

Addressed to:

The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The London Commissioner
The Chief Fire Officer

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Update the Fire and Rescue Service about the National Citizen Service and where further information is available if they wish to become involved.

Fire, Resilience and Emergencies Directorate

1. Background

1.1 As part of the ongoing reshaping in the Department of Communities and Local Government, changes will shortly be taking place at Deputy Director level within Fire, Resilience and Emergencies Directorate. The Department is under going a complete restructure and there will be further staffing changes over the course of the next few months.

2. Fire, Resilience and Emergencies

2.1 As set out in Fire and Rescue Service Bulletin number 7, the Department for Communities and Local Government is being reshaped. Following the earlier restructuring at Director General and Director level further changes have now taken place across the Department at Deputy Director level. These changes come into effect on Tuesday 3 May.

2.2 The Fire, Resilience and Emergencies Directorate are welcoming three new Deputy Directors:

- Jane Cockerill is the new Deputy Director of Fire Programmes (Firelink and New Dimension). Prior to taking up this role Jane was the Deputy Director of Local Government Strategy
- James Cruddas is the new Deputy Director of Resilience and Emergencies Management. Prior to taking up this role James was the Deputy Director of Thames Gateway
- Andrew Morrison is the new Deputy Director of Fire Policy leading on the Fire Service College and Research and Statistics. Prior to taking up this role Andrew worked in the Programme Team as a Deputy Director.

2.3 Dawn Eastmead will continue to lead as the Deputy Director of National Fire Policy including decentralisation, fire safety and fire related finance. Roger Hargreaves will continue his role as Deputy Director of Future of control room services.

2.4 The following Deputy Directors have chosen to leave the Directorate and Department:

- Sandy Bishop, Deputy Director of Fire and Rescue Development and Cath Reynolds Deputy Director of Research and Statistics, will be leaving to pursue other interests. Ian Wakeling Deputy Director of Firelink Project will be leaving the Department to return to the Ministry of Defence.

2.5 Staff below deputy director level are currently taking part in a selection exercise and may not be available for short periods over the next month or so.

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Fire Kills Campaign

1. Background

1.1 Partners will be aware that agreement has been given for the continuation of the Fire Kills Campaign in 2011-12.

2. Fire Kills 2011-12

2.1 The focus of the campaign in 2011-12 will be to support and empower local Fire and Rescue Services to deliver the campaign and its messages locally within their communities. Where appropriate, the Department for Communities and Local Government will co-ordinate activity nationally and issue briefing packs to ensure a joined-up approach with consistent messages. Campaign activity is currently being planned for 2011-12 and partners will be updated in due course.

2.2 The Department's Fire Extranet (<http://clg.globusmedia.com/BMS/>) contains all the artwork for campaign literature and material which can be printed locally. Content will continue to be reviewed as appropriate to ensure it remains up-to-date and contains relevant materials needed to support local fire and rescue service activity. The Extranet allows artwork to be adapted for local use, e.g. inclusion of fire and rescue service logos, phone numbers, etc...

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Local Government Improvement and Development consultation on draft guidance for fire safety in purpose built block of flats

1. Background

1.1 Local Government Improvement and Development are leading a project to develop sector-owned fire safety guidance for purpose built blocks of flats and have invited views on the proposed guidance.

2. Draft Fire Safety Guidance for Purpose Built Flats

2.1 CS Todd Associates were commissioned in January 2011 to develop guidance to help landlords, fire risk assessors, enforcement bodies and others meet their statutory responsibilities. The Fire and Rescue Service Monthly Bulletin 7/2011 refers to this and is available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fsb72011>.

2.2 A consultation draft of the proposed guidance is available from the Local Government Improvement and Development website at: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=1>.

2.3 Comments should be sent to guideconsult@cstodd.co.uk by 31 May 2011.

2.4 Local Government Improvement Development expect to publish the final guidance in July 2011.

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Payment of Fire Capital Grant and Fire Revenue Grant

1. Background

- 1.1 Neil O'Connor wrote to all Chief Fire Officers and Heads of Finance detailing the arrangements for the payment of Fire Capital Grant and updating on Fire Revenue Grant on 15 April 2011.

2. Funding

- 2.1 Ministers have decided that funding for 2011-12 will be allocated via a pro-rata distribution using the current distribution method relating to population figures but updated to reflect the increase in funding from £35m to £70m per annum (£500,000 baseline for all Fire and Rescue Authorities and the rest by population (except for Isles of Scilly which receive £75,000).
- 2.2 Funding will be provided via a Section 31 grant payment made to each authority for 2011/12. Amounts to be paid in 2011 were listed in the 'Fire and Rescue Authorities Capital Funding Grant Determination 2011/12' (No 31/1867), which was enclosed with the letter that Neil O'Connor sent out on 15 April 2011. Payment of 2009/10 funding was made to authorities on or around 21 April 2011.
- 2.3 The method of allocation for capital for years 2012-2015 is currently under review. Ministers are considering a number of options for future years including a fund administered via a bidding process. We plan to seek sector views shortly.
- 2.4 The Department also intends to begin making monthly payments of Fire Revenue Grant 2011-12 shortly. The grant covers funding for New Dimension, Firelink, Olympics Security and Control Rooms and indicative figures were released alongside the final local government settlement. The Firelink funding will be adjusted to reflect changes to the inflation rate and reduced Airwave service fees. Some funding has also been added to the Control Rooms to cover costs associated with control centres where leases have transferred. It is expected that further funding will be made available subsequently in light of the responses to the recent consultation on future control room arrangements.

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Publication of the Future of Local Public Audit consultation document

1. Background

1.1 On the 13 August 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Rt. Hon Eric Pickles MP announced plans to disband the Audit Commission, and refocus audit of local public bodies on helping local people hold those bodies to account for local spending decisions.

2. Future Audit framework

2.1 The Government recently published a consultation paper which sets out proposals for the future framework for audit of local public bodies, including Fire and Rescue Authorities. The consultation can be found at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localpublicauditconsult>.

2.2 The intention is to replace the current, centralised audit systems managed by the Audit Commission, with a new decentralised regime, which will support local democratic accountability, cut bureaucracy and costs, while ensuring there continues to be robust local public audit. This consultation sets out proposals on the new audit framework where:

- audit quality is regulated within a statutory framework, overseen by the National Audit Office and the accountancy profession
- local public bodies will be free to appoint their own external auditors with stringent safeguards for independence.

2.3 The consultation will run until 30 June 2011. Responses can be sent to:

foia@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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National Citizen Service

1. Background

1.1 The National Citizen Service is a flagship policy at the heart of the coalition Government's vision for building a Big Society. National Citizen Service brings together 16 year olds from different backgrounds in a summer programme of challenge, service and learning, enabling them to develop the confidence, skills and attitudes they need to become more engaged with their communities and to become active and responsible citizens. National Citizen Service will promote a more cohesive, responsible and engaged society.

2. Latest News

2.1 Twelve National Citizen Service pilot providers were announced in November 2010, and are currently recruiting young people to participate in National Citizen Service.

2.2 The National Citizen Service will commence in June 2011 for a six week period, although precise local starting dates will be determined by local needs.

2.3 Year 2 of the pilot will run during the summer of 2012 and those pilot providers are expected to be announced in September.

2.4 If you would like to learn more about National Citizen Service and how the Fire and Rescue Service could get involved, more information is available on the following websites:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/nationalcitizenservice/a0075357/national-citizen-service>

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/national-citizen-service-introduced>.

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