

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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New Director General and Director Team appointed at the Department for Communities and Local Government and changes to the Fire and Resilience Directorate.

Title: End of the requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide Annual Efficiency Statement data

This item is to signpost that the Secretary of State no longer expects Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide efficiency data in respect of Annual Efficiency Statement data returns.

Title: New Dimension 2010/11

Information on grant funding which was awarded on 22 December 2010 to Fire and Rescue Authorities in relation to the New Dimension project for 2010/11.

Title: Fire Service Emergency Cover toolkit software update – Major incident model

This item signposts a future Fire Service Emergency Cover software update on Major Incidents module.

Title: Fire Safety Guidance for Purpose Built Flats

This item is to signpost that work is now underway to develop fire safety guidance for purpose built flats, including high rise.

Director for Fire, Resilience and Emergencies

1. Background

1.1 This item signposts the changes in the Department for Communities and Local Government following a re-shaping of the Department's policy teams into two Groups (Localism; and Neighbourhoods) which took effect on 4 January 2011.

2. Fire, Resilience and Emergencies

2.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government has recently been reshaped into two policy groups, Localism and Neighbourhoods. Alongside this some Directors within the Department have also taken up new posts. Shona Dunn has moved to the post of Director of Planning in the Neighbourhoods Group headed by Director General Richard McCarthy and Neil O'Connor has now taken up the Director post for the expanded Fire, Resilience and Emergencies Directorate within the Localism Group, headed by Director General David Prout.

2.2 The expanded role for the Directorate now includes Emergencies, previously part of a different Directorate within the Department. The Emergencies role also encompasses the work previously undertaken by the Regional Resilience Teams in the Government Office Network. The expanded Directorate role is to work with the Fire and Rescue Service and wider fire sector to ensure they have the resources necessary to:

- Reduce deaths and injuries from fire
- Promote fire prevention activity, particularly amongst the most vulnerable sectors of the community; and
- Respond effectively to major national emergencies, such as natural hazards (e.g. severe weather including flooding) and malicious threats (e.g. terrorist incidents)
- Support local responders and other government departments to plan, prepare and respond to wide-scale emergencies.

2.3 Prior to taking up his current role Neil was Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods in the Department.

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End of the requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide Annual Efficiency Statement data

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the drive to reduce burdens on the sector, Fire and Rescue Authorities will have seen the letter from Neil O'Connor, Director, Fire, Resilience and Emergencies dated 4 February 2011 which was sent to all Fire and Rescue Authority Chairs and Chief Fire Officers. The letter advised that the Secretary of State no longer expects Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide efficiency data in respect of Annual Efficiency Statement data returns.
- 1.2 The Government's published Draft Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency document on 7 February 2011. This indicates that Fire and Rescue Authorities should make available details with regard to efficiency in respect of spending, performance and other information too the local press and public in accordance with the principles outlined.
- 1.3 As of Wednesday 2 February 2011, 23 Fire Authorities have published spend over £500 to assist local accountability. Those 23 are ahead of the game and have also published and provided links to their websites. In addition five have provided information via their county websites. The up to date list is available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/about/fireserviceexpenditure/>.

2. Reducing Burdens

- 2.1 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England have previously been required to submit a detailed Annual Efficiency Statement reporting their progress on achievement of efficiency gains. Two Annual Efficiency Statement have been submitted by each Fire and Rescue Authority each year consisting of:
- A forward look statement: the forecast for recurring efficiency gains to be achieved over the course of current financial year; and
 - A backward looking statement giving the actual outturn figures of recurring efficiency gains achieved over the course of the last financial year
- 2.2 As part of the Government's commitment to significantly reduce the data burdens on the sector, all Fire and Rescue Authorities have been advised via the letter from Neil O'Connor that, with immediate effect, the Secretary of State no longer expects to enforce rigorously Fire and Rescue Authorities' National Framework obligations to provide efficiency data in respect of Annual Efficiency Statement data returns.
- 2.3 Fire and Rescue Authorities will be expected to provide reassurance with regard to efficiency in respect of spending and performance through greater transparency and accountability. To support this process the Government has produced a the Draft Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency for consultation with the intention of enshrining the principles of transparency.
- 2.4 The Draft Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency is available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/codepracticeladataconsult>.

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New Dimension Grant 2010/11

1. Background

1.1 New Dimension grant 2010/11 is a continuation grant providing funding to the Fire and Rescue Service in maintaining the New Dimension capabilities.

2. Funding Detail

2.1 This item is to signpost that payment of all funding was made by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 22 December 2010 via Bankers Automated Clearing Systems. A copy of the Fire and Rescue Authorities (New Dimension) Grant Determination 2010/11 (No. 31/1852) and schedule of payment detailing amounts for individual Fire and Rescue Authorities, was sent to all Chief Fire Officers and Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities by email on 23 December 2010.

2.2 The Fire Service Circular 36/2008 outlined the funding for Fire and Rescue Authorities in support of New Dimension over three years to 2010/11. The grant amounts are in line with this with the exception of the enhanced command support capability which, in view of there only being an interim capability currently in place, is being paid on the basis of the individually estimated costs incurred by each enhanced command support host Fire and Rescue Service in 2010/11.

2.3 Under this grant, funding has also been awarded to Northumberland Fire and Rescue Authority for accommodation of their Incident Response Unit. Funding for the Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre, which is determined annually, is included in this grant.

2.4 A link to Fire and Rescue Circular 36/2008 is attached:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fsc362008>.

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Fire Service Emergency Cover toolkit software update - Major incident model

1. Background

- 1.1 This item signposts a future Fire Service Emergency Cover software update on the Major Incidents module. This is a new module, which reflects the role that Fire and Rescue Services have in planning for and dealing with major emergencies.

2. Software package

- 2.1 The Fire Service Emergency Cover toolkit is a software package which allows each Fire and Rescue Service to undertake a risk-based assessment of their area and to plan fire and rescue service provision based on the risk. The toolkit includes separate modules to model the risk for dwelling fires, other building fires, special services and major incidents.
- 2.2 Unlike the other modules, the original version of the major incidents module did not provide quantitative estimates of risk. A new module has therefore been developed to estimate the risk from different types of major incident and the proposed month that the Department is planning to release this module to Fire and Rescue Services' Fire Service Emergency Cover teams is March 2011. This will be followed by an email to all Fire Service Emergency Cover teams that include instructions for downloading.
- 2.3 The new module includes risk calculations for the following types of major incidents: major road vehicle incidents, major rail incidents, aircraft, ferry fires, hazardous materials, road tunnel fires, terrorist, flooding, severe weather, structural collapse, and public protest.
- 2.4 The new module will allow the estimated risk for major incidents to be included in the total estimated risk for all incident types in the Fire Service Emergency Cover toolkit.

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Fire Safety Guidance for Purpose-Built Flats

1. Background

1.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government has for some time been discussing with interested parties, including the Fire and Rescue Service through the Chief Fire Officers Association, whether additional guidance is needed to help landlords, fire risk assessors, enforcement bodies and others to meet their responsibilities in relation to fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats.

2. Fire Safety Guidance

2.1 This item is to signpost that work is underway to develop fire safety guidance for purpose-built flats, including high rise.

2.2 A project to prepare such guidance has recently been commissioned, led by Local Government Improvement & Development. The guidance, which aims to be completed by July 2011, will complement the existing guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing, published by local authority co-ordinators of regulatory services (now Local Government Regulation) in August 2008.

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