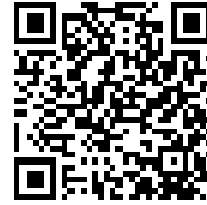


**To: All Members of the Performance & Scrutiny
Committee
(and any other Members who may wish to attend)**



**J. Henshaw
LLB (Hons)
Clerk to the Authority**

The Protocol and Procedure for visitors attending meetings of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority can be found by clicking [here](#) or on the Authority's website:

<http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk> - About Us > Fire Authority.

Tel: 0151 296 4000
Extn: 4113 Kelly Kellaway

Your ref:

Our ref HP/NP

Date: 4 January 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE** to be held at **1.00 pm** on **TUESDAY, 12TH JANUARY, 2016** in the Liverpool Suite at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle.

Yours faithfully,

Clerk to the Authority

Encl.

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PERFORMANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2016

AGENDA

Members

Councillors Robbie Ayres (Chair), Ray Halpin,
Jimmy Mahon, Barbara Murray, Jean Stapleton,
Sharon Sullivan and Lesley Rennie;
and Anthony Boyle (Independent Person)

1. Preliminary matters

Members are requested to consider the identification of:

- a) declarations of interest by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the Agenda
- b) any additional items of business which the Chair has determined should be considered as matters of urgency; and
- c) items of business which may require the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 10)

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5th November 2015, are submitted for approval as a correct record and for signature by the Chair.

3. Community Fire Protection Update (Pages 11 - 56)

To consider Report CFO/006/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning performance of the Community Fire Protection function over 2015.

A presentation will be provided in support of this report.

**4. Freedom of Information requests and organisational capacity 2015
(Pages 57 - 62)**

To consider Report CFO/001/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer,

concerning a review of the impact of processing Freedom of Information requests.

5. Review of CLG FRS Attendance Times 2014/15 (Pages 63 - 72)

To consider Report CFO/002/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning analysis of CLG Fire & Rescue Attendance Times 2014/15. The data within the report has been sourced from CLG and compares MF&RS attendance times for Dwelling Fires and Primary Fires against fellow Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Services.

6. Standing Item: Forward Work Plan (Pages 73 - 80)

To consider the updated Forward Work Plan and evaluate the questions for scrutiny contained within, considering;

- a) Any feedback from Members and Lead Members on the scrutiny work they are currently involved in, and
- b) Any scrutiny questions that Members feel should be dealt with under a different priority, and
- c) Any questions that Members feel should be added to the forward work plan and the priority of that same question.

If any Members have queries, comments or require additional information relating to any item on the agenda please contact Committee Services and we will endeavour to provide the information you require for the meeting. Of course this does not affect the right of any Member to raise questions in the meeting itself but it may assist Members in their consideration of an item if additional information is available.

Refreshments

Any Members attending on Authority business straight from work or for long periods of time, and require a sandwich, please contact Democratic Services, prior to your arrival, for arrangements to be made.

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PERFORMANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 NOVEMBER 2015

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Robbie Ayres (Chair) , Cllrs Ray Halpin, Barbara Murray, Sharon Sullivan, Lesley Rennie, Anthony Boyle and Denise Roberts

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from:
Jimmy Mahon and Jean Stapleton

1. Preliminary matters

Members considered the identification of declarations of interest, any urgent additional items, and any business that may require the exclusion of the press and public.

Resolved that:

- a) The following declarations of interest were made by individual Members in relation to items of business on the Agenda:
 - Cllr Lesley Rennie declared a personal interest in agenda item 3 – “Service Delivery Plan Quarter 2 2015/16” and agenda item 7 – “Home Safety Strategy 2015-18”, due to the reports referring to the Fire Support Network, to which she is an appointed trustee.
- b) no additional items of business to be considered as matters of urgency were determined by the Chair; and
- c) no items of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 3rd September 2015, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN QUARTER 2 2015/16

(CFO/086/15)

Members considered Report CFO/086/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning scrutiny of performance against the objectives and the performance targets/ outcomes, as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2015/16 for the period April 2015 to September 2015.

A presentation was delivered by Jackie Sutton – IRMP Officer, providing an overview of progress against Service Delivery Plan and Functional Plan action points; and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), against the outcome targets.

Members were informed that the number of road traffic collisions attended and the number of injuries as a result of road traffic collisions, has reduced from quarter 1. They were informed that following discussion with the Lead Member for Strategy & Performance, research was undertaken to identify if there has been a rise in the number of requests from the Police for attendance at road traffic collisions, over a five year period. However, no such increase was found.

The Committee were informed that the target for the number of road traffic collisions involving fire and rescue service vehicles has not been met; however there is a number of measures in place to address this issue.

With regards to performance concerning the number of shifts lost due to sickness, Members were informed that following transfer to a new HR System, there is no historical data available at present to enable comparison with previous years.

Members were informed that once it is possible to do so, comparative figures against previous years will be presented to Members.

Discussion took place concerning sickness absence levels; with Members observing that at present, sickness levels among Grey Book staff is lower than among Green and Red Book staff, which is contrary to previous statistics.

It was acknowledged that to date, a number of Green Book staff have been placed at risk of redundancy and that this uncertainty around job role may have had a detrimental effect on their health and wellbeing.

Members requested that their appreciation to Grey Book employees for this performance, be recorded.

Further discussion took place around work with Registered Social Landlords and the Registered Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

Members Resolved that:

Performance against the objectives and the performance targets/ outcomes as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2015/16 for the period April 2015 to September 2015, be noted.

4. Short Term Engagement Commitments Delivery Plan 2015-16 update
(CFO/079/15)

Members considered Report CFO/079/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning an update on the implementation of the Think People Strategy and the associated short and long term engagement commitments.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which detailed action taken following the outcome of the 2014 staff survey to help address some of the issues identified, what positive engagement means for MFRA staff, what MFRA's specific engagement commitments are; and the introduction of the concept of "thinking people" as part of any decision making process.

Members were informed that the last staff survey was undertaken during a period of significant change and uncertainty for staff, which was a brave decision for the Authority to take. Despite change and uncertainty continuing, there has been a commitment made to undertake a staff survey every two years; and it is vitally important that this is followed through.

Some of the measures taken to improve the visibility of the Authority, Strategic Management Group and Senior Officers were highlighted to Members; along with the need to ensure all staff feel valued and recognised for their contribution.

Discussion took place around some possible ways of engaging with staff further.

Cllr Murray – Lead Member for Strategy & Performance, thanked Members for their support and attendance at recent sessions around effective engagement, arranged in preparation for a Staff Engagement Day. Cllr Murray requested that Members be provided with a list of the questions for the engagement day and the suggestions for further engagement suggested by Members during the session.

Members Resolved that:

- a) Progress made against the commitments, be noted.
- b) The revised Appendix A attached to the report, be agreed.

5. Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2013-16 Year 3 Actions Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 update
(CFO/080/15)

Members considered Report CFO/080/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning an update on the agreed Equality and Diversity actions for Year 3 (2015/16), together with an update on progress against the actions for quarter 1 and 2; and an update on progress against the Equality Objectives for 2015/16 as at quarter 2.

The Committee were reminded of the Authority's commitment to renewing its achievement of the LGA Equality Excellence Framework.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted some of the notable achievements against year 3 actions, such as work undertaken in relation to engaging with diverse businesses to ensure business safety compliance. Significant work has been undertaken to provide education to and develop a tool kit to support Asian businesses, in an effort to address the disproportionality of action taken against this particular group.

Members were informed that equality and diversity is embedded across the whole organisation, with the Equality and Diversity Action Plan containing actions across all Directorates.

They were also reminded that the Authority has received an award for the work it has undertaken in relation to positive action in recruitment, in an attempt to ensure that those recruited are representative of the communities served by MFRA.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The content of the Equality and Diversity Progress report and Equality Objectives, be noted.
- b) Their thanks be placed on record to staff, for their excellent work to date.

6. Health and Safety Annual Report 2014-15

(CFO/089/15)

Members considered Report CFO/089/15 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning a review of the Annual Health, Safety and Welfare Report; and scrutiny of the performance of the Authority with regards to Health, Safety and Welfare Outcomes for 2014/15.

Members were provided with an overview of the report detailing work undertaken in relation to health, safety and welfare during 2014/15, performance with regards to injuries during 2014/15 and performance against the previous year's objectives.

Members were informed that during 2014/15, there were 6 more injuries reported than in the previous year, with the most prevalent cause being manual handling. The target to increase the number of near misses reported by 20% was not achieved, however there is an objective for 2015/16 to develop a more user friendly reporting tool for the recording of near misses.

The Committee were informed that work is still underway to develop a risk information gathering protocol for premises where a full SSRI visit is not undertaken. This will enable a simple audit to be undertaken on premises where

there is deemed to be an increased risk, to identify those risks and enable more effective decision making on the ground.

The overview also highlighted an improvement during 2014/15 on the previous year, in terms of the number of days lost as a result of an accident/ injury.

Members Resolved that:

- a) Performance in relation to the report concerning Health, Safety and Welfare, be noted.
- b) The information contained within the report concerning Health, Safety and Welfare, be noted.
- c) The report be referred to the next meeting of the full Authority for consideration.

7. Home Safety Strategy 2015 – 2018

(CFO/090/15)

Members considered Report CFO/090/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the proposed refresh of the Home Safety Strategy for 2015-2018, with particular regard to the targeted approach and referral pathway.

The Committee were provided with an overview of the report, which detailed the six key priorities contained within the proposed new strategy, what will be done to deliver those priorities; and what are the desired outcomes.

Members were informed that as resources are reducing, it is important to ensure that each contact with the public counts. Therefore, MFRA is keen to encourage referrals from partners, by helping them to understand and identify when individuals may be vulnerable in terms of fire safety.

Discussion took place around the work undertaken by the Fire Support Network (FSN); and it was suggested that the Chief Executive of FSN be invited to present to Members around their work and progress.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The information contained within the report, concerning the proposed revised approach to home safety, be noted.
- b) The Home Safety Strategy 2015-2018, be submitted to the full Authority for approval and implementation.
- c) The Chief Executive of the Fire Support Network, be invited to attend a future Learning Lunch, to present to Members on the work and progress of FSN.

8. **Standing Item: Forward Work Plan**

Members considered the Forward Work Plan for the Committee for 2015/15; and confirmed that they were happy with the items contained within it.

Close

Date of next meeting Tuesday, 12 January 2016

Signed: _____

Date: _____

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PERFORMANCE REPORT TO THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2016

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION UPDATE

REPORT NUMBER: CFO/006/16

APPENDICES: APPENDIX A: ENGAGING WITH DIVERSE
BUSINESS SEMINAR REPORT

REPORTING OFFICER: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: JAMES BERRY – AREA MANAGER COMMUNITY
RISK MANAGEMENT

OFFICERS CONSULTED: GM GUY KEEN, SM ANDY GROOM, SM CHRIS HEAD,
SM STEVE TAYLOR.

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members consider the performance of the Community Fire Protection function over 2015.

Introduction and Background

2. This aim of this report is to update members on the key areas of performance achieved within the Protection function during 2014/15 and includes details of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) returns and specific information on the Protection functional plan for 2015/16.

3. This report accompanies a short Learning Lunch presentation for Members, prior to the Performance & Scrutiny Committee on 12th January 2016.
4. The purpose of the Community Fire Protection (Protection) function is to fulfil the statutory duties of the Authority in respect of promoting Fire Safety (s6 Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004), enforcing Fire Safety Legislation and in doing so support the Service's mission for Safer, Stronger Communities - Safe, Effective Firefighters. This is achieved by refining and delivering the Protection Risk Based Strategy
5. The Fire Safety Legislation includes: The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO); Fire Precautions (Sub-surface Railway Station) (England) Regulations 2009; Fireworks Act 2003; Fireworks Regulations 2004; Explosives Regulations 2014; Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmosphere Regulations 2002; Petroleum Act 1928; Petroleum Regulations 1929; Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 and The Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990.
6. The legislative onus upon the Authority of the above falls in three distinct categories:
 - a. Legislation that the Authority has a responsibility to regulate;
 - b. Legislation that the Authority has a responsibility to consult upon; and
 - c. Legislation that governs the conduct of regulators (the Regulators Code).
7. The Protection Risk Based strategy directs the functions resources to target risk priority in order to influence standards of fire safety in the built environment. The targeting methodology is detailed in Service Instruction 0805 and ensures that audits and inspections are prioritised according to risk in a proportionate and transparent manner as required by the Regulators code.

Functional Plan 2015

8. Over 2014/15 the Function has made good progress on the succession plan through investment and development in the senior Protection managers and fire engineering capability in the central team. Officers have worked closely with professional colleagues through Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) forums at national and regional level contributing to and benefitting from a range of professional tools such as the national CFOA performance benchmarking, the qualifications and curriculum framework and the Fires in the Built Environment training package for operational crews.
9. The current functional plan for Protection, 2015-16, identified a number of local and national influences.
10. Local influencers:
 - a. Financial challenges due to significant cuts in Service and Departmental budgets;
 - b. Succession gaps will begin to emerge from a combination of factors including retirement, retention, and maintenance and development of technical competence.

