

**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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This item announces the commencement of general power of competence and broader powers for fire and rescue authorities in England.

## Fire and Rescue Control Rooms

On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012 the Fire and Rescue Minister Bob Neill MP made a Written Ministerial Statement to parliament announcing funding of £74 million to support a range of projects to improve the resilience and efficiency of fire and rescue control services across England. The Written Ministerial Statement can be found at: [http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/March\\_2012/01-03-12/1.DCLG-Fire-and-Rescue-Control-Services.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/March_2012/01-03-12/1.DCLG-Fire-and-Rescue-Control-Services.pdf)

The Department received 23 bids from 44 of the 46 Fire and Rescue Authorities. 20 of those bids have so far been successful and will receive a share of the £74 million. The press notice announcing the funding can be found at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/fire/2097875>

A document summarising the “national picture” presented by the bids together with a document summarising the individual bids can be found at:

National Picture: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/futurecontrolnationalpicture>

Individual bids: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/futurecontrolsummaries>

### Background

In December 2010, Fire and Rescue Minister Bob Neill MP announced the termination of the main IT contract and closure of the FiReControl project. The project began in 2004, and had aimed to replace England's 46 standalone fire and rescue control rooms with nine regional control centres. The contract was terminated because the contractor EADS Defence and Security (now trading as Cassidian) Ltd could not meet the requirements of the project within an acceptable timeframe.

In January 2011 following the termination the Department for Communities and Local Government consulted on the future of fire and rescue control services in England. The consultation document can be found at: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fireandrescuecontrolservices](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fireandrescuecontrolservices)

Fire and Rescue Minister Bob Neill MP considered the responses to the consultation and announced his intention to make funding available to Fire and Rescue Authorities to enable them to improve resilience, efficiency and technology in their control services the response document can be found at: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/controlservicessummaryresponses](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/controlservicessummaryresponses)

In July 2011 all Fire and Rescue Authorities were invited to bid for this funding by sending a summary of their plans to be reviewed by the Department by 4 November 2011.

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## **Fire Kills Campaign – National Advertising Activity**

### **1. Background**

The objective of Fire Kills national advertising in 2011-12 is to create a long-term link between the biannual clock change and smoke alarm testing so people do both together to ensure an increase in the number of working smoke alarms in homes. Fire and Rescue Service Bulletin 15 outlined the national advertising activity that took place over the clock change weekend in late October. The second burst of advertising is due to start two weeks ahead of the clock change on 25 March.

### **2. Evaluating the October Clock Change Campaign**

An independent evaluation of the national press, radio and online video advertising in October was based on pre- and post- advertising tracking surveys. The top line results were as follows:

- The percentage of people testing their smoke alarm once a month or more rose from 34% pre-campaign to 37% post-campaign. Amongst those who recalled the adverts, this post-campaign figure rose to 42%.
- Awareness of fire safety advertising rose from 39% pre-campaign to 45% post-campaign, with radio the most successful medium (5% increase).
- One in seven adults claimed to have tested their smoke alarms over the October clock change weekend.

A range of national partners beyond fire and rescue authorities also supported the delivery of the campaign, including the Child Accident Prevention Trust, Ei Electronics, Energizer, Kidde Safety Products, the National Association of Chimney Sweeps, Poundland, Safelincs and Sprue Safety Products.

### **3. Clock Change Campaign – March 2012**

The advertising campaign in March will be similar to the October burst. Radio advertising will begin two weeks prior to the clock change, with advertising appearing in national newspapers over the weekend itself. Following analysis of the October evaluation, the press advertising will be boosted by slots on Friday 23 March in addition to those on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 March. Additional titles specifically targeting older people will also feature the press adverts. A reworked version of the online video will be released and once again promoted through social media channels.

More details on the specific radio stations and newspaper titles have been sent to community safety and communications practitioners in each fire and rescue authority along with information on how they can get involved with promoting the key messages.

### **4. Local Delivery**

We recognise the value that support received from local fire and rescue authorities across the country adds in helping to boost the campaign's impact and effectiveness. In October, a number of fire and rescue authorities secured coverage in local newspapers and on local websites to reinforce the message at the local level. Others undertook specific promotional activity at the time of the advertising; for example, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service branded a promotional vehicle with the Fire Kills clock change imagery and toured it around their area spreading the message. We would certainly be interested to hear of local innovations that support the delivery of the national advertising. Community Safety Practitioners may wish to work closely with your FirePRO representative to consider how best to engage with the March national advertising campaign.

**For further information please contact:**

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## Fire and Rescue National Framework for England Consultation closes on 19 March 2012

### 1. Background

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires a Fire and Rescue National Framework to be in place which sets out the priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions.

The Fire and Rescue Service Immediate Bulletin 7/2011

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fsbimmediate72011> highlighted that on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December the Fire and Rescue Minister Bob Neill MP made a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament announcing the start of consultation on the draft Fire and Rescue National Framework for England that closes on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

### 2. Consultation

The public consultation provides fire and rescue authorities, members of the fire and rescue services, professional and representative bodies, local authorities and other local bodies, industry, charities, and the general public an opportunity to help shape the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

Consultees are invited to respond in particular to the following questions:

- Is the content of each chapter clear, specific and proportionate?
- Does the draft National Framework set clear and appropriate expectations of fire and rescue authorities? If not, how could it be improved?
- Are the respective roles of fire and rescue authorities and the Government set out clearly? If not, how could they be improved or made clearer?
- Do the requirements for fire and rescue authorities on scrutiny, access to comparable performance data and assurance go too far or not far enough?

The existing National Framework remains in force until the new one is brought into effect.

The consultation document can be found at the Department for Communities and Local Government website at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fireframeworkconsultation2012>

The public consultation ends on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012. Please send responses to [FireNationalFramework@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FireNationalFramework@communities.gsi.gov.uk) (with any attachments in Microsoft Word).

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## Localism Act 2011– commencement of general power of competence and fire provisions

### 1. Background

Fire and Rescue Service Monthly Bulletin Number 17 issued 5 December 2011 provided an update on the Localism Act and how it would impact on fire and rescue authorities.

### 2. Commencement

As a consequence of the High Court ruling banning the practice of prayers at the formal beginning of council meetings, the Secretary of State decided to fast track the commencement of the general power of competence on 17 February. This applies to councils including county councils that provide fire and rescue services.

Section 9 of the Localism Act provides stand alone fire and rescue authorities with a similar power to the general power of competence related to their single-purpose status. Section 10 amends the existing charging arrangements for fire and rescue authorities.

These powers are now in effect for all principal local authorities and fire and rescue authorities in England. The powers for Welsh fire and rescue authorities will be commenced separately by the Welsh Assembly Government in due course.

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