

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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Title: [Firelink Service Fees](#)

This announces the intention to commence charging Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) for the use of the Firelink service. It covers service charges and net new burden payments. This bulletin supersedes Fire and Rescue Service Circular 54/2009 which is revoked.

Title: [Update on the Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career Campaign](#)

This informs Fire and Rescue Service partners of the termination of the Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career Awareness Raising Campaign in 2010/11.

Title: [Firefighter Recruitment and Careers Information available on the Skills for Justice Website](#)

This informs the Fire and Rescue Service that firefighter careers and recruitment information, including the updated firefighter recruitment DVD "So you want to be a Firefighter?", is now available on the Skills for Justice website.

Firelink Service Fees

1. Background

- 1.1 This bulletin announces the intention to commence charging Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) for the use of the Firelink service. Chief Fire Officers will be notified individually of the date for commencement of charging, forecast charges and new burden grants to be paid.

2. Firelink Payment

- 2.1 FRAs have been benefiting from the use of the Firelink radio system for voice services without charge since the conversion of fire vehicles. The dates for commencement of charging align with the planned dates for cut-over to Control Centres prior to the delayed announcement in July 2009. This avoids charging commencing any earlier than FRAs would have previously been budgeting for.
- 2.2 When Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) actually cut-over to Control Centres Firelink fees will be adjusted to include the charges for the data capability and integration with Control Centres (SAN H). New burden grant will be adjusted for these two elements.
- 2.3 Service fees consist of:-
- Charges for the voice service – These have been calculated for each FRA based on the number of radios they received during roll-out. This method of apportionment has been used for simplicity. Subsequent changes in the number of radios will not affect the service fee under the core contract. Changes in the number of radios will therefore not result in changes to fees chargeable or new burden grants payable.
 - Charges for MDT1A based on number of MDTs.
 - Charges for MDT2 based on the number of terminals and charged from the date of actual cut over to the Control Centre.
 - Charges for SAN H (capability integrating Firelink with Control Centres) charged by Airwave region and apportioned between FRAs on the basis of the ratio of the normal monthly charges or as may otherwise be agreed by the constituent FRAs. Charged from the date of actual cut-over.
 - Service credits which will reduce the monthly invoice in the event of service quality falling below thresholds defined in the contract. The reduction will be applied on the basis of Airwave region and apportioned between FRAs on the basis of the ratio of normal monthly charges unless FRAs agree an alternative distribution methodology.
 - Charges for Traffic units in excess of the maximum number permitted to be used each year under the contract. The maximum level has been set such that it is very unlikely that it will be exceeded. However, early use of the system for voice rather than data mobilising will involve higher traffic levels than planned when operating through Control Centres. No FRA will be required to make payments for additional traffic units above the inclusive limit used in 2009/10 which will be billed in 2010/11.

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Firelink Service Fees

3. Interim Traffic Unit Charging Arrangements

- 3.1 The Department will meet the cost of traffic units used above the contracted maximum during the period prior to cut-over to Control Centres if it can be demonstrated that best practice has been adopted in the use of the system and that the FRS has made every effort to optimise efficient use.
- 3.2 The in-service management team will continue to work closely with the FRS to assist in managing traffic usage and in consultation with CLG will provide best practice advice. A check list of actions which will help FRS manage their traffic unit allowances efficiently has been produced and promulgated to the FRS.

4. In-Service Management

- 4.1 The Department has consulted on arrangements for the in-service management of the Fire and Resilience Programme. The result of the consultation was set out in FRS Circular 74/2009. Detailed planning work is currently underway in consultation with partners. The cost of the in-service management function will be charged to FRAs along with the Firelink service fees. New Burden principles will apply when these costs become chargeable.

5. Optional items

- 5.1 Any optional items or services ordered or used by FRSs to supplement the core Firelink provision, including those supplied within the main roll-out programme and airtime over the inclusive limit will be recharged to the relevant FRA. This will include any associated service charges and will not be considered for New Burden payments.

6. Procedure for Payment of Firelink Service Charges

- 6.1 Within each Airwave region FRAs will be able to decide whether they all wish to:-
- receive individual invoices, based on the number of radios installed at roll-out, or
 - be re-charged via the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACCs).

7. Firelink New Burden

- 7.1 The net new burden has been calculated by comparing the difference between the Airwave service costs and the operational costs of legacy wide area radio systems based on cost returns submitted by FRAs which were subject to a separate verification check undertaken by PKF during 2007-2008.
- 7.2 Net New Burdens will be paid by a section 31 grant for the remainder of this CSR period. It is expected that this method of payment will continue until the costs of the fire and resilience programme stabilise when consideration may be given to an alternative approach. **END**

For further information please contact:

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Update on the Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career Campaign

1. Background

- 1.1 To inform Fire and Rescue Service partners of the termination of the Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career Awareness Raising Campaign in 2010/11.

2. Termination of 2nd phase

- 2.1 The decision has been taken not to continue with a second (final) phase of the Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career Awareness Raising Campaign planned for 2010/11.
- 2.2 If Fire and Rescue Services locally wish to continue with any elements from the campaign this can be achieved by using the range of materials which have already produced. This would, of course be a matter for Fire and Rescue Authorities to decide based on their individual needs.
- 2.3 Although the campaign itself has been terminated with immediate effect the national website which was created to support the campaign is still active and will be updated regularly (www.direct.gov.uk/extraordinary). This will mean that the materials which have already been designed containing the website URL will still be relevant and usable by the Service. The public will also still be able to find up to date information on the site.
- 2.4 Campaign contacts in Fire and Rescue Services have been sent samples of materials that have already been developed during the campaign along with details of where additional copies can be ordered.
- 2.5 The Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career Campaign materials can also be downloaded from the Communities and Local Government Extranet. Access to the Extranet has been provided to specific contacts within each of the Fire and Rescue Services within England. Those who do not currently have access but would like to be able to use the materials locally should, in the first instance, contact their service FirePRO representative.

For further information please contact:

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Firefighter Recruitment and Careers Information available on the Skills for Justice Website

1. Background

- 1.1 This bulletin notifies the Fire and Rescue Service that information about Firefighter careers and recruitment is now available on the Skills for Justice website. This includes access to the updated firefighter recruitment DVD "So you want to be a Firefighter?".
- 1.2 Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) Circular 77/2009, issued on 22 December 2009, stated that Firefighter Careers and Recruitment information previously on the Fire Gateway website was to be relocated to the Skills for Justice website. We confirm that this work has now been completed and you may wish to provide the following links to this material on your FRS website:
- Firefighter Careers and information pages at
<http://www.skillsforjustice.com/careers.asp?PageID=741>
- General National Firefighter Selection (NFS) process information (including practice test booklets for candidates) at <http://www.skillsforjustice-ipds.com/nfs.php>
- General Assessment Development Centre (ADC) information at <http://www.skillsforjustice-ipds.com/adc.php>
- 1.3 The Firefighter recruitment DVD issued in 2006 - "So you want to be a Firefighter?" - has been updated and is available to view on the Skills for Justice website at <http://www.skillsforjustice-ipds.com/nfsvideo.php>. The provision of a link to this on your website may be useful for potential firefighter applicants.

For further information please contact:

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