- c. An outdated management information system is starting to hinder the efficient and effective delivery of the Community Fire Protection function.
- 11. National influences:
 - a. New legislation and statutory obligations enacted in 2014 that will have the biggest impact upon how Fire and Rescue Authorities deliver the function of Protection since the implementation of the Fire Precautions Act in 1972.
- 12. In recognition of these challenges the 2015/16 priorities are to:
 - a. Commence implementation of 2020 plans to optimise the Protection structure to deliver the strategic priorities for Protection in the Service.
 - b. Commence implementation of a new management information system (MIS) to support efficient and effective performance delivery against the Protection risk based strategy.
 - c. Implement a revised Risk Based Inspection programme with a greater focus on targeting Protection performance on reducing high risk.
- 13. These priorities will enable the Function to meet these challenges by ensuring that our people, our procedures and our systems are fit for purpose and actively support optimum performance against the risk based strategy whilst supporting business compliance in line with government expectations in the current economic climate.
- 14. The Function has made the following progress in respect of the above deliverables:

2020 Implementation

- 15. The 2020 plan is a 5 year plan which includes a new structure aligned to the CFOA competence framework and optimises technical and operational skill sets to enhance the value and productivity of Protection personnel despite significant budget challenges.
- 16. The plan acknowledges and overcomes the Function's succession challenges, provides future capacity and resilience, creates significant opportunities for green book personnel, refocuses operational protection staff where they can best utilise their Protection skillsets to optimise operational safety and effectiveness and yet still releases 16% savings against the 2014/15 budget.
- 17. 2020 Implementation plans have been subject to all stages of scrutiny and are seen as a model of best practice for 2020 reviews. The plan has made excellent progress and is on track to complete all of the key deliverables set for this financial year, including:
 - a. Recruit and develop up to 5 competent Fire Safety Advisers in line with the 2020 plan. 3 have been recruited in 2015 and are making excellent progress with further recruitment planned for spring 2016;
 - b. Implement the new Ops-Protection Watch Manager role. Recruitment is ongoing, selection will take part in January 2016 and positions are planned to be filled in February;

- c. Recruit and develop 2 competent green book Protection Middle-Managers. Selection will take place in January 2016 and positions are planned to be filled in February;
- d. Commence accreditation of Protection Officers to the CFOA national qualifications & competence framework.

Protection Management Information System

18. Implementation of a new MIS has slipped significantly. After several years of working on this project it became clear that none of the available solutions either from commercial suppliers or partnerships with other Services were fit for the needs of the Service.
- a. It has been established that Service-wide integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems is a strategic priority. Therefore all ICT systems projects have been realigned under the Services functional restructure (August 2015) as part of a wider strategic review and now sits under Area Manager John McNeill. The Protection MIS project has been identified as a top priority.
 - b. The Protection MIS is to be developed internally with Protection staff working closely with the ICT development team to produce a bespoke 'fit for purpose' system that is based on modern technology and can support mobile working.
 - c. The development of the MIS will use current methodologies for IT systems development; using storyboards (end user system functionality requirements) and sprints (intensive system development in distinct stages with tangible product development at the end of each sprint).
 - d. This new MIS when fully developed will be user friendly for Inspecting Officers and Operational crews alike. It will contain active monitoring information, in order that premises at greater risk of fire can be targeted more effectively and will also have performance management tools to enable local and annual performance reporting to DCLG. Crucially the new MIS will facilitate safety critical premises information to be disseminated appropriately across the organisation.

Protection Risk Based Strategy

19. The Risk Based Strategy has been revised and is now more focused on higher risk. Outcomes to date include:
- a. A successful pilot using Operational Crews to complete Fire Safety Assessments appropriate to their level of competence;
 - b. Agreed adoption of the new CFOA short audit form. Officers are currently being trained on the form and we are on-track to go-live as part of a regional collaboration in April 2016;
 - c. With the introduction of the new 2020 structure the function has commenced a rolling review that ensures Officers with higher levels of expertise are more focused on premises with higher risk levels.

- d. Early indications of success of this deliverable are evidenced by the rise in the nature of challenges regarding failures of fire safety in the built environment, as shown in the following case studies:

Case Study 1: Sekander Prosecution

20. The owner of a café in South Liverpool (Café Sekander, 165 Allerton Rd) was summonsed to Liverpool Magistrates Court for committing several RRFSO offenses, including a number of breaches of a Prohibition Notice.
21. Due to the aggravating features associated with this case (mainly being the level of deceit by the owner) the judge ordered the case be heard in Liverpool Crown Court.
22. Whilst at the Crown Court, the owner pleaded guilty to several offences and was sentenced to 8 months imprisonment, this is MFRA's first custodial case
23. Although we have prosecuted a number of offenders for offences committed under the RRFSO it has been well publicised which will assist in sending a clear message that serious breaches to fire safety legislation and particularly persons who flout Prohibition Notices, will not be tolerated in Merseyside.

Case Study 2: Fire Separation in Major Construction projects

24. A site visit to a local school on 9th January 2015 following a fire on 7th January 2015 (incident no 32304) identified serious fire separation concerns due to smoke spread from the ground floor kitchen to the 1st floor protected staircase.
25. The school was built as part of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) initiative. The investigation led to 11 additional PFI sites where the same issues were detected. As the issues potentially had national implications Protection Officers utilised the CFOA Community of Practice to share the risk information. It was subsequently established that the same issue had been found in other major new-build / refurbishment projects across England with estimated repair bills totalling in excess of £100m.
26. Officers escalated the issue to the CFOA Fire Engineering Technical Standards Group due to the national potential in order that the risk information can be effectively shared with other Fire and Rescue Services and that national guidance is produced to ensure that these issues are dealt with consistently and effectively.

Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) Performance & Review

27. The current protocol for response to Automatic Fire Signals (AFAs) introduced in November 2012 is now in its third year. Having made excellent progress in years 1 and 2, through establishing 2 stages of the protocol, year 3 then saw some moderate increases with a 6.2% increase in UwFS compared to the previous year.
28. In order to analyse UwFS information in greater detail all data relating to AFA incidents that the Service attends is now gathered directly from the Incident Recording System (IRS). This has allowed Protection Department to identify

more closely both the types and individual premises that are generating high levels of AFA incidents.

29. A number of options were considered to address the increases seen in UwFS over the 2014 to 2015 period.
 - a. Extending the current protocol of not responding to additional types of sleeping accommodation between the day time hours 07:30 – 19:30
 - b. Charging premises for attendance at UwFS under the Fire and Rescue services Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011
 - c. Targeting premises with high levels of UwFS and working with them to address this.
30. Option c was considered to be the most appropriate course of action and was introduced in September 2015. This has resulted in the top 20 premises with the highest levels of AFA activations being contacted by Protection Departments and working with Responsible Persons to reduce such activations.
31. Results to date have been encouraging.
 - a. September 2015; 13.2 % Reduction
 - b. October 2015; 7.9% Reduction
 - c. November 2015; 17.3% Reduction.
32. Protection Department will continue to implement this approach and work with premises to improve UwFS performance where possible.
33. The Function is also gathering information on the charging models applied elsewhere as was suggested by the Performance and Scrutiny Committee. A report detailing the findings will follow this report.

Better Regulation

34. Better Regulation continues to be a Government priority with increasing legislation under the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 and the refreshed and strengthened Regulators Code requiring a stronger commitment from regulators to support Business compliance whilst preventing any unnecessary burden.
35. The Protection department continues to take a proactive approach to the Better Regulation agenda and has made good progress:
 - Primary Authority Scheme (PAS)
 - a. Following on from the success of our involvement in the statutory pilot, Primary Authority partnerships with A.S.Watson (Superdrug) and Ladbrokes were ratified in April 2015 to full formal status by the Secretary of State.
 - b. These schemes have resulted in over £9000 income being generated to date. This income is restricted to cost recovery only and consequently is reinvested back into development of protection

capacity for the future where it provides some mitigation against succession and potential redundancy risk.

- c. As per previous reports to the Authority the Protection department continues to take a cautious approach to PAS partnerships to ensure that our capacity to deliver against our risk based inspection programme is not compromised.
- d. From time to time opportunities are likely to arise where the department is approached by other businesses seeking PAS partnerships. Where such arises Protection officers will consider the business case and where it is deemed to be in the interests of the Service the department will report back to the Authority with recommendations to extend the number of partnerships.

Engaging with Diverse Business

- e. Last year Protection managers became concerned with the number of ethnic minority businesses that were coming to our attention in terms of enforcement and prosecution activity. Working in collaboration with the Consultation and Diversity Manager and the CFOA NW Protection Task Group (PTG) Officers identified that this was a national issue that warranted further investigation.
- f. As a direct consequence Merseyside took the lead in hosting a national seminar in partnership with CFOA, the Institute of Fire Engineers and the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA).
- g. The aim of the seminar was to gain a better understanding of the challenges of supporting compliance in diverse businesses and to share learning from both good practice and also initiatives that had failed to deliver.
- h. The seminar attracted a number of prominent speakers; it was well attended and received excellent feedback from delegates. A report has been written by Wendy Kenyon and Guy Keen that captures the contents of the day and outlines an action plan aimed to overcome the existing challenges.
- i. The report (see appendix A) has been forwarded to the CFOA Business Safety Group for consideration of CFOA becoming the lead body for delivering against the actions.
- j. As a consequence of his involvement in the seminar, GM Guy Keen was a runner up in the AFSA awards category for champion of equality and diversity, receiving a certificate of merit for supporting inclusion, equality and diversity.

Enforcements & Prosecutions.

- 36. The Protection department enforces legislation for which the Authority has a statutory responsibility paying due regard with The Regulators Code 2014.
- 37. In maintaining a proportionate approach to those that we regulate, Officers respond to identified non-compliance of legislation through clear explanation of

what the non-compliant item or activity is, give advice and actions required to achieve compliance, and the reasons for these. Where appropriate Officers will provide an opportunity for dialogue in relation to the advice, requirements or decisions, with a view to ensuring that the Authority act in a way that is proportionate and consistent.

38. This does not apply where Officers can demonstrate that immediate enforcement action is required to prevent or respond to a serious breach or where providing such an opportunity would be likely to defeat the purpose of the proposed enforcement action.
39. Immediate enforcement action has been required on a number of occasions during 2015 and where necessary Officers have served Prohibition and Enforcement Notices on premises that present a serious risk to the safety of relevant persons.
40. In the last year the Protection department has prepared 6 cases for prosecution by the Authority, with a further 2 cases currently being worked on. These range from relatively simple and straightforward but serious breaches in Legislation such as sleeping in business premises where a Prohibition Notice is in place to more complex cases. Over the course of 2015 Protection Officers served 8 Enforcement Notices, 27 Prohibition Notices and 3 Alterations notices.

Fires in the Built Environment Training (FiBE)

41. FiBE is Fire Protection training concentrating on 4 specific areas; building construction, fire safety law and regulations, means of escape from buildings, and fire safety systems in buildings. This training was identified as a requirement for crews in a CFOA skills gap report in 2012, and it was left to individual fire and rescue services to deliver their own training.
42. The first module relating to building construction has now been successfully delivered over a 4 month period to all operational crews, with a few outstanding mop-up sessions ongoing. The remaining modules will be delivered in 2016, possibly as part of a 2 day course at the Training and Development Academy.
43. In support of the FiBE objectives, a complete program of Protection training, consisting of 24 hours input, was also delivered by Protection officers to the recent recruit course, and that training package will form the basis for the next phase of operational protection training.

Planning and Building Regulations

44. The handling of all building regulations submissions and consultations was centralised into Headquarters to be processed by a specialist team of Protection Officers in 2014, and has now been in place for over 12 months.
45. During 2015, the team have dealt with over 1500 submissions for new build and refurbished buildings across the county.
46. The amount of electronic submissions being received, as opposed to the more traditional written plans, has shown a marked increase during this time, and it is envisaged that this will increase even more over the next 12 months as the government encourages more initiatives and schemes to support the move towards a 'paperless' society. Consequently, Protection Officers are putting

plans in place to identify the departments long term needs in order to deliver this objective.

47. 2015 has seen an increase in the amount of submissions received that rely on a 'fire engineered' approach to complying with the requirements of building regulations. Most of these submissions rely on fire modelling to support their proposal, therefore investigations are planned for early in 2016 into the provision of appropriate software and training to support and enhance the capacity of the team to evaluate these submissions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

48. There are no direct equality and diversity implications in relation to this report.

Staff Implications

49. There are no new staff implications contained within this report.

Legal Implications

50. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority has a duty to exercise its statutory functions which includes the provision of fire safety and to comply with all other relevant legislation in regard to acting as an enforcing Authority

Financial Implications & Value for Money

51. There are no new financial implications contained within this report.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

52. There are no new risk management, health and safety or environmental implications contained within this report.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

53. The work undertaken by Community Fire Protection has had a significant impact upon reducing fire safety risks within the built environment. It achieves this through inspections and audits, action plans, enforcement, prohibitions and prosecutions to ensure effective compliance with fire safety legislation. This has a direct impact upon improving the safety of communities in Merseyside by reducing the risk of

fires in the built environment. The planning and building team have a direct input on influencing the provision of safety features and facilities for firefighters in new build and refurbishments across the county. The 2020 plan has also refocused the role of Operational officers to ensure that technical fire safety knowledge, skills and experience is better utilised to support safe and effective firefighting operations.

Recommendation

54. That Members;

- a) Consider performance in relation to this report concerning the Community Fire Protection department, and

- b) Scrutinise the information contained within this report concerning the Community Fire Protection department

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AFA	Automatic Fire Signals
AFSA	Asian Fire Service Association
CFOA	Chief Fire Officers Association
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
FiBE	Fires in the Built Environment
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IRS	Incident Recording System
Authority	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MIS	Management Information System
PAS	Primary Authority Scheme
PTG	Protection Task Group
RRFSO	Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
UwFS	Unwanted Fire Signals

Engaging with Diverse Businesses for Business Safety Compliance Seminar Report



Prepared by Guy Keen and Wendy Kenyon
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service. October 2015

HOSTED BY:



CFOA
Chief Fire Officers
Association



Contents

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This report provides an insight into the unique seminar 'Engaging with Diverse Business for Fire Safety Compliance', hosted at Aintree Race Course, Merseyside on 17 September 20

The seminar was hosted by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) in collaboration between the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), the Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) and the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA). The aim was to draw together professionals in fire protection and diversity to take on the challenge of engaging with our diverse business communities. This was in order to support and educate all sectors of the business community, irrespective of their ethnicity, to prosper and grow and have confidence that they will be dealt with fairly by those who regulate them.

The delivery partners helped significantly to make the event happen but a particular mention must go to AFSA who have been instrumental in highlighting some excellent initiatives and acquiring many of our key speakers for this seminar.

