hose Layer, loaded on to five Prime Mover vehicles, depart from the Fire Service College.
- 20.15 HVP column arrives at Incident Command Centre in Cumbria.

Monday 10 January

- 8.00 Four HVPs and crews prioritise the pumping out of the main road into Carlisle and the Willow Holme electrical substation.
- 9.00 After consultation with the Environment Agency, HVP column commander warns that additional HVP capability may be needed and HVP crews at the College prepare to deploy.

Strategy Manager at the ODPM, to see a section from his log of events as the incident unfolds.

12.15 Gold Command request the deployment of a further five HVPs to Carlisle.

16.00 Column of five HVPs leaves the Fire Service College for Cumbria after the road route is agreed.

23.45 Second HVP column arrives at Silver Command in Cumbria.

Overnight The first four HVPs and crews pump water at Willow Holme sewage station and electrical substation. Pumping capacity is 1.9 million litres of water per hour.

Tuesday 11 January

10.30 Six HVP units now deployed to pump out at the sewage station. Three units pump out a flooded underpass. HVP pumping capacity increases to 4.5 million litres per hour.

16.00 Operation moves into the recovery phase.

Wednesday 12 January

22.30 Column of four HVPs arrives back at the Fire Service College, after decontamination and cleaning by the Environment Agency.

Thursday 13 January

22.45 Convoy of five remaining HVPs, one Hose Layer and one Hydrosub module arrives back at the Fire Service College.



Photo: Gary Mattingley

HVPs and Prime Movers outside Silver Command near Carlisle Castle.

HVP training rollout

The ODPM is working closely with the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) to develop the water capability and training programme for the Fire and Rescue Service.

HVP training began at the Fire Service College in January 2005. Up to five trainers from each service will be trained to HVP instructor level, on a two-week course funded by the ODPM. The 15 people trained on each course will then return as instructors to fire and rescue services in

their regions to train identified personnel to HVP operator standard.

High volume pumps greatly enhance the existing capabilities of the UK fire and rescue services as they face an increase in the numbers and types of water-related emergencies they are required to attend.

Bernard Dolan, DCFO of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, told a BBC news reporter that ‘the return to normality in Carlisle would have taken much longer without the HVP units’. These were the worst floods in Carlisle since 1822.



Photo: Keith Phillipson

Photo: Gary Mattingley
HVPs operate overnight at Willow Holme, Carlisle.



Photo: Gary Mattingley

Cheshire water rescue technician assists HVP crew to deploy hose in the River Eden.



Photo: Gary Mattingley

New Dimension team from the Fire Service College help during Carlisle floods.

HVP factbox

- High Volume Pumping (HVP) is the term given to pumping water through a hose that is 150mm wide. A normal fire hose is 70mm or 45mm wide.
- Each HVP consists of two modules. One module contains a submersible pump and hose box, and the second module contains two hose boxes. Both modules are carried on New Dimension Prime Mover vehicles.
- The new HVP equipment can extract and pump up to 7,000 litres per minute, which is more than three times the capacity of most existing pumps.
- HVP equipment is ideal for moving large volumes of water over long distances in the event of:
 - natural or deliberate flooding; or
 - water needed for firefighting.
- The ODPM’s New Dimension programme is meeting the costs of maintaining the HVP and Prime Mover equipment, and initial training for their use, as well as any additional capital costs for their accommodation.

‘At one point severe flooding forced the closure of all routes into the city, and power to thousands of homes and businesses was cut when the main electricity substation was flooded.’

Fudge the issue in Derbyshire

Derbyshire FRS have stepped up their fight against arson by employing the services of a four-legged friend.

Fudge is a three-year-old chocolate Labrador bitch, who joined Alfreton risk management team at the end of last year. Whenever a suspected arson attack occurs in the area, Fudge the Firedog moves in to investigate. Although she and her handler Dave Coss are members of Derbyshire FRS, the two are available to work at fire scenes across the East Midlands.

