

Fire and Rescue Service Monthly Bulletin

Bulletin number: 4

01 November 2010

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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The closure of Firebuy following the review of arms length bodies across government.

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Title: Fire Kills Media Campaign – 2010/11

Update on the Fire Kills campaign national activity for 2010/11.

Title: Supporting compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety)Order 2005

Activities to help raise local awareness of the compliance requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, particularly through promoting the availability of the suite of guidance documents available on the Department for Communities and Local Government website.

Title: Equality and Diversity in the Fire and Rescue Service

Information on the changes being made to the arrangements regarding central equality and diversity initiatives.

Public Bodies Reform - Firebuy

1. Background

1.1 Ministers announced on 14 October 2010 that Firebuy is to close following the review of arms length bodies across government.

2.0 Expressions of interest

- 2.1 It is envisaged that Firebuy will cease operations by spring 2011. However, ministers will be looking for a managed handover to new arrangements thereafter, which maintain the benefits of collaborative procurement.
- 2.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government has written to all Fire and Rescue Authorities, and selected professional buying organisations, to invite expressions of interest to take over the procurement framework contracts Firebuy has developed. These are invited from Fire and Rescue Authorities proposing to act as a lead authority to deliver a sector wide service, or from two or more Fire and Rescue Authorities collaborating together.
- 2.3 Expressions of interest are required by midday on **16 November 2010**, and organisations short-listed will be invited for interview at Eland House on **29** or **30 November**.
- 2.4 A decision on the future management of the Integrated Clothing Project contract will be taken shortly.
- 2.5 The intention is to bring management of the New Dimension maintenance contract within the Department in the short-term. The Department will be working over the next few months to identify and consider options for future contract management arrangements.

Anna Wadsworth	Telephone	0303 444 2954
Fire and Rescue Service Finance & Performance	Email	anna.wadsworth@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Transparency in the Fire and Rescue Service

1. Background

1.1 Bob Neill MP, the Fire Minister, wrote to Fire and Rescue Authorities on the 2 August 2010 asking them to provide greater disclosure on spending as part of a series of transparency measures. The Secretary of State has set a deadline for returns on this information of January 2011 for the publication of spend, contracts and tenders over £500.

2. An update on the progress towards greater transparency

- 2.1 Fire and Rescue Authorities are reminded to join in the opening up of files and data by publishing all items of spend over £500 on their websites. A number of Fire and Rescue Authorities are already publishing their data and these are listed on the Department for Communities and Local Government website at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/about/fireserviceexpenditure/
- 2.2 The deadline set is January 2011 and we are keen for Fire and Rescue Authorities to take the initiative. When publishing your data, please forward the link to the Department at: robert.flynn@communities.gsi.gov.uk to ensure your authority is listed.
- 2.3 On 1 October 2010 guidance was published which you may find helpful. This is available at http://lgtransparency.readandcomment.com/

Robert Flynn	Telephone	0303 444 2959
Fire and Rescue Finance	Email	robert.flynn@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Fire Kills Campaign – 2010/11

1. Background

- 1.1 The 2010/11 Fire Kills campaign has been classified as essential marketing activity and has been given an exemption from the current cross-government freeze on marketing and advertising.
- 1.2 Campaign activity has resumed for 2010/11, but at a reduced budget level.

2. Funding for the remainder of 2010/11

- 2.1 The focus of the campaign for the remainder of 2010–11 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.
- 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. The Extranet allows artwork to be adapted for local use, e.g. inclusion of Fire and Rescue Service logos, phone numbers, etc. Content will be reviewed as appropriate to ensure it remains up-to-date and contains relevant materials needed to support local Fire and Rescue Service activity. We can no longer provide hard copies of Fire Kills leaflets and merchandise for free.
- 2.3 Comments and feedback on what additional information you would like to see, or improvements you think could be made, are welcome and can be submitted on the Fire and Rescue Service Forum section on the Extranet. This facility can also be used to exchange ideas with other Fire and Rescue Services and offers a platform to discuss and consider opportunities for working together, such as the printing of literature.