The seminar presented an opportunity for delegates to listen to some eminent speakers who shared their valuable insights on engaging with diverse businesses, and just as importantly to learn and share from each other. The delegates were drawn from a wide variety of individuals with a strong commitment to overcoming the diversity challenges in business fire safety. It is clear from the Seminar feedback forms that they took full advantage of the day to engage and to build networks that will help them to overcome difficult challenges in their own professional work.

This report summarises the key seminar outcomes, discussion points and information disseminated during the presentations and workshops. This is also an important document to help set the scene going forward in terms of outlining the commitments made during the event to enable all partners to work together in taking this agenda forward.

HOSTED BY:



2. Why and how the Seminar developed

The journey that led to this seminar started with concerns within our Protection department at Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MF&RS) due to the number of ethnic minority businesses that were coming to our attention in terms of enforcement and prosecution activity. The North West CFOA Protection Task Group also knew that this experience was reflected across the region.

Having identified a potential equality issue MF&RS Protection officers worked with the Service's Diversity and Consultation manager to consider whether we were discriminating, inadvertently or otherwise. Initial findings were reassuring as they demonstrated that the number of diverse businesses being targeted for audits was proportional given that we had reached a point in our risk-based programme where we were targeting the category of restaurants and shops.⁽¹⁾ This category included a high number of businesses that were owned and run by people from an ethnic background and therefore the number of enforcement actions against diverse businesses was at least proportional to the overall number of audits in those businesses.

This finding demonstrated that we were not directly discriminating, however it did cause us to consider whether we were meeting the needs of supporting diverse businesses to comply with fire safety legislation. Why were so many of these businesses falling foul of our enforcement and prosecutions activity, was it language, was it culture, were there barriers to engagement between us and the business community? This was something we needed to understand better.

Part of our Equality Action Plan required us to conduct Equality Impact Assessments in our Protection work. This established a number of priorities for change. The priorities made a lot of sense at the time and as a Service we were about to commence implementation when we met with officers from Cheshire to share learning from their business support team. In this meeting we realised that our planned initiatives were very similar to initiatives that Cheshire had already tried which had not delivered the desired outcomes. In sharing the learning from Cheshire we started to recognise a sector we needed greater sharing of both best practice and our lessons learned in respect of engaging with diverse business communities for fire safety compliance - consequently the idea of this seminar emerged.

The seminar had four key objectives:

- To obtain a better understanding of the challenge and put the issues into context;
- To share learning on what has worked well and what has not;
- To obtain a better understanding of the Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Business Experience; and
- To develop and share best practice going forward.

(1) The MF&RS risk-based programme follows the national CFOA Guidance Note 4, which provides a prioritisation methodology based on assumed fire safety risks in building types.

3. The Seminar Experience - What happened on the day?

Merseyside's Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) Phil Garrigan, introduced the Seminar and outlined the commitments MFRA have made in progressing engagement with diverse communities. Since the Communities and Local Government Committee's 2006 report of the Fire and Rescue Service expressed concerns at the low levels of diversity across the FRS workforce nationally.

He explained that through this commitment MFRA had started to become concerned about the number of ethnically diverse businesses attracting significant levels of enforcement activity. In Merseyside alone, three out of four of the last prosecutions have been against ethnic minority business owners, one of which was the first custodial sentence to date, an Asian business man.

This experience is not unique to Merseyside and is reflected up and down the country.

The DCFO said that he is convinced that the Fire and Rescue Service is not directly discriminating against diverse businesses, however, he believed that fire and Rescue Services may not be doing everything they can to ensure that diverse businesses are not at a disadvantage.

He said: "One fact is clear; the level of fire safety prosecutions against responsible persons from an ethnic minority background is proportionally higher than that experienced within across our wider business communities."

DCFO Garrigan asked how we can assure ourselves that we are not discriminating against them and more importantly what it is we can do better to ensure that we fully support diversity in business fire safety compliance.

His introduction also set out the Fire and Rescue Authorities' remit as enforcing authorities for fire safety legislation, the duties under the Equality Act and more recently the responsibilities under the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 and the refreshed Regulators Code that came into force on April 6th last year. Combining these responsibilities with the practicality of engaging with diverse communities and the ever increasing financial pressures suffered by Authorities and businesses alike and it is not difficult to understand why we have some significant challenges. The only way Fire and Rescue Services can step up to these challenges is if they all come together, collaborate to learn and share from each other to better understand the nature of the problem and better equip Fire and Rescue Service staff to engage with diverse business communities.

It was acknowledged that there are some excellent examples from around the UK where this has happened locally, however it is not reflected across the whole country and even where those examples do exist, there is an acknowledgement of the need to continue to improve.

The DCFO said: "Going forward it is important that we learn the lessons from the past, not only from other sectors but also from ourselves: what is it we have done that's worked or not worked; what mistakes have we made; what the impact was and how can we demonstrate that we have learned from this experience."

4. Summary of Presentations delivered on the day

All delegates who attended the Seminar received a brochure which provided an overview of the planned activities, timetable and more detailed information about the presenters and the workshops.

The brochure, along with the presentation slides that were used by speakers, are available on the MF&RS website at www.merseyfire.gov.uk.

The following section provides a brief narrative capturing the key points made by each presenter.

Presentation 1 – Introduction to Engaging with Diverse Businesses

Jaguar Singh - National Advisor

Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA)



Jagtar Singh hosted the day. He opened the seminar by explaining the importance of the day and why people were coming together. He summarised the following points:

Why are we here?

- To expose statistics; Fire and Rescue Services have been brave in sharing their figures, for example MF&RS had shared their results that three out of four of their prosecutions had been carried out against businesses where were owned by Ethnic Minorities. Jagtar encouraged everyone in the room to consider ways to share information to help paint a bigger picture of the landscape of prosecutions and business support.
- An important opportunity to allow everyone a safe environment to discuss the difficulties all are facing. Jagtar set the scene as to what attendees could expect from the conference. He explained that the workshop had some excellent presenters there to discuss their own experiences and that this would support the attendees who he urged to participate and ask questions in this safe environment. This was the day that space had been made to let everyone have an opportunity to discuss the subject openly without fear. The importance of Networking cannot be undervalued in their role to forcing change around Equality and Diversity.

- Jagtar introduced everyone to AFSA, an independent inclusive employer led support group. He explained that AFSA has the desire to raise the profile of Asian staff and associated issues across Fire and Rescue Services nationally in relation to the service provision, delivery, employment, policy and practice. Jagtar asked who was a member of AFSA and there were a few hands raised. To date, 29 Fire and Rescue Services and three other organisations are members.
- AFSA also has a lot of experience in charitable work and has recently been involved in raising money to build 12 water wells in countries that need them, each saving 500 lives. Jagtar encouraged all to consider forming relationships with different charities to help network around the issues of supporting BAEM business for fire safety. AFSA is going to be working in India in providing First Aid training.

Jagtar explained the bigger picture and the need for the government to keep equality high on the agenda. There is still a huge importance of focusing on equality for BAEM people, NHS surveys show that if you are a black nurse you are four times more likely to be disciplined compared to their white colleagues. He suggested we are not a racist society but unconscious bias plays a big part and needs addressing.

Another example from the medical sector showed that white doctors have a 98% chance of passing their exams compared to British Asian having a 70% chance and only 30% if you are Asian or of Asian origin. He said things need to change and this case is now with the High Court. Jagtar suggested that if we continue to prosecute Asian communities we are likely to be accused of racism.

The following question was posed: "What can CFOA, AFSA and Fire Services do to demonstrate good practice when engaging with diverse businesses?"

Suggestions from the attendees included:

- 1) To be educated more about different communities.
- 2) To discover the best way of opening doors. Reaching the communities was seen as the biggest issue.
- 3) gaining trust from communities, takes time but more needs to be learnt to help Fire service staff to do this more effectively.
- 4) Understanding cultural issues and barriers to engagement.
- 5) Look at the language used across Fire and Rescue Services.

Presentation 2 - The changing landscape of Business Fire Safety

Billy Myers - Area Manager

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service



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Deputy Chair of CFOA Business Safety Group, Billy Myers, outlined the national perspective on these challenges. Billy expanded upon the areas of concern, how we've arrived at this position, the experience to date across the sector both good and bad, and finally on the need for us to develop our capacity to improve our level of engagement with diverse businesses.

Billy was planning to introduce an individual from the business community who had been subject to a fire safety prosecution and prior to the conference had agreed to talk about their experience of what went wrong in order to help us to understand the challenges from the business community perspective. The seminar team had agreed to keep the identity of this person anonymous due to concerns of potential implications to the individual from her own community.

Unfortunately, this individual remained absent from the seminar without explanation, and this in itself further highlights the need for the Fire and Rescue Services to better understand and build trust within our diverse business communities.

Billy highlighted the need to work more in partnership with the community, in a way that suits them. He outlined what he felt were key points for Fire and Rescue Services to consider as barriers when engaging with Diverse Businesses:

- **Ways of Working:** Enforcement is not always the answer. Education is key. Visiting the premises at the right times to suit the businesses.
- **Language:** The terminology used in the fire service. Jargon is not helpful and doesn't translate well into different languages. We all struggle to understand jargon so must those whose English is a second or third language. Plain English is key.
- **Knowledge:** Business Safety practitioners need much more support and education about understanding BAEM attitude to fire safety and risk.
- **Trust:** Diverse businesses may not have trust in uniformed services due to their past experiences in their home countries. Engaging with them in a more informal manner might help, and using third parties to help bridge the gap with language.



Billy went on to talk about some possible solutions that the sector should consider developing guidance on nationally:

- The importance of using positive action in recruiting staff for business engagement roles.
- Diverse businesses often have no previous fire safety knowledge and won't see it as a priority to spend money on. If you were born in the UK there is a chance you have experienced regular fire alarm tests and evacuations in school and or work. This provides a good education around fire safety and risks. Not everyone is at the same starting point so tailoring your safety visits to those starting points is key – education and awareness is where we can make the biggest impact.
- The importance of investing money in the development of education. Awareness is better spent than funding a costly prosecution. Reconsider how to fund some of the engagement work through business safety prevention activities.
- There is a need for a national Fire and Rescue Service communication strategy for working with Diverse businesses – Simple and Safe fire precautions promotion for BAEM business.
- Build relationships with cultural leaders to ask them to be our advocates.
- Understanding more about why business aren't always willing to comply.
- The toolkit is a great way forward to hold all this good practice together in one consistent approach.

Presentation 3 - What we might and might not do again?

Paul Cooper - Business Education Advocate and **Naseem Begum** - BME officer

Nottingham Fire & Rescue Service



Data Collection and Processing is very important:

Where do we get it from?

How do we use it?

What does it not show?

What we don't do with regards to data:

We don't record the ethnicity of persons involved in fires (casualties and premise owners).

We don't record the ethnicity of business owners.

Ethnic categories are sometimes too broad e.g. White European. Who is a white European? Which country and culture do white European's come from?

Once collected data is not always shared even within individual services e.g. Prevention may have data and be working on projects whilst at the same time Protection could be gathering similar data and working on similar projects but neither team will interact and share information.

If a family does not have fire precautions or smoke alarms in their home they are unlikely to have adequate precautions in their business premises.

Engaging with the Business Community

We need to accept that it will be hard to gain the trust of the business community but can rest assured that once it is gained we will be respected.

One way to gain trust is to get out of the office and integrate with the business community – walk around and talk to people. Wearing a suit, as opposed to a uniform, opens doors as it makes you one of them.

Another way is to get into the community through key figures within the community such as business or religious leaders.

Seek out and train "Community Champions" to deliver your message. One Service recruited Chinese PhD students and gave them training in fire protection legislation in order to get the relevant messages across to members of the Chinese community. This built trust in the community and equipped the students with valuable knowledge and skills.

Use members of the business world to show the advantages of compliance – it can bring both investment and growth to small businesses.

Ask yourself the question: What's in it for me? Consider it from both the Service and business point of view.

Offer something for free:

Hold workshops or business lunches to help business people understand fire safety legislation. If business owners attend, you have a “captive” audience. Such events will foster trust and you may find members of the community will then be more willing to come to you for advice. Events could be co-hosted (and sponsored) by partner agencies who could give advice on matters such as occupational health and business growth.

Don't be disappointed with initial low attendances. Remember the ripple effect, if one or two people turn up and have a positive experience they will tell others. Persistence and continuity is the key to success.

Remember to always follow up on previous encounters and engagements.

Consider the cost of running an event against the cost of making a successful prosecution for non-compliance. Running an event may well prove to be more cost effective in these times of austerity.

You could also consider getting involved in local business community events and also work in partnership with other regulatory bodies such as Environmental Health Teams.

Use language support if necessary and avoid using complex terms and jargon when speaking about fire safety. Be culturally aware have an awareness of the different cultures within your service area and use this information to decide how best to “sell” the idea of fire safety to those communities.

What Doesn't Work

Don't expect businesses to work around your office hours and the Christian Calendar. Remember restaurants are not always open during the working day but will most likely be open during evenings and at weekends. Be aware of significant festivals in the various cultures such as Eid and focus your engagement around community and business safety at these times.

Don't have an over reliance on the fact that everyone will want to get on board with your plans.

The Future

Secure adequate funding for events and engagements.

Go to the business community – meet them on their home ground.

Work flexibly – work at a time that suits the business community not yourself.

Always look for engagement opportunities.

And Finally

Consider this:

- Is education the way forward?
- Should we educate the younger generations and encourage them to pass on the information to the elders?
- Could we engage with local institutions and encourage them to include fire safety compliance on business courses?

Presentation 3 – Business Fire Safety Good Practice

Yasmin Bukhari - Bridging Cultures
Coordinator

Greater Manchester Fire and
Rescue Service;



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Mr Idu Miah - Director
Eastern Concept Limited

Mr. Idu Miah is from a strong finance background. In 2007 he set up a property business with several friends and one of the properties they acquired was Anchor Mill. This was a sizable build of 20,000 sq ft. and was a grade 2 listed building. The premise had been left unattended for 30 years and during that time it had been abused and burnt out, but they took on a challenge to develop it, which took two and a half to three years. The building now has an area for wedding and conference facilities and the lower areas are retail units and accommodation.