'Fudge has a range of around 25 different smells,' explained Dave. 'She is trained to find fire accelerants such as petrol, diesel and cigarette lighter fuel. When she finds something she stands and stares without disturbing it – allowing scene of crime officers to take accurate samples for forensic tests.' Evidence obtained through Fudge's skills is already being used in court.



Photo: Derbyshire FRS

Fudge is trained to stand aside to allow forensic tests.

For those considering a career change, it's not easy to become a firedog – Fudge's training lasted three months and she requires a new licence each year from the Fire Service College. Though it might be worth it for the accessories –

Fudge has her own set of fire boots to protect her feet while she's on scene.

For further information about Fudge the Firedog, contact Dave Coss on 01773 837248.

Van-tastic results in Wiltshire partnership

Wiltshire celebrates a partnership between the Bobby Van Trust and the Fire and Rescue Service.

Wiltshire was the first English county to adopt the Bobby Van project in 1998, with the creation of the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust to raise funds for the scheme. Bobby Van operators go to the homes of elderly or vulnerable victims of burglary, or those at risk of house crime, to complete a security check and where necessary carry out improvements such as the fitting of window locks and door chains.

As a result of the new partnership, home visits will now include a fire safety assessment. The Service has run a comprehensive three-day fire safety training programme for the Bobby Van operators to enable them to conduct the assessments. The Bobby Van operators now make sure all the homes they visit are fitted with smoke alarms.



Photo: Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust

Bobby Van operators trained by Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service installed more than 120 smoke alarms in two months.

The partnership has already been a resounding success with over 100 referrals to Wiltshire Fire

and Rescue Service of residents at risk from fire. The Bobby Van operators have installed over 120 smoke alarms on behalf of the Service in the last two months alone.

Chairman of Wiltshire Fire Authority, Jerry Willmott, says: 'This initiative is an important part of the larger modernisation programme that the Service has been implementing for a number of years. Thanks to the Bobby Van Trust, Wiltshire and Swindon now have a one-stop community safety advice service, forming a key part of Wiltshire's community safety programme to ensure the elderly and vulnerable are safe from fire.'

For more information on the Bobby Van Trust please go to www.wiltshirefirebrigade.gov.uk and follow the link.

Working with young people – a vision for the future

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service has taken its work with young people to new levels. And, as Chief Fire Officer Peter Jones explains, it's all down to thinking differently.

'Working with young people is nothing new in Gloucestershire – we have been spreading the community safety message in schools for more than a decade,' says Peter. 'But we have moved into a different league over the past 18 months, with the appointment of secondary school deputy head teacher Dave Norman to our Community Safety Team.

'Dave's background is probably unique, in that alongside a 30-year career in secondary education, he has served for almost as long as a retained firefighter around the country.'

Alternative curriculum

The idea of making the most of Dave's expertise was born four years ago around the issue of an 'alternative curriculum' for secondary-age students.

'I was delighted when I was given the chance to develop the youth confidence building course Firescape as part of an "alternative curriculum" for schools,' says Dave Norman.

The courses involve partnerships with police and ambulance service colleagues to deliver messages on road safety and vehicle crime. More educational partnerships include seconding staff to the Prince's Trust, establishing a community fire station in each district council to provide



Photo: Course leaders and participants

Positive feedback for the 'Firescape' courses has come from officers, schools, parents and students.

Duke of Edinburgh awards, and projects to reach disadvantaged children.

'The team has run six courses across the county,' continues Peter Jones, 'with more planned. Positive feedback from councillors, officers, schools, parents and students has been overwhelming.'

Students of safety

'We will also be working in further education with a BTEC course in firefighting skills beginning in September 2005. Successful students will then

be able to secure places on the public service course offered by most colleges.

'This extensive programme of activity has been funded through the Education Service, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Government Office for the South West. We continue to apply for partnership funding to expand activity across the spectrum.'

For more information contact Dave Norman at GFRS HQ, on 01452 753292 or at dave.norman@glosfire.gov.uk

Wheels on fire **A new report on vehicle arson shows that recent Government initiatives have had an impact.**

The Arson Control Forum recently commissioned research into the rise of vehicle arson. The report by the University of Liverpool¹ has established the link between car theft and arson – with over half of all vehicles set on fire being stolen. The report also shows the cost of disposal and weak enforcement of licensing and registration to be important factors.