3. Partnership engagement

3.1 Wider engagement with voluntary and commercial partners at the national level will be crucial in utilising existing and new communication channels. While extending the reach of the campaign, this also enables more efficient targeting of relevant messages to vulnerable groups. These partners will be encouraged to take on some responsibility for the campaign and to more actively support, promote and manage the campaign, in line with the Big Society principles.

4. National advertising

- 4.1 Radio advertising will be used as the primary vehicle to drive the campaign's lead messages of smoke alarm maintenance to the widest possible audience. A range of other communications will augment this and all creative assets will be available on the Extranet for local use. The reduced media presence, in comparison with previous years, heightens the importance of the role of local Fire and Rescue Services in delivering the campaign.
- 4.2 More detailed information on the Fire Kills campaign plan for 2010-11 has been sent to FirePRO and Community Fire Safety contacts and can be found on the Department's Extranet.

James Webb	Telephone	0303 444 2932
Fire Safety Policy Team	Email	james.webb@communities.gsi.gov.uk

A Reminder to Support compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

1. Background

1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 took effect in October 2006. The Department for Communities and Local Government is committed to ensuring awareness of the legislation and the fire safety guidance available on the Departments website, particularly among the micro and smaller enterprise/business sectors.

2. Role of the Fire and Rescue Service

- 2.1 The Fire and Rescue Service has an important role to play in communicating the legislative requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to businesses, and to others with the responsibility for delivering safe public buildings.
- 2.2 Evidence suggests that the majority of regulated entities want to comply with regulations, and want the regulators to provide authoritative and accessible information on how to do this. HM Government's suite of premises-specific fire safety risk assessment guidance documents, as well as guidance on fire safety for certain types of housing and information for small accommodation providers was produced specifically to support compliance is available on the Department's website, including as free downloads.
- 2.3 Whilst it is for each Fire and Rescue Service to consider how best to engage and support compliance within their communities, the sign-posting and promotion of these guidance documents on your websites is an obvious step to facilitate better understanding of the measures that must be considered. These guidance documents are now also available through the Department's Fire Extranet and can be used to support the impact and effectiveness of any locally developed fire protection initiatives and interventions.

Rowan Chapman	Telephone	0303 444 2874
Fire and Safety Policy Team	Email	rowan.chapman@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Equality and Diversity in the Fire and Rescue Service

1. Background

1.1 This bulletin provides information on the changes being made to the arrangements regarding central equality and diversity initiatives.

2. Summary of the changes

- 2.1 The Fire Minister announced on 28 July 2010 that the Department for Communities and Local Government is no longer expecting to enforce certain aspects of the National Framework 2008–2011 including monitoring Fire and Rescue Authority compliance with the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy or enforcing the recruitment, progression or retention targets.
- 2.2 As a consequence of this announcement changes have been made to the arrangements regarding centrally developed and funded equality and diversity initiatives. The Department will no longer be progressing the following:
 - enforcing the recruitment, progression or retention targets set out in the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Report 2009
 - publishing annual equality and diversity reports
 - administering the National Equality and Diversity Awards
 - chairing and facilitating the National Equality and Diversity Delivery Partnership
 - continuing the national awareness campaign *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career* (see Fire and Rescue Service Monthly Bulletin 2 for details in respect of this campaign).
- 2.3 In making his announcement the minister has made clear that the Government believe equality and diversity to be important issues which should be mainstreamed within the work of the fire service. It will be for the sector to consider how best to effectively continue to progress equality and diversity issues within the fire service.

Gill McManus	Telephone	0303 444 2944
Equality & Retained Duty System Team	Email	gill.mcmanus@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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Department for Communities and Local Government Eland House Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU

Telephone: 0303 444 0000

Website: www.communities.gov.uk

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Department for Communities and Local Government Publications

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