Mr. Miah explained that he and his partners were not experts in fire related issues so were grateful that the Fire Service paid them a visit to provide advice even though the suggestions were significant and were going to cost money.

The visits enabled them to work together with a given timescale to ensure that the relevant regulations were in place to achieve the standards prior to final build inspection. They were able to work to a framework of advice as opposed to an audit with negative outcomes attached such as enforcements and prosecutions.

The key points to note from Mr Miah's presentation were:

- It is important to have the right approach when entering premises. Go out and learn to work together working as a team. Don't threaten or alienate people work together.
- Have enough time and resources to work together.
- Have good customer service ethic.
- Awareness is such an important issue. Having the Fire Service to point out fire safety issues around Mosques etc. in a supportive way is key.
- Be mindful of culture (i.e. dates of Ramadan, dress codes etc).

Presentation 4 - Business Support & Migrant Access

Balvinder Singh-Bains -
Business Support Supervisor

West Yorkshire Fire
& Rescue Service;



West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Pria Bhabra - Commissioning Officer
Leeds Local Authority



Balvinder and Pria presented on the outcomes of the Partnership between Leeds City Council Migrant Access Project (MAP) and West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (WYFRS) Fire Protection.

In summer 2014, in Leeds dangerous conditions were identified within a flat above a takeaway following a post-fire visit which had occurred in the takeaway. The takeaway owner had leased the entire two storey building and the flat was rented out privately to an Italian family who spoke virtually no English. The layout of the flat did not meet approved building regulations and the separation between the flat and shop below had been compromised.

Interim measures were implemented with reassurance from the takeaway owner to stop trading until a resolution had been reached. A lot of resources were taken up over the week of monitoring the premises whilst WYFRS had been trying to liaise with Leeds City Council Housing Department to arrange a return visit and also for an interpreter.


The Migrant Access project was contacted and they were able to call upon an Italian translator who agreed to assist at no cost. However on return to the premises the family had vacated to an unknown location and this had left Safeguarding issues unanswered as there were concerns about the family. The outcome resulted Housing officers prohibiting the flat as well as the owner who had lost his tenants and a week's loss of earnings from the takeaway.

The takeaway owner and his family were hostile to our actions and were left disgruntled but the situation could be classed as resolved. However, was it ever resolved? This is a clear example of switching off engagement channels when funding gets restrained. Feedback from community says the Fire Service retreat and return years later trying to re-invent the same wheel instead of simply keeping in touch.

The outcome from this case study was that the Fire and Rescue Service and the local authority both recognized the value of each other's services in working closer with their local communities.

The project has won local praise and featured in a corporate Customer Service Excellence assessment at WYFRS. It was also singled out as innovative during the assessment of the Leeds City Council's equality framework by an external panel of judges. The Migrant Community Networkers who are volunteers of the Migrant Access Project are Migrants and refugees.

Training was also provided to Fire Protection Inspectors using Fire Protection Scenarios and discussions by Leeds City Council.



A multi-agency working relationship has been established and opened up to other agencies to discuss how they could prevent similar situations reoccurring.

In 2010 Leeds was successful in receiving funding to address the need to alleviate the pressure on services such as Health, Employment, Education, Housing and Social Care due to the impact of migration and new arrivals across Leeds.

The Migrant Access Project was set up to work with services and community leaders to pass on important messages such as safety and wellbeing to migrant communities in their language. There are now 87 trained volunteers that make up the Migrant Community Networks (MCN). The MCNs are from different national, ethnic or language backgrounds and working in partnership with many services is the key success of the project.

The Fire Service and the Migrant Access Project have worked together, improving engagement with migrant communities, in particular new migrants, to raise awareness of fire safety and prevention. One of the areas of joint working focused on breaking down barriers of language. There were concerns around some new communities accessing poor accommodation and arranging large gatherings to celebrate events such as 'Eid. One community group had no health and safety planning or knowledge to accommodate the gatherings and are now better equipped for such projects in the future.

The Migrant Access Project brought together community leaders from diverse communities where the Fire Service delivered an Information session on Fire Safety to 27 people representing 14 different countries (Iran, Tanzania, Kenya, Sudan, Slovakia, Romania, Latvia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, India, South Africa, Pakistan and Hungary). All had previously little engagement with the Fire and Rescue Service. There was a lot of positive discussion over lunch following the sessions and individuals wanted us to return to speak with their respective organisations. Home Fire Safety Checks were also carried out.

In the afternoon the delegates chose from one of three workshops and armed with the new knowledge from the mornings presentations they participated actively in the discussions.

The focus of the workshops was on how we can take this agenda forward, how we can better overcome the challenges of engaging with diverse business communities and how we can better support them to achieve fire safety compliance. The workshops were targeted on specific areas of concern, areas where we as a sector currently do not have all the answers.

The topics of the three workshops were:

- Understanding the Nature of Black and Ethnic Minority Business and their Approach to Fire Safety Risks;
- Learning from the Experience of Other Regulators; and
- Better Support for Business Fire Safety Practitioners.

Each workshop had a number of facilitators to assist the running of the workshops and to help draw out the valuable comments and ideas that can help us all move forward. Note-keepers captured the content of the discussions and the key points were annotated on flip charts which were then used to summarise and feedback to the wider seminar on what we have learned from each workshop. During the feedback delegates were encouraged to feedback and let us know we have captured it correctly.

Following the workshop summaries, the Chair, Jagtar Singh, talked about how we take this knowledge and experience and shape it into something that will make a big difference across our sector. He recognised that the workshops were the first step in making this happen, to apply the learning and to set actions going forward. He then led a debate to consider the next steps and how we should take what we have gained from the seminar and build it into actions in national professional forum. It was clear that the seminar was not about quick fixes, it was not about sitting back and passively learning lessons. It was about stepping up and taking an active part in improving how we, as a sector, engage with our diverse communities.

Understanding the nature of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Business and their approach to fire safety risks

The aim of this workshop was to debate:

- Why businesses challenge compliance.
- How can we encourage businesses to see our approaches are **genuinely** supportive before **closures** are needed.
- Impact of Migrant Transient Workers on Fire Safety.
- Multi-occupancy issues and sleeping arrangements.
- What can third parties do to support our role?
- Who are they? How do we access them in our areas?
- Examples of good collaborative working relationships producing results.
- Examples of what hasn't worked and why to help others avoid the same mistakes.

Outcomes of the Workshop discussions:

1. All agreed a toolkit is key to support compliance.

- With pooled knowledge from across Fire and Rescue Authorities and other sectors.
- Must be easy to use and accessible to users.
- Must include essential elements.

2. Education for Fire and Rescue Service staff is needed around:

- Understanding why some businesses have no desire not to be compliant.
- Cultural competence of regulators, understanding if barriers exist.
- How to expose businesses, TV programmes, advertising extinguisher companies that are make money out of over provision.

3. Communication to support engagement with diverse businesses.

- As regulators is our terminology easy to understand and easy to translate?
- Are our standard letters fit for purpose? (can we have a CFOA suite of letters)
- Do not send jargon worded letters. We have a duty under Equality to provide accessible information.

4. Responsibility of Private Sector Suppliers, e.g. fire extinguisher companies, profit before service.

- Some unscrupulous companies are targeting businesses causing business owners to unnecessarily overspend in fire safety compliance, for example unnecessary fire extinguishers with maintenance contracts.

5. Better guidance and transparency of fire safety regulators.

- Sector relevant Fire Risk Assessment templates.
- Reward compliance five star award - recognised by insurance companies, and reduced premiums.
- May need a Primary Authority approach.

6. Problems are not limited to the diverse business community – however they are more likely to be affected by it.

7. Role and competence of external Fire Risk Assessors.

- Do you get what you pay for?
- Industry certification / accreditation.
- Companies “selling” risk assessments as part of the package are sometimes over complicated, out of date and very generic.

8. Emerging nature of diverse business sector e.g. Migrant Workers, cultural dimensions of risk.

- People may sleep in premises during Ramadan and the last 10 days before Ramadan in Mosques. Is this risk recognised? What can fire safety officers do to assist compliance?

Sources of Help

- Local Authority Licensing.
- Local and National media (Asian TV).
- Assistance from data protection companies.
- Look to other Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Police Community Support Officers.
- Banks and financial institutions.
- Environmental Health.
- GPs.
- Business chamber of commerce.
- Border agencies.
- Social Networking - Where's our Fire and Rescue Service App?

Learning from other Sectors

Many new migrants find it difficult to gain mainstream employment. Many choose to set up in business with little or no knowledge of fire safety. The workshop looked at what some of the difficulties new migrants are facing in setting up their business and where they could gain Business Advice from third sectors.

Sources of Advice

- Job Centre
- Citizen's advice
- Chambers of Commerce
- Local Authority
- Word of mouth
- Places of Worship
- Community groups

Barriers

- Authority
- Language
- Don't understand legislation.
- No evidence of qualifications.
- No experience of organised Fire and Rescue Services.
- Lack of trust of Public services.
- Expectation of cost puts them off doing anything.

Considerations on Route to supporting Migrants

- Having cultural knowledge before attending to prepare for the visits.
- Have you allocated enough time for your visit?
- Could you use pictures to pass on information?
- Communication and who can assist.
- Different work ethic/patterns.
- Assistance from other agencies who may also be working with the individuals (Food Standards Agency).
- Patience/flexibility (be prepared to explain from the beginning).
- Think about their concepts – what are they hoping to achieve?

Communication

- One-to-one could be difficult – they may have someone to assist, for example a case worker. They may use a relative, such as one of their children.

Explaining Compliance

- Use simple language to get message across.
- They may not realise they have responsibility for employees and members of the public.

Sources of Information

- Localised radio station, Sky TV etc.
- Find someone from Facebook from that community, keep in touch, and ask for help.
- Stay in touch with what is happening in that community – don't align yourself to the wrong member of that community. Use prevention staff to help.
- Don't always assume that what has been the case is still the case.
- Are there any projects you can access in your local area?

Questions asked to the workshop group

- Q.** Is there any pictorial Prevention focussed guidance that Fire and Rescue Services can access?
- A.** Not at the moment, Leeds Fire and Rescue Service are working with the Police regarding funding to print and develop a booklet of translation services. What works? What's cost effective? What are the possibilities for national support with standardised letters?
- What Third Parties can do to help?
 - Examples of what's working.
 - What to avoid.
 - Religion.
 - Cultural.
 - Maintaining standards.
 - Being confident to prosecute without fear of what people will perceive.
 - Are there any other sectors we can learn from?

How to support Business Fire Safety Legislation Practitioners to engage with diverse businesses

The Workshop Brief was to developing a greater understanding of the diversity training and education that is needed for Practitioners to feel confident in their roles in supporting BAEM businesses.

The workshop facilitated discussions to gather participant views and experiences of how they currently:

- Understand different business cultures and backgrounds to help build better relationships.
- Receive cultural training.
- What staff need to help carry out roles as business support, such as toolkits and resources.

The outcomes of the Workshop included:

- Overwhelming agreement that a toolkit will provide much needed support for Business Safety Practitioners who currently are not always included in Equality and Diversity training from their Fire and Rescue Service or the Fire Safety College. A toolkit needs to be adaptable to host case studies and examples of how other Fire and Rescue Service or Regulatory Organisations have:
 - Supported a range of diverse businesses (different cultures, different size businesses, cost effective easy to implement ideas) and what worked or what didn't.

- That helps to provide guidance on which third parties Fire and Rescue Service can work with and how. A list that can be transferable to any Fire and Rescue Service.
- Provides cultural awareness guidance specific to protection work (using resources from Merseyside , Nottingham, Lancashire and West Yorkshire Toolkit and other AFSA toolkits).
- Includes guidance on emerging issues around migrants and over occupancy.
- Provides links to other sector organisations case studies.
- Provides links to a suite of translation services and translated materials for use across all Fire and Rescue Services (e.g. National Register of Public Service Interpreters – Lancashire), using cases studies of how other Fire and Rescue Services have used cost effective translation services. For example, using university international students, community leaders and advocates.
- Provides example Diversity training to assist practitioners in their roles.
- Provides data and statistics nationally and provides guidance on how to start collecting information and how to use it.
- Can be easily accessible electronically and user friendly by Fire Practitioners on a daily basis.
- The toolkit needs to be a work stream through CFOA via the Business Safety strand of work with support from the relevant partners attending the conference.

- Further research required to assist the toolkit around cultural attitudes to risk and fire safety (AFSA to revisit).
- Developing a single work stream (CFOA) to research the possibility of working with Universities and Student Unions to see how fire Safety legislation can be included on Business courses. Start at grass roots with the training.
- Establish clear procedures for all Fire and Rescue Services to follow on assisting with working with local building control officers at the beginning of large projects to help with fire legislation. How can this be one single conversation?
- **AFSA – Merseyside – West Yorkshire – Nottinghamshire – E-Learning.**

What do Practitioners Need to help them to Engage with Diverse Businesses?

Skills

- Managing Cultural Differences.
- Understand attitudes to Health and Safety, gender, authority and Fire Services.
- Inclusion Training – need to be specific to role from Fire Service College as a starting point.
- Community Knowledge – Data and statistics.

Materials/Toolkits

- Needs to be specific to Fire Safety with lots of cultural tips and information.
- Finding the audience.
- Help with finding out where to find the key leaders and influences of key community groups, including case studies.

Who can support Practitioners & How?

Internal

- Advocates – Bi Lingual Advisors.
- Your own staff – Use staff with specialisms or links to Diverse Groups/communities.

External

- Safety/Competencies Framework.
- Community Leaders.
 - Help to build relationships.
 - Provide information on businesses.
 - Help to understand issues.
- Third Sector.
 - Councils.
 - Charity organisations.
 - Migrant Support Charities.
 - Chamber of commerce.
- AFSA.
- Blue lights.
- CFOA.
 - Communities of Practise.
 - Central Network of Diverse Communities list.
 - Engagement Volunteers – using a database.
 - Volunteer Networks – for help with training.

6. What people said about the day?

Out of a total of 75 delegates, 66 (88%) provided feedback which is a good response rate. The questions asked on the evaluation form were designed to gain a quick insight into delegate's experiences of the seminars and workshops, providing some questions with scores and some with free text narratives. The scores were out of 5, where 5 is very positive (strongly agree) and 1 being least positive (strongly disagree).

Overall the response was excellent with over 90 % of delegates finding the seminar positive, the area where the feedback was least positive was around the Workshops where feedback has suggested that the workshops were not specific enough in relation to providing ideas and answers. This is acknowledged by the organisers and partners as being understandable feedback. However there was never the intention to provide all the answers on the day. This is the start of the journey but the fact that people are keen to have more information makes it even more important to ensure the toolkit is developed.

Seminar Feedback Summary

Out of 66 respondents:

- **61 (92%)**
rated the overall experience of the seminar as positive giving it a score of 4 or 5.
- **42 (64%)**
scored the seminar 5 out of 5.
- **63 (95%)**
rated the presenter(s) responses to questions as positive scoring 4 or 5.
- **41 (62%)**
scored 5 out of 5.
- **63 (95%)**
rated the presenters knowledge as positive scoring 4 or 5.
- **53 (80%)**
scored 5 out of 5.
- **54 (82%)**
rated the amount of information given for the time allowed as positive scoring 4 or 5.
- **34 (52%)**
scored 5 out of 5.

7. Seminar Outcomes summary of the key points arising from the Seminar “things we need to do”

During the seminar we saw examples of open, honest accounts of things that have failed and why they did so. These were shared not for delegates to judge, but to help them to avoid making a similar mistake.

In fact, the very catalyst for this seminar was born from such an experience. In Merseyside we had recognised the imbalance in enforcement activity and we came up with some great ideas to help our diverse business community to better comply with the fire safety legislation. Only, not so great as it turned out; one of our neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services kindly shared their experience of a very similar approach that they had already attempted: “We tried that, same idea, didn’t work... this was the impact ... and this is what we have learned.” So thanks to their generosity, their honesty and their trust in sharing their lessons learned, we and our communities in Merseyside have benefitted.

To assist the agenda moving forward the following is a summary of the key outcomes and observations made during the presentations and seminars together with some practical suggestions of what delegates wanted to see happening going forward to support Fire and Rescue Services to engage with Diverse Businesses in the future:

1. Diverse businesses many not be at the same starting points in terms of understanding fire risk. Education and awareness is where we can make the biggest impact.
2. The importance of investing money in the development of education and awareness is better spent than funding a costly prosecution. Reconsider how to fund some of the engagement work through business safety prevention activities.
3. There is a need for a consistent national Fire and Rescue Service communication strategy for working with Diverse businesses - Simple and Safe fire precautions promotion for BAEM business
4. Build relationships with cultural leaders to ask them to be our advocates. Understand more about why business aren’t always willing to comply.
5. Developing a toolkit is a great way forward to hold all this good practice together in one consistent approach to include tried and tested approaches that can be transferrable to any Fire and Rescue Service. With additional advice (a checklist) to support any engagement events with diverse businesses
6. Develop cultural awareness training for Business safety staff nationally and training providers. Consider making cultural competence a feature of the overall competence of fire safety regulators. Build this into toolkit.
7. Engage with the National Students Union (PHD students)for support for all Fire and Rescue Services to help them engage BAEM businesses where language and trust is a barrier. Train community champions from colleges and universities where there are high levels of diversity.
8. Engage with Colleges and Business study courses and English as a Second language providers to help them spread the message about fire safety. Teach the next generations to teach their parents and grandparents.

9. Carry out weeks of action in partnership with CFOA, linked to BAEM business communities. Hold community events with partners to show visibility to help build relationships and engagement. Ask Protection departments to help so they can access the community and gain trust for business fire safety advice.
10. Identify and contact national BAEM business associations, interfaith councils and local community groups to ascertain what they can do to support our work regionally and nationally (e.g. Chinese business networks, Asian business forums). Ask them if they know how BAEM businesses would like to be engaged with around fire safety. Can they be our advocates?
11. Sharing good practice around the importance of using positive action in recruiting staff for business engagement roles.
12. Use members of the business world to show the advantages of compliance. It can bring both investment and growth to small businesses.
13. Don't expect businesses to work around your office hours and the Christian Calendar. Remember restaurants are not always open during the working day but will most likely be open of evenings and at weekends. Be aware of significant festivals in the various cultures such as Eid and focus your engagement around community and business safety at these times.
14. Don't have an over reliance on the fact that everyone will want to get on board with your plans.
15. Asylum seekers have nothing from home, learning to survive using the skills they have. It would be good to work closer with Border agencies.
16. Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service – look to work with universities, look at engaging with Business Students to raise the awareness and knowledge of Fire Safety and legislation.
17. Look at working with Building Control Officers at the beginning of large projects to help them and business owners understand and ensure fire safety compliance on new projects. May help reduce costs.
18. Target HFSC to homes especially within the communities where business engagement is difficult. Home safety may help business safety.
19. Restaurants and takeaways. Look at the impact. How we can engage better. Use the idea of Nottingham and engage through businesses lunches and dinners
20. Use free community TV to advertise, community press etc.

8. Next Steps and Commitments

Post seminar, the organising team from Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service led by Wendy Kenyon, Diversity Manager and Guy Keen, Head of Protection have captured the content of the presentations, the workshops and the discussions and analysed the delegate feedback forms in order to populate this report.

Discussions have already taken place with the CFOA conference team about a follow up event in 12 months' time that will focus on the progress that we will have made.

This will be a great opportunity to open the seminar up to a wider business audience and formerly launch products and initiatives that will make the necessary improvements going forward. Additionally in the shorter term, there will also be further opportunities at the AFSA conference hosted by Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service in November to continue the dialogue on progress made today.

Summary of the Key steps going forward are:

Things we committed to do following the conference

What we would like to do	Lead	How? when
1. Provide a report that captures the information gathered and discussed on the day to be used as a platform to work from to engage with CFOA to ensure this is embedded into work streams and to discuss with other key partners such as AFSA.	MFRA – with support from all partners	December 2015
2. Develop a Toolkit for Business Safety Practitioners to enable them to better understand and support Diverse Businesses. Utilising all the existing good practice and case studies and cultural awareness training and researching other sectors and academic best practice.	CFOA / MFRA/ AFSA	2016
3. Commission research and bid for funding from Academic institutions to support a better understanding of this BAEM business communities attitude to risk and fire safety- to feed into the toolkit.	AFSA	2016
4. Review progress in 2016/17 via further conference hosted by CFOA and open up to a wider audience.	CFOA	2016/17

9. Acknowledgements by DCFO Phil Garrigan, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

It has been a privilege to be involved in the hosting of this event and it is important to acknowledge all of the people who have come together to make this event a success and especially those who have worked hard in the preparation and delivery of this seminar.

This includes the members of the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) North West Region's Protection Task Group, who openly shared the lessons learned, recognised the value of taking action and gave their support to the hosting of the event.

I would like to thank the North West branch of the IFE, for allowing us to deliver the Seminar on behalf of the North West and to our political lead, Councillor Barbara Murray, who has taken an active interest in the seminar and demonstrated clear leadership by actively participating as a delegate on the day.

It is also worthy to mention the CFOA Communities of Practice (CoP) forums, which we utilised to open this matter to the wider Fire Service and to all of the CoP members whose responses confirmed that the issues were reflected across the country. The fact that there were far more questions than answers reinforced the need for the seminar.

Yasmin Bukhari needs a special mention, as she has had a massive influence in the design, preparation and delivery of this seminar. Yasmin brought not only a passion and energy to help us understand these challenges she also brought with her the full support of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA).


Through Yasmin and AFSA's chair Mehrban Sadiq, they immediately offered to co-host the seminar with us and immediately the speakers with both good practice and lessons learned started to emerge.

AFSA is a great asset, it has a real drive and commitment that benefits not just its members but also the wider fire and rescue service and its stakeholders. We are immensely grateful for AFSA's support, we simply could not have effectively delivered this event without their active involvement and support.

We are particularly grateful to Jagtar Singh, national adviser to AFSA. He is real ambassador with some standing in a number of influential circles, and his presence in chairing the seminar added credibility to the event. Jagtar not only fulfilled his role as chair with professionalism and efficiency to keep the day on track but he contributed his significant thoughts and experience on the issues in question and has committed his energy into driving this agenda forward for the mutual benefits of the Fire and Rescue Services and our Diverse Business Communities.

We would also like to thank the speakers:

Area Manager Billy Myers, deputy chair of the Business Safety Group, chair of the Fire Engineering Technical Standards committee, who not only spoke about Manchester's experience, the importance of developing Strategy, Tools and Solutions.



Paul Cooper and Naseem Begum from Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service who spoke about the progress they have made in Nottinghamshire, sharing the lessons they have learned and their planned next steps.

Yasmin and Idu Miah for highlighting some good practice in respect of overcoming fire safety challenges in diverse businesses from both the fire services and the business owner's point of view.

Balvinder Singh Bains and Pria Bhabra who told us about the partnerships and project successes in West Yorkshire.

The workshop facilitators – Yasmin Bukhari, Balvinder Singh-Bains, Pria Bhabra, Mehrban Sadiq, Councillor Idu Miah, Wendy Kenyon and Guy Keen.

The seminar planning and delivery team from Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to pull this together, notably Vicky Campbell, Mandy Harris, Karen Hughes, Karl Mansfield, Adele Doran and Ian Girven and all the assistants for helping to ensure that the day has run smoothly.

For the IFE for taking the risk in funding this event, for providing their support and for the four and a half hours of Continued Professional Development.

Last but certainly by no means least I would like to thank all of the delegates for taking time out of their busy diaries and contributing fully to the event.

Phil Garrigan

10. Feedback

Presentations

Evaluation

Engaging with Diverse Businesses (For Fire Safety Compliance)

Seminar, September 17, 2015.

Feedback

Introduction

Out of a total of 75 delegates, 66 (88%) provided feedback. The questions were designed to give a brief overview of their experiences of the seminars and workshops with 5 being most positive (strongly agree) and 1 being least positive (strongly disagree).

Seminar

	Feedback				
The overall experience of the seminar was positive for me	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	4	19	42
Out of 66 respondents:					
• 61 (92%) rated the overall experience of the seminar as positive giving it a score of 4 or 5.					
• 42 (64%) scored the seminar 5 out of 5.					
The presenter(s) responded to questions effectively	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	22	41
Out of 66 respondents:					
• 63 (95%) rated the presenter(s) responses to questions as positive scoring 4 or 5.					
• 41 (62%) scored 5 out of 5.					
The presenter(s) was knowledgeable about the subject	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	10	53
Out of 66 respondents:					
• 63 (95%) rated the presenters knowledge as positive scoring 4 or 5.					
• 53 (80%) scored 5 out of 5.					
The amount of information was appropriate for the time allowed	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	11	20	34
Out of 66 respondents:					
• 54 (82%) rated the amount of information given for the time allowed as positive scoring 4 or 5.					
• 34 (52%) scored 5 out of 5.					

Positive Comments/Suggestions

- Very useful seminar
- A very interesting and informative seminar. I have taken a lot of ideas away to discuss with my colleagues and hopefully these ideas will be implemented within my fire and rescue service.
- An insightful range of presentations and knowledgeable speakers. Obviously requires collaboration not only with Fire and Rescue Services but other government departments. Challenges brought about through immigration and asylum require Fire and Rescue Services to work efficiently. There is huge potential for helping our community help themselves. Thanks for all the hard work and commitment it was very evident and much appreciated.
- An excellent conference – solutions start here. Well done everyone!
- Valuable day to discuss and highlight issues and best practice.
- This was one of the most interesting and engaging seminars I have attended.
- Any issues that business owners could bring to future seminars is what is positive engagement experiences or what fire service approaches do not encourage this supportive approach.
- Issues arising from trying to support diverse business community leaders and do not want to engage with fire services as they see us as authority rather than offering help and how we can attempt to work with them better as they refuse to speak to us or divulge information about who we need to speak to e.g. we don't speak English, don't understand.
- The areas discussed links to the wider business engagement agenda. Up to date data is required and they require central

Government involvement to ensure it is collected. Revision to IRS, data on ethnic engagement/enforcement action.

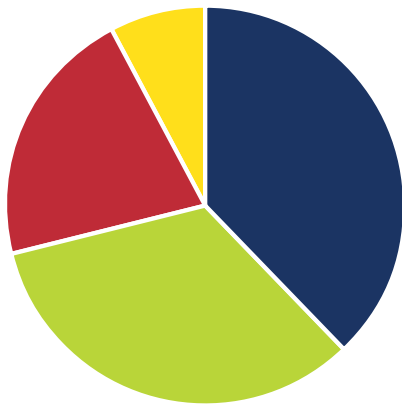
- The seminar has prompted me to ask questions about the way I deal with business owners and employees within the BME committees. I also feel confident to challenge my workplace
- The whole seminar was well run and interestingly worthwhile. I brought five of us here today from my Fire and Rescue Service and I feel it was worth the time, effort and money. Today has been one of the most valuable days I have attended in over ten years in fire safety. I will take much of what I have heard and learnt today. I will be running a training day for the remainder of my department, once back in service based on today's input. Thank you all for a wonderful and enlightening day.
- I found the seminar really worth while attending. Met some lovely people. We are all aiming for the same goal, we just need to work together sharing our ideas and knowledge.

Areas suggested for improvement

- The points covered in the programme were not discussed. Only an exercise about what difficulties were faced by new migrants, rather than notational support standard letters, translation services, being confident to prosecute without fear of what people will perceive.
- A lot of time was taken discussing education for different ethnicities, but I feel education should also be given to ourselves also, I certainly do not know a lot about different religions/sects/nationalities and I am sure it will help us liaise and communicate with the people we work with.

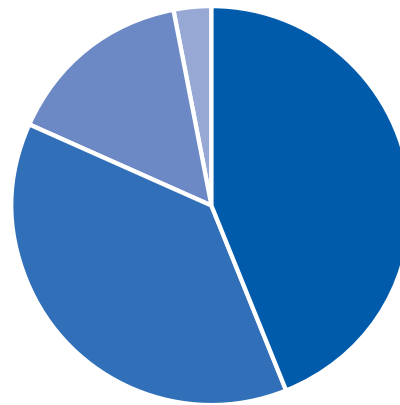
Workshop Feedback

Workshop Attended



Workshop	Total
A	25
B	22
C	14
Unknown	5
Total	66

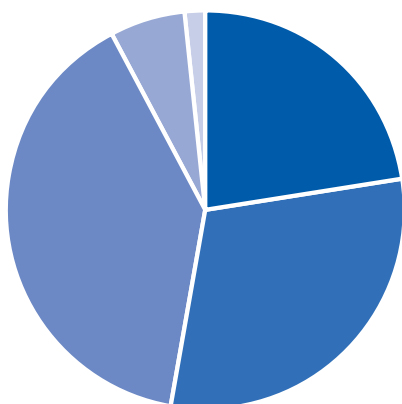
The pace and style of the workshop was effective



- 29 Strongly Agree
- 25 Agree
- 10 Neither agree/disagree
- 2 Disagree

- 54 (82%) rated the pace and style of the workshop as positive giving it a score of 4 or 5.
- 29 (44%) scored pace and style of the workshop 5 out of 5.

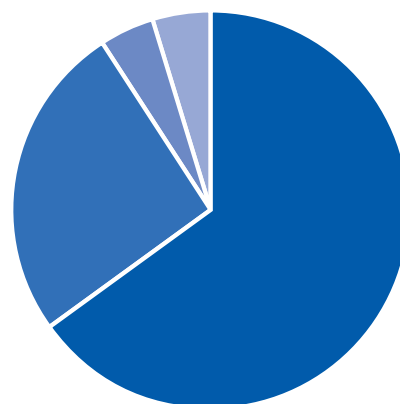
The workshop content was challenging



- 15 Strongly Agree
- 20 Agree
- 26 Neither agree/disagree
- 4 Disagree
- 1 Strongly disagree

- 35 (53%) rated the workshop content as positive giving it a score of 4 or 5.
- 15 (23%) scored the workshop content 5 out of 5.

Participation and interaction during the workshop was encouraged



- 43 Strongly Agree
- 17 Agree
- 3 Neither agree/disagree
- 3 Disagree

- 60 (91%) rated the participation and interaction as positive giving it a score of 4 or 5.
- 43 (65%) scored the participation and interaction as positive giving it 5 out of 5.

The pace and style of the workshop was effective

1	2	3	4	5
0	2	10	25	29

The workshop content was challenging

1	2	3	4	5
1	4	26	20	15

Participation and interaction during the workshop was encouraged

1	2	3	4	5
0	3	3	17	43

Positive Comments/Suggestions

- A client lead from CFOA around the issues raised in workshop A would be the way forward.
- As always (and no criticism) time is short and everyone wants to contribute. A good session but it could have been longer.
- No, made a significant contribution to the event.

Areas suggested for improvement

- Yes very relevant information, workshop was more of a discussion and would have liked a more interactive learning session. I would like more ideas /toolkit on how to better engage with diverse communities.
- Audio could have been clearer/louder.
- Couldn't hear some of the speakers especially in the workshop.
- Although the presenters at the workshop were very knowledgeable – it was not a workshop – based on my experience. The majority of the content was one way transmit. We were not set tasks or topics to discuss between small groups to feedback and discuss further, this limited cross pollination of ideas and experiences. We talked more after it had finished.

- The workshop only challenged general issues but did not seem to take account of geographic aspects.
- More time to explore workshops, share ideas, discuss in small groups.
- Didn't really discuss the barriers and how we really engage with diverse communities. With reduced work force and smaller budgets we don't have the capacity to work the streets and engage individually. This has to be another way.
- I am a Diversity and Inclusion professional so the information was not particularly stretching but was good to discuss with a variety of colleagues.
- Workshop did not cover what was in the brochure.
- The workshop concept is a worthwhile and very valuable one. However, I feel that there was not enough time by far given over to the workshop, I do understand the time constraints of the day however.
- Could have had a couple of different workshops.

Reflective Feedback

Ideas

Positive Comments/Suggestions

- Creation of a crib sheet of useful advice to businesses (nationally) with help phone numbers – all languages – could be on websites.
- Would there be a potential to develop a multi-lingual phrasebook to assist auditors when carrying out audits? This could contain key questions in a range of languages with brief descriptions/explanations etc.?
- Shared resources such as pictorial leaflets and multilingual guides should be shared via CFOA communities of other forums.
- Engagement with the third sector.
- I am wondering if there is a potential for establishing a coordinated partnership for a Primary Authority Scheme. This will provide consistent Fire Safety Advice and enforcement to businesses owned and operated by members of minority communities. Thus would be established on a regional basis.
- It is clear that FRS require more guidance, coherence, and support from organisations such as CFOA, IFE, AFSA etc.
- Can we (FRS's) each share what we do about equality in fire safety compliance? And share reports of disproportion?
- A national toolkit to allow all fire and rescue services to combine resources and enable our communities to comply.
- Run a continual programme of stewards throughout the country.
- CFOA developed videos in all languages to aid understanding and reduce impact on each Fire and Rescue Service, thus improving efficiency.
- Fire Extinguisher Companies – most maintenance engineers work on a commission basis and earn more by selling more products. There is a need to promote those extinguishing devices which are certified for 20-25 years. Poor risk assessments – Refer businesses to a register of fire risk assessors. Is there any rule age in the AFSA complying a register?
- Work with landlords re lettings and sub lettings and business lettings for referrals and advice. Need for guidance completing risk assessments. Need to stop prosecution once complaint, use this as a stick to, can do. Attend colleges/courses where English is being taught. Use tutors as translators to get messages across.
- I have provided some notes I will share.
- Will contact Wendy Kenyon to offer support for toolkit.
- Happy to email ideas/documents we have produced. Laura.Kavanagh-Jones@shropshirefire.gov.uk
- Involvement of BRDO/BIS. Greater business involvement. Fire and Rescue Services don't have the answers only questions. New and encouraging communities need to be identified.
- Though GP's were identified as a source of information other home visitors were not identified. PCT and Health visitors can provide valuable insight into who is at risk and who may not be complying.

- Encourage more middle and senior managers to attend and BRDD to bring the programme through.
- Provision of qual Level 2 FS cert
Staffordshire's Business Support Team have produced a set of presentations that lead to a formal level 2 fire safety qualification, that addresses the problem of fire safety and FRA in the work place for small micro businesses. There is a cost, but much less than a formal FRA. For further info; John Berrisfred Staff's fire and rescue 07528983115. We can also offer Level 2's in health and safety, food hygiene for caterers, manual handling, and good nutrition.
- Protection teams are under pressure through budget constraints. Staff selection for future Fire Safety Officer, must include "soft skills" a commitment to equality. Chief Officers understanding the need for equality and diversity in the protection role.

Further Comments about the day

Positive Comments/Suggestions

- Excellent.
- This day has exceeded my expectations in all ways. I am fairly new to FS but I have learned more than I imagined to take back to my service. Many thanks.
- A fantastic experience learned so much about the fire service and the great work undertaken across the county. I was very happy to have been given the opportunity to share good practice as the work needs to be done.
- The whole event was thought provoking and inspiring and fantastic venue and food.
- Thank you – a great day.
- Great day, very informative.
- An excellent day – thank you very much.
- Excellent – very informative.
- As a new fire safety advisor working with both businesses this was a great learning opportunity.
- Brilliant conference, very interactive, well put together, a lot of time and effort paid off, lot of learning curves, I have taken a lot from this.
- Thank you. As a new fire safety officer working with BOAM businesses this was a great learning opportunity.
- A very interesting and thought provoking day. Networking and introduction too many new and existing contacts which will lead to more/better shared future experiences.
- Let's fit the date for next year. Shall we keep the same venue? Shall we have a celebration pre conference event?
- Many points were raised throughout the day which will enable me as an individual and the team I work with move forward in a positive way to engage better with local communities. Also a better knowledge and understanding has been good.
- For further information or to provide any ideas, suggestions or case studies, please contact Wendy Kenyon or Guy Keen at Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

11. Your Fire and Rescue Service's Commitments

Now you have had a chance to understand more about the key outcomes and ideas from the conference, we challenge you to set three priorities or actions to complete over the next 12 months to help your Fire and Rescue Service to progress this important agenda.

Please feel free to forward this information on to Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

1.

2.

3.



MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

REVIEW REPORT TO THE

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2016

SUBJECT: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY 2015

REPORT NUMBER: CFO/001/16

APPENDICES:

REPORTING OFFICER: DEB APPLETON

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: PHIL GARRIGAN

OFFICERS CONSULTED: JULIE YARE, JEAN CRIMMINS

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members review the impact of processing Freedom of Information requests.

Introduction and Background

2. MFRA adheres to and is supportive of the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act 2000 and values its role in allowing people access to information and giving them the right to find out about matters and decisions that affect them. However, use of the Act has become increasingly popular and the volume of Fol requests has increased over the years. The table below shows the increase in requests to MFRA since 2011:

Freedom of Information requests breakdown 2011-2015					
Year	Total number of Fol requests	Requests from commercial organisations (as far as can be determined)	Repeat Applicants	No of applicants that made 2-4 requests	No of applicants that made 5-8 requests
2011	72		5	4	1
2012	80		2	1	1
2013	101		8	8	0
2014	138	13	11	9	2
2015 to 9th November	131	17	12	10	2
Additional comments					
2011			Union made 5 requests		
2012			Solicitors made 4 very detailed requests about incidents at the Sonae factory		
2015			One requester made 8 requests and another requester made 5 requests		
There have also been an increasing amount of requests for information about bariatric callouts					

3. Each Fol request involves staff from more than one Department contributing to providing the requested information (or deciding why it cannot be provided). This could include providing the information as requested, providing the information but with some of it redacted (removed), refusing to supply the information by a) applying an exemption, b) determining that the work involved requires disproportionate effort, c) notifying the applicant that it is available via other means or d) determining that the request is vexatious.
4. Dealing with this increase in requests places pressure on relatively small teams. As Members are aware the cuts that MFRA has had to make during the last four years has resulted in significant reductions in its support services, which means there are fewer staff available to service Fol requests. Further budget cuts from 2015/16 will mean more cuts to support services, further reducing capacity.
5. Whilst MFRA respects the rights of citizens to ask for information that may affect their lives and communities and recognises the role that journalists may play in seeking out inefficiencies or poor practices in the public sector, there is an associated cost. The staff collecting, collating, checking, redacting and authorising release of the requested information all have other work to do. As a result, dealing with a Fol request can take staff away from core business and not result in any added value for the organisation.
6. For example in the Strategy and Performance function, where the Fol requests are processed, the requirement to deal with increasing numbers of Fol requests within the 20 day deadline means that other important work that also contributes to compliance with legislation (such as Data Protection) is adversely

affected. Checking and signing up to Information Sharing Agreements and maintaining robust information retention schedules and records management processes all suffers as a result of the relatively short timescales allowed for Fol responses. A similar effect is felt in other Departments that frequently have to provide information such as People and Organisational Development and Procurement. Some other Departments are less frequently asked for information and dealing with Fol requests has less of an effect on normal business.

7. Organisations are encouraged to publish as much information as possible on their websites to help people find the information they need without having to resort to making a Fol request. However, this is not a complete solution to the developing problem as it is very uncommon for exactly the same request to be made by two separate applicants. Often the requests are subtly different and require individual consideration. It is intended that all Fol requests will be published on the MFRS website in the future and this might ease some of the current issues.
8. In relation to specific requests, MFRA believes it is particularly difficult to justify the extent to which commercial organisations use Fol to request information to develop new business leads or seek a commercial advantage.
9. MFRA has responded to a call for evidence by an independent Commission that is reviewing the Freedom of Information Act. MFRA have asked the Commission to consider either, levying a charge for such requests (as is the case in other countries), or the ability for an organisation to refuse the request where the applicant is not able to demonstrate that the request is in the public interest.
10. The submission to the Commission goes on to say that, even when requests could be considered to be in the public interest, for example in relation to a public consultation on MFRA's plans, the enthusiasm of some members of the public to seek more and more detailed information can place pressure on a small Authority. Five requests from one person for similar but subtly different complex information in the space of one or two months results in disproportionate effort. This is despite the fact that individually, the cost of meeting the requests would not be sufficient to justify refusal and the subtle differences between requests rule out treating them as vexatious. It is the cumulative effect that has the impact.
11. The Information Commissioner has published his response to the call for written evidence from the Fol Commission. In his submission, the Commissioner argued against the introduction of fees, said there was no evidence that ministerial 'safe space' was being eroded, and that Authorities are able to reduce Fol's burden themselves through using section 14 (vexatious requests). It has also been announced that the Commission will be delayed in concluding its inquiry, having received over 30,000 written submissions. The Commission will now be taking oral evidence in January 2016.

12. It is the view of MFRS that it is difficult to treat requests as vexatious or indeed classify the work required as excessive without it being perceived by the requestor or indeed the public or press as defensive – so in effect organisations often still provide the information for fear of otherwise being perceived as less than transparent.
13. The time spent by all officers involved in processing Fol requests since July 2015 (32 completed requests up to 9th November) has been recorded as the Service was already aware that requests were increasing and wanted to share the information with the Authority and Government departments.
14. The total time spent dealing with Fol requests since recording began has totalled 153 hours spread across a range of staff from administrators to the Chief Fire Officer. This equates to an average of 4.8 hours per request.
15. If this was applied to the total number of requests received this year (to 9th November) it would total 629 hours or 90 working days.
16. One particular example is of a single request for information that was initially refused when it was received in early 2015. This has resulted in a request for an internal management review by the applicant (essentially an appeal to MFRA) and subsequently a complaint to the Office of the Information Commissioner. This one request is estimated to have involved over 20 hours of officer time including two Directors and is still ongoing at the time of writing this report.
17. This is resource that can be ill afforded during these times of austerity, so the point has been made to the independent Commission that it is vital that the Fol requests processed are of valid public interest and not, for example, to further the profits of a commercial organisation.

Equality and Diversity Implications

18. An equality impact assessment is not required for this report. Although each request should be accompanied by a name and address no further details are required and it is not permitted to ask why the applicant wants the information.

Staff Implications

19. The views of staff who are called upon to deal with Fol requests were sought prior to the return of the Fol consultation. Below are a few of those comments:

“The companies requesting it use the data to support their own business (eg bid writing businesses) and get financial gain from doing so. There is one company that is collating all the information and is then trying to sell it back to the public sector as an aid to identifying collaboration opportunities.”

“There is a feeling that all the information has to be provided and other areas of our work must be stopped in order to undertake the Fol. This then leads to a backlog in general work.”

“Whilst receiving similar, albeit slightly different, requests for information quite close together can be frustrating, I can’t say completion has a huge impact on workloads.”

“Frustrations...requests that are virtually the same as another request, only one word is different leading to an entirely new piece of work”

“More complex and contentious Fol requests can create a significant amount of work for the officers involved; often senior officers in these cases”

Legal Implications

20. MFRA has a duty under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to deal with a request promptly and in any event no later than the 20th working day after receipt of the request. MFRA can exercise its rights under the Act if an exemption correctly applies and in most cases a public interest test is then applied to ensure that any exemptions are correctly applied.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

21. There are no financial implications arising from this report

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

22. There are risks associated with not complying with the legal deadline for responding to Fol requests. There are also organisational risks associated with the amount of time officers spend dealing with the increasing number and complexity of requests which means that when they are dealing with them they are not always able to carry out their other duties.

Contribution to Our Mission: Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters

23. Dealing with Fol requests can have a negative impact on officers’ ability to carry out other work that would contribute to achieving the Mission.

Recommendation

24. That Members;
a) **Scrutinise the information contained within this report concerning Freedom of Information requests**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/111/11 If this report follows on from another, list the previous report(s)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is the physical and legal entity.

In writing reports MFRA is the “object”.

MFRS

Merseyside **F**ire and **R**escue **S**ervice is the service provided by MFRA.
In writing reports MFRS is the “action”

E.G.

You are employed by the Authority (MFRA). The job you do forms part of the Service (MFRS) provided by the Authority (MFRA).
[If in doubt use MFRA]

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

FEEDBACK REPORT TO THE

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2016

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF CLG FRS ATTENDANCE TIMES 2014/15

REPORT NUMBER: CFO/002/16

APPENDICES: APPENDIX A: REVIEW OF CLG FIRE & RESCUE ATTENDANCE TIMES 2014/15

REPORTING OFFICER: DCFO GARRIGAN

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: JOHN FIELDING

OFFICERS CONSULTED: DEB APPLETON

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members scrutinise the attached report concerning an analysis of CLG Fire & Rescue Attendance Times 2014/15. The data within the report has been sourced from CLG and compares MF&RS attendance times for Dwelling Fires and Primary Fires against fellow Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Services

Introduction and Background

2. The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide a summary of how Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service performed within the recent CLG Publication: "Fire Incidents Response Times: April 2014 to March 2015, England."
3. At an England level, the CLG report provides the following summary:
 - I. The average response time to attend a Dwelling Fire was 7 minutes 45 seconds
 - II. The average response time to attend a Dwelling Fire involving a casualty or rescue was 7 minutes 32 seconds

- III. The average response time to all Primary Fires was 8 minutes 43 seconds
- IV. The average response time for predominantly urban FRS to Primary Fires was 7 minutes 42 seconds
- V. The average response time predominantly rural FRS to Primary Fires was 10 minutes 50 seconds.
- VI. During 2014/15, all Metropolitan FRS had slower attendance times than in previous years

Comparison of Merseyside against the Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Services

Dwelling Fires

- 4. Merseyside has the fastest attendance time of all the Metropolitan FRS, with a time of 00:06:35 minutes. When compared across all English FRS, only Cleveland is quicker with a time of 00:05.27 minutes.
- 5. When compared against the English average of 00:07:45 minutes, Merseyside is well ahead of this performance, as are the majority of Metropolitan FRS's with the exception of South Yorkshire, which attended Dwelling Fires, on average in 00:07:59 minutes.

Primary Fires

- 6. Greater London has the quickest attendance time for primary fires of all the Metropolitan FRS with 00:06.51 minutes (marginally quicker than Merseyside). When compared across all English FRS, only Cleveland is quicker, with a time of 00:06.24.
- 7. When compared against the English average of 00:08:43 minutes, Merseyside is well ahead of this performance, as are the majority of Metropolitan FRS's with the exception of South Yorkshire which attended Primary Fires within 00:08:52 minutes.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 8. This report does not directly have any Equality and Diversity Implications for Merseyside as it is reporting national figures.

Staff Implications

- 9. There are no staff implications directly linked to this report. This report is for information only.

Legal Implications

- 10. MFRA have a statutory duty for the provision of firefighting.

11. This report uses data obtained from CLG. The report acknowledges that CLG are the source for the data obtained in this report.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

12. This report is for information purposes only.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

13. This report is for information purposes only.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

14. This report reflects the excellent performance of Merseyside fire crews in attending Dwelling Fire and Primary Fire incidents. Due to that the time of attendance is amongst the quickest in England it contributes to our mission by keeping our communities safer .

Recommendation

15. That Members;
- a) Consider performance in relation to this report concerning attendance times of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service appliances to Dwelling and Primary Fire incidents.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

FRS **Fire & Rescue Service**

CLG **Communities & Local Government**

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Review of CLG Fire & Rescue Attendance Times 2014/15

VERSION 1.1

STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE

Author: J Fielding
Work For: D Appleton
Date Assigned: 19/11/2015
Date Data Extracted: 20/11/2015
Work Completed: 30/11/2015

Document Type: Statistics / Maps Survey Report

System(s) Used: Incident Recording System
 FSEC / Vision BOSS
 Snap Surveys
 Oshens
 Other: Data obtained from CLG

Related Documents

Title: Fire Incidents Response Times: April 2014 to March 2015, England
Date of Document: 19/11/2015

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide a summary of how Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service performed within the recent CLG Publication: "Fire Incidents Response Times: April 2014 to March 2015, England."

At an England level, the CLG report¹ provides the following summary:

- The average response time to attend a Dwelling Fire was 7 minutes 45 seconds
- The average response time to attend a Dwelling Fire involving a casualty or rescue was 7 minutes 32 seconds
- The average response time to all Primary Fires was 8 minutes 43 seconds
- The average response time for predominantly urban FRS to Primary Fires was 7 minutes 42 seconds
- The average response time predominantly rural FRS to Primary Fires was 10 minutes 50 seconds

The following paper analyses two specific incident types attended including: All Primary Fires and Dwelling Fires. This paper compares performance against fellow Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Services and the England Average.

2. Methodology

It should be noted that the times provided within this paper differ from the KPI 137 – "Standards of Fire Cover" that forms part of MFRAs performance management suite, as CLG use a different methodology when analysing attendance time data. The CLG methodology is detailed below²:

Response Time

A response time measures the minutes and part minutes taken from time of call to time of arrival at scene of the first vehicle. The following incidents have been excluded from the average response time calculations:

- a. Where there was heat and smoke damage only.*
- b. Where road vehicle was abandoned.*
- c. Where the location of fire was derelict.*
- d. Where an FRA learned of the fire when it was known to have already been extinguished. Such incidents are known as 'late calls'.*
- e. Where the response time for an incident was over an hour or less than one minute.*

The last two of these exclusions have been applied to avoid erroneous data or exceptional incidents from skewing the averages.

Analysis undertaken:

- Information used in this paper uses the appendix spreadsheets provided by CLG as part of the "Fire Incidents Response Times: April 2014 to March 2015, England" release.
- The information was downloaded and interrogated using Microsoft Excel 2015.
- Please note there is no data available for **Tyne & Wear FRS**, the following extract is taken from the CLG document: "*Tyne and Wear 2014-15 Response Time data DCLG were informed by Tyne and Wear that 2014-15 response time data for their FRA were not robust. While they are resolving the issue we have used their 2013-14 response time data for the calculation of national and other totals in this release and its associated tables. This may therefore slightly affect the robustness of these totals in this release and may result in greater than usual revisions to 2014-15 data in next year's release.*"

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/477790/Fire_and_Rescue_Response_Times_2014-15_Statistical_Release.pdf

² Please note that due to this definition which omits certain incident sub classifications the counts for Primary Fires and Dwelling Fires within Charts 1 and 2 differ greatly from published figures produced by MF&RS and CLG

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3. Findings

Chart 1: Comparison of attendance times involving Dwelling Fires attended by Metropolitan FRS during 2014/15 (ordered by quickest attendance)

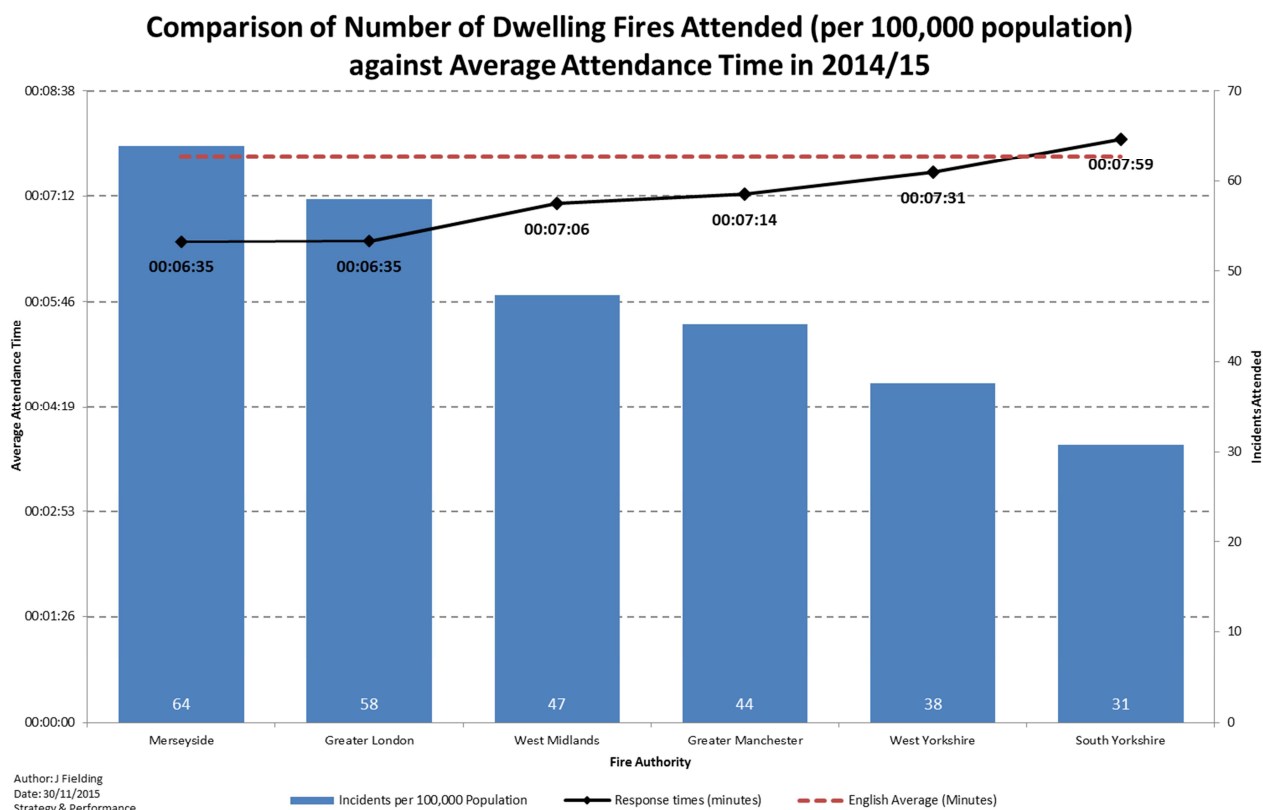


Chart 1 compares the average time to attend a Dwelling Fire (black line) against the English Average (red line) in minutes. The chart identifies that Merseyside has the quickest attendance time of all the Metropolitan FRS, with a time of 00:06:35³. When compared across all English FRS, only Cleveland is quicker with a time of 00:05:27.

When compared against the English average of 00:07:45, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service is well ahead of this performance, as are the majority of Metropolitan FRS's with the exception of South Yorkshire, which attended Dwelling Fires, on average in 00:07:59.

Table 1: Average Attendance Times to Dwelling Fires since 2010/11 (Met FRS)⁴

Fire and rescue authority area	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Merseyside	00:06:23	00:06:30	00:06:23	00:06:18	00:06:35
Greater London	00:06:44	00:06:36	00:06:37	00:06:30	00:06:35
West Midlands	00:06:29	00:06:15	00:06:24	00:06:40	00:07:06
Greater Manchester	00:06:36	00:06:28	00:06:18	00:06:39	00:07:14
West Yorkshire	00:06:46	00:06:36	00:06:40	00:06:57	00:07:31
South Yorkshire	00:07:19	00:07:20	00:07:21	00:07:50	00:07:59
Tyne and Wear	00:05:20	00:05:09	00:05:16	00:05:38	NA
England Wide	00:07:24	00:07:14	00:07:23	00:07:24	00:07:45

Table 1 provides a historical overview of average times to attend Dwelling Fires by Metropolitan FRS. The table identifies that between 2010/11 and 2013/14 there was some

³ Though it appears that Greater London have the same time, MF&RS are in fact marginally quicker

⁴ Key ↔: Red indicates an increase in response on the previous year. Green indicates a reduction (improvement in response)

evidence to suggest that FRS response to dwelling fires was getting quicker. However during 2014/15 all Metropolitan FRS have seen a reduction in their attendance times, though in the majority of cases this is only marginal.

The same trend of increasing attendance times is also mirrored within the English Fire and Rescue overall figure.

When incidents are compared at a 100,000 population rate, Merseyside proportionally attends more dwelling fires than any other Met Fire & Rescue Service.

Chart 2: Comparison of attendance times involving Primary Fires attended by Metropolitan FRS during 2014/15 (ordered by quickest attendance)

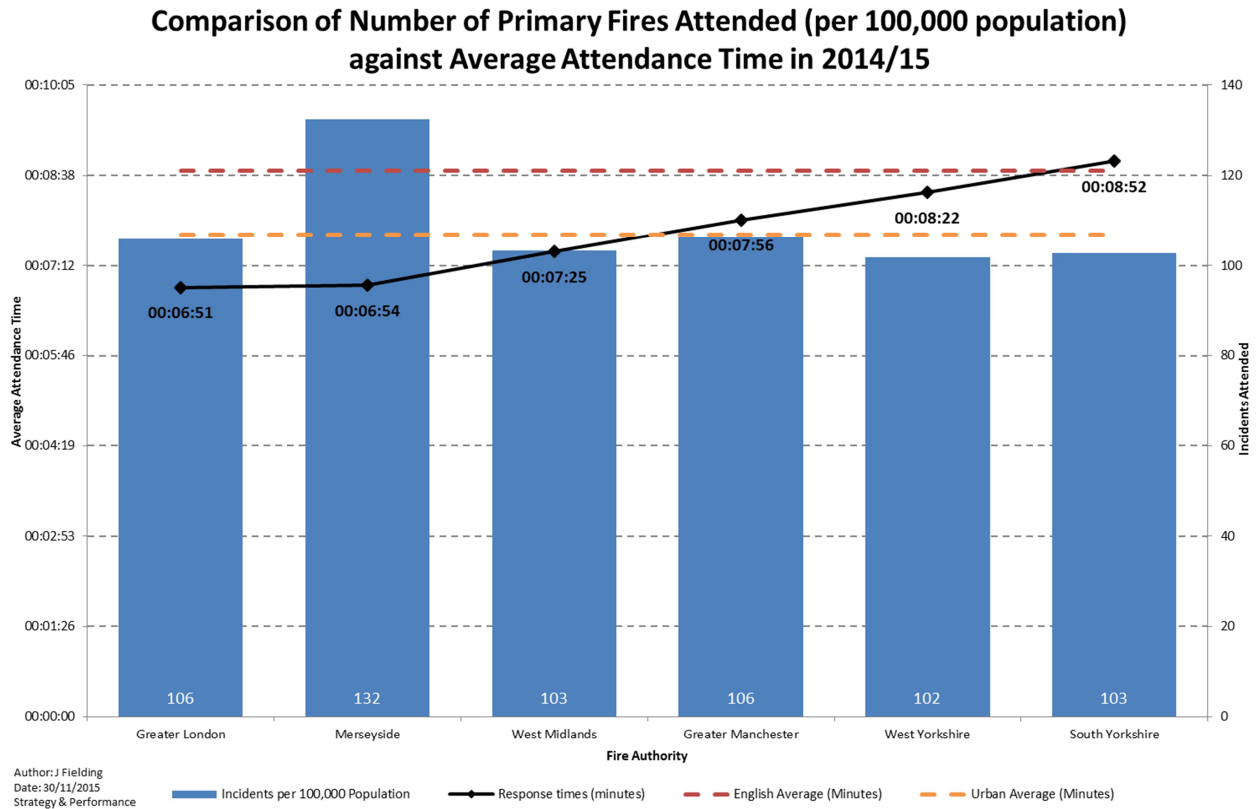


Chart 2 compares the average time to attend a Primary Fire (black line) against the English Average (red line) in minutes. The chart identifies that Greater London has the quickest attendance time of all the Metropolitan FRS with 00:06.51 (marginally quicker than Merseyside). When compared across all English FRS, only Cleveland is quickest with a time of 00:06.24.

When compared against the English average of 00:08:43, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service is well ahead of this performance, as are the majority of Metropolitan FRS's with the exception of South Yorkshire which attended Primary Fires within 00:08:52.

Also included on the above chart is the "Urban" average time to attend incidents which is equal to 00:07:42 (orange line). When compared to this average time, heavily urbanised FRS's including: Greater London, Merseyside and West Midlands perform well. However; Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire do not perform as well - possibly due to these FRS's having more rural locations (proportionally).

When incidents are compared at a 100,000 population rate, Merseyside proportionally attends more primary fires than any other Met Fire & Rescue Service.

Table 2: Average Attendance Times to Primary Fires since 2010/11 (Met FRS)⁵

Fire and rescue authority area	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Greater London	00:07:14	00:07:00	00:06:53	00:06:47	00:06:51
Merseyside	00:06:48	00:06:58	00:06:42	00:06:43	00:06:54
West Midlands	00:06:52	00:06:44	00:06:50	00:06:55	00:07:25
Greater Manchester	00:07:12	00:06:59	00:06:56	00:07:00	00:07:56
West Yorkshire	00:07:25	00:07:28	00:07:31	00:07:55	00:08:22
South Yorkshire	00:08:02	00:08:09	00:07:56	00:08:22	00:08:52
Tyne and Wear	00:05:43	00:05:32	00:05:42	00:05:58	NA
England Wide	00:08:16	00:08:11	00:08:11	00:08:23	00:08:43
Urban Fire & Rescue Services	00:07:22	00:07:16	00:07:13	00:07:21	00:07:42

Table 2 provides a historical overview of average times to attend Primary Fires by Metropolitan FRS. The table identifies that between 2010/11 and 2013/14 there was some evidence to suggest that FRS response to primary fires was getting quicker. However during 2014/15 all Metropolitan FRS have seen a reduction in their attendance times, though in the majority of cases this is only marginal.

The same trend; involving increasing attendance times is also mirrored within the English Fire and Rescue overall figure and Urban Fire and Rescue Service averages.

⁵ Key ⇐: **Red** indicates an increase in response on the previous year. **Green** indicates a reduction (improvement in response)

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FORWARD WORK PLAN FOR PERFORMANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2015/16

ITEM FOR SCRUTINY	REASON FOR SCRUTINY	DETAIL OF SCRUTINY	SCHEDULED FOR REPORTING	ASSOCIATED AUTHORITY AIMS	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/OFFICER
<p>Performance Against New AFA Protocol</p>	<p>To review performance against the new AFA Protocol and scrutinise the impact that the introduction of the new Policy has had on attendance at UwFS.</p>	<p>Report to be produced at the request of the Performance & Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the rationale underpinning the introduction of the Policy and the subsequent impact its introduction has had on attendance at UwFS and appliance availability.</p>	<p>Performance & Scrutiny Committee 23rd July 2015</p> <p>COMPLETE</p>	<p>Aim – Excellent Prevention & Protection</p>	<p>Lead Member for Community Risk Management – Cllr Jimmy Mahon</p> <p>AM James Berry – Community Risk Management</p>
<p>Fire & Health Exploring opportunities for collaboration.</p> <p>Understanding the potential implications of the Care Act 2015.</p>	<p>To scrutinise ways in which MFRA can work alongside partners from the health and care arena, to enable the Authority to play a wider role in the general health and wellbeing of the community; and mitigate some of the potential issues arising from the</p>	<p>Representatives from the health and care sectors, be invited to attend a special meeting of the Performance & Scrutiny Committee, to look at how they and the Authority might work together to address some of the issues arising from the Care Act 2015, moving forward.</p>	<p>Performance & Scrutiny Committee 3rd September 2015 (single status meeting)</p> <p>COMPLETE</p>	<p>Aim – Excellent Prevention & Protection</p>	<p>Lead Member for Community Risk Management – Cllr Jimmy Mahon</p> <p>AM James Berry – Community Risk Management</p>

	Care Act 2015 in relation to prevention activity and protecting the most vulnerable.				
Fire Control and the Mobilisation Process	To review the process for the mobilisation of resources to incidents	Requested by the Performance & Scrutiny Committee. Report to be produced in consultation with the relevant Lead Member regarding the mobilisation of the Authority's resources. The report be accompanied by a presentation to explain the mobilisation process and the role of Fire Control.	<p>Performance & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>5th November 2015</p> <p>Report deferred to 17th March 2016 meeting</p>	Aim – Excellent Operational Preparedness	<p>Lead Member for Operational Preparedness – Cllr Lesley Rennie</p> <p>AM Nick Searle – Operational Preparedness</p>
Implementation of the Management Review and impact on Partnership Arrangements	To scrutinise and monitor the implementation of the recent Management Review, to identify any shortfalls and issues regarding officer capacity, including potential impact on partnership arrangements.	Report to be produced regarding the implementation of the Management Review, to enable any shortfalls and any issues with regards to officer capacity to be identified, including potential impact on partnership arrangements.	<p>Performance & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>5th November 2015</p> <p>Report deferred to 17th March 2016 meeting</p>	Relevant to all Aims	DCFO Phil Garrigan

ITEM FOR SCRUTINY	REASON FOR SCRUTINY	DETAIL OF SCRUTINY	SCHEDULED FOR REPORTING	ASSOCIATED AUTHORITY AIMS	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
How effective is our Consultation Process?	To review our current consultation process and identify any possible improvements.	Report to be produced in consultation with the relevant Lead Member regarding the public consultation process in relation to the merger of Fire Stations, to enable any lessons learnt to be identified and considered for future consultations. To consider if any further scrutiny is required in this regard.	<p>Performance & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>5th November 2015</p> <p>Audit of consultation processes forms part of the Annual Internal Audit Plan – Report on hold pending outcome of Internal Audit</p>	Aim – Excellent People	<p>Lead Member Strategy & Performance – Cllr Barbara Murray</p> <p>Deb Appleton – Director of Strategy & Performance</p>
Progress against Staff Engagement Commitments	To scrutinise how the Authority is progressing against its Staff Engagements Commitments, devised in response to some of the main issues raised by staff during the staff survey and focus groups	Report to be produced in consultation with the relevant Lead Member, to monitor progress against the Authority’s Staff Engagement Commitments; and to enable Members to identify any further improvements/ avenues for engagement with staff.	<p>Performance & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>5th November 2015</p> <p>COMPLETE</p>	Aim – Excellent People	<p>Lead Member Strategy & Performance – Cllr Barbara Murray</p> <p>Deb Appleton – Director of Strategy & Performance</p>

<p>How well do we work with our Partners?</p>	<p>To establish how well we work with our major partners and how our partnership arrangements can be sustained moving forward, following reductions in resources and changes to service delivery.</p>	<p>A report be produced highlighting the partnerships which add the most value to the work of the Authority and how well we work with those partners to achieve meaningful outcomes; and how the Authority can continue to facilitate those partnerships in the face of significant reductions in resources and changes to service delivery.</p>	<p>Performance & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>12th January 2016</p> <p>(Deferred from last year's FwP and amended to reflect challenges in terms of facilitating partnerships, moving forward)</p> <p>To be removed and incorporated in report - <i>Implementation of the Management Review</i></p>	<p>Relevant to all Aims</p>	<p>Involvement from all Lead Members and Support Officers</p>
<p>Implementation of New HR Policies</p>	<p>To monitor the implementation of the new suite of HR Policies and Procedures around Conduct and Capability; and scrutinise the impact that their introduction has had on absence levels.</p>	<p>Report to be produced in consultation with the relevant Lead Member, regarding the implementation of the new suite of HR Policies and Procedures around Conduct and Capability and highlighting the impact that their introduction may have had on absence levels.</p>	<p>Performance & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>17th March 2016</p>	<p>Aim – Excellent People</p>	<p>Lead Member People & Organisational Development – Cllr Sharon Sullivan</p> <p>Director of People & Organisational Development – Nick Mernock</p>

STANDING ITEMS	REASON FOR SCRUTINY	DETAIL OF SCRUTINY	SCHEDULED FOR REPORTING	ASSOCIATED AUTHORITY AIMS	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
Function Updates (rotating)	To enable scrutiny of activity and performance within each of the following functions:	Reports and Presentations concerning Functional Updates to be provided at meetings as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Safety • Protection • Road Safety • Arson & ASB Reduction • Children & Young People 	Performance & Scrutiny Committee 5 th November 2015 - complete 12 th January 2016 17 th March 2016 19 th May 2016 T.B.C (next Municipal Year)	Relevant to all Aims	Lead Member for Community Risk Management – Cllr Jimmy Mahon AM James Berry – Community Risk Management
Performance Update Against Service Delivery Plan	To enable regular scrutiny of performance against the Authority's Service Delivery Plan.	Reports and Presentations concerning to be provided at meetings as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Quarter • 2nd Quarter • 3rd Quarter • Final Year End Update 	Performance & Scrutiny Committee 5 th November 2015 5 th November 2015 (report covered Q1 & 2) 17 th March 2016 19 th May 2016	Relevant to all Aims	Deb Appleton – Director of Strategy & Performance

<p>Review Forward Work Plan</p>	<p>To ensure that the Forward Work Plan remains current and in line with the Strategic Direction of the Authority.</p>	<p>To be included as a Standing Item on each agenda of the Committee.</p>		<p>Relevant to all Aims</p>	<p>Performance & Scrutiny Committee</p>
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ANNUAL/ BI-ANNUAL ITEMS	REASON FOR SCRUTINY	DETAIL OF SCRUTINY	SCHEDULED FOR REPORTING	ASSOCIATED AUTHORITY AIMS	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
Progress Against Equality & Diversity Action Plan	To enable regular scrutiny of progress against the Equality & Diversity Action