The link between vehicle theft and arson that the report suggests shows the importance of close co-operation between the police and fire and rescue services in dealing with this blight on communities.

Turning it around

Vehicle arson is also affected by the numbers of abandoned vehicles. The Government has employed a range of initiatives and many local authorities now have good measures in place to combat the problem. For example, new regulations were introduced in April 2002 enabling vehicles of no value, which form the majority of abandoned vehicles, to be removed by local councils after 24 hours. Other new powers enable local authorities to clamp and remove unlicensed vehicles and tighten vehicle registration procedures.

The Nuisance Vehicle Strategy launched in November 2004 sets out further action to reduce by 25% the number of abandoned cars by 2008.

Additionally, the Arson Control Forum has sponsored a range of local arson reduction projects focusing on the removal of abandoned cars and better co-operation between the police, the Fire and Rescue Service and local authorities.

These initiatives have had a positive impact. Latest figures show deliberate vehicle fires had fallen by 12% in England and Wales in the year ending March 2004.

For more information look online at www.arsoncontrolforum.gov.uk

¹ Explaining the rise in vehicle arson: exploring the relationship between deliberate vehicle fires, vehicle abandonment and other vehicle crime ODPM, 2005

Fire Safety Task Force to target Batley and Todmorden

Over the next 12 months Batley and Todmorden will benefit from the most intensive community fire safety (CFS) drive ever witnessed, involving an unprecedented temporary redeployment of fire safety staff from across West Yorkshire.

Local fire crews will be supplemented by a task force made up of seven teams of seconded firefighters, specialist community fire safety staff and a CFS vehicle and crew from Holmfirth.

In addition, 28 fire safety officers will be drafted in to visit more than 1,600 local shops and business premises to carry out inspections and offer advice on combating arson and more.

The campaign was launched at spectacular roadshows in Batley and in Todmorden at the beginning of February, setting out objectives for the next year. By the end of the 12-month strike, West Yorkshire Chief Fire Officer Phil Toase expects his staff to have:

- carried out almost 8,000 free home fire safety checks;
- installed 6,800 smoke alarms;

- replaced 1,000 chip pans with safer thermostatically-controlled deep fat fryers; and
- replaced 250 electric blankets in the homes of local pensioners.

‘Make no mistake, nothing like this has ever been attempted before,’ declared Phil Toase.

The drive will target high risk groups, particularly the elderly: 50% of fire deaths in West Yorkshire involve over-60s, though they account for just 20% of the population. Children and people with disabilities will also be targeted.

West Yorkshire Fire Authority is nominating political champions from its Elected Members to link up with social services, housing departments and other agencies to identify vulnerable people on their books.

Robert Light, who chairs the Fire Authority and is a councillor for Birstall and Birkenshaw, will be the Batley Champion and Councillor Graham Hall, a Calderdale representative, will be his counterpart for Todmorden.

‘We have already driven down accidental fire deaths across West Yorkshire by 40% over the past few years – but the easy wins are over,’ they explained. ‘If we want to see deaths and injuries down by at least a further 20% by 2010 we have to be more bold and more imaginative.’

‘We have to make fire prevention just as much part of the fire officer’s job as firefighting and we have to help drive unnecessary risks out of our homes and workplaces.’

For further information please contact Stephen Hardy on 01274 655807/717.

NCFSC ensures a safe Eid Al-Adha celebration

Building on the successful Diwali fire safety campaign, the National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC) co-ordinated work with the Muslim community to promote fire safety during the festival of Eid Al-Adha on 21–24 January 2005.

The NCFSC issued a detailed briefing paper and a draft press notice to help fire and rescue services raise awareness with local media and the community. Adverts appeared in the *Daily Jang*, *The Nation*, *Eastern Eye*, *India Weekly* and the *Asian Times*, all key publications widely read by the Muslim community in England and Wales. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service were one of many services who pursued proactive campaigns. Naseem Begum, Black and Ethnic Minority Community Development Worker, says: ‘Everyday fire hazards increase when people spend more time at home during Eid Al-Adha. For example, a great deal of cooking is done, usually with hot oil-filled karahis,* and children can be running around – leading to accidents.’

Naseem gave a fire safety talk at the Islamia Muslim School and then firefighters performed a safety demonstration to over 150 children and parents showing the dangers of a karahi fire, using their chip pan unit.



Photo: Nottinghamshire FRS

Nottinghamshire were one of many fire and rescue services who pursued proactive Eid safety campaigns. Firefighters used their chip pan unit to show the dangers of a karahi fire.

For more information on fire safety campaigns, please email: ncfsc@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

* Karahi: a pan similar to a wok, used for cooking food in hot oil.

Making an assessment – Fire CPA 2005

The Audit Commission are currently carrying out Comprehensive Performance Assessments (CPAs) for English fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) with a view to providing each FRA with a robust baseline assessment of their strengths and weaknesses from which they can continue to improve.

CPA will review each FRA in terms of its performance against three key questions:

- What is the fire authority trying to achieve?



Photo: ODPM
Comprehensive Performance Assessment is not an inspection of the operational side of services.

- How has the fire authority set about delivering its priorities?
- What has the fire authority achieved to date and, in the light of this, what does it plan to do in the future?

The process covers a number of stages:

- Each FRA has been invited to complete a self-assessment document.
- There is the option to have a 'peer review' by an external body of their choice.
- This, with supporting evidence, forms the basis of an on-site review by the Audit Commission's CPA team.
- The Commission will provide the FRA with a detailed assessment report with an overall judgement of the authority's performance as 'excellent', 'good', 'fair', 'weak' or 'poor'.

It is important to remember that CPA is about how the authority and service are managed – its corporate governance framework, leadership and performance management. It is not assessing operational ability in terms of delivering an emergency response. But remember that operational staff will be involved throughout the assessment process so make sure you keep yourself

informed by asking your line manager or visiting the Audit Commission website (details below).

So what happens next? If your Authority achieves an 'excellent' or 'good' rating it will be offered new freedoms and flexibilities to help it continue to innovate and help shape the future of fire and rescue services; 'weak' or 'poor' authorities will be supported to help them improve. Following the report, all FRAs will produce an improvement action plan supported by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

For example, Ministers have agreed that FRAs should have full access to the local government Capacity Building Programme, which is a jointly funded initiative by the ODPM and the Local Government Association. This provides central funding for a range of national, regional and local programmes to build capacity and includes, for instance, development courses for managers, future leaders and elected members.

All CPA reports for English fire and rescue authorities will be published on the Audit Commission website (www.audit-commission.gov.uk) by August 2005.

Contact CPA Helpline on 020 7166 2423.

Practice makes perfect

The Practitioners' Forum has completed a busy first year.

The Practitioners' Forum, which draws together personnel and stakeholders from across the Fire and Rescue Service, is the body through which key practitioners and stakeholders work with the Government on policy development.

Group practice

The Forum operates in two ways:

- **Task and Finish Groups** – these concentrate on addressing strategic issues during a specified timescale. Groups' recent work has included: equality and fairness; the development of a Centre of Excellence at the Fire Service College; core values for

a modern Fire and Rescue Service; and service delivery monitoring. Groups are currently working on co-responding; recruitment and retention of retained firefighters; and the Service's approach to automatic fire alarms (AFAs).

- **Stakeholder Consultation Groups** – these concentrate on longer timescale work, and provide ongoing input into a range of issues and projects. Recent work has included regional control rooms; the New Dimension programme; a fire and rescue health and safety group; and exploring future opportunities for the Fire Service College.

Alan Doig, Chairman of the Practitioners' Forum, says: 'It is early days for the Forum as a new institution in the Fire and Rescue Service arena. It has made a sound start but there is still much to do, both to assist in delivering the improvement programme, and in looking over the horizon at the future role of the Service.'

For further information on the Practitioners' Forum, including a full list of members and their roles and responsibilities, visit www.pforum.fire.gov.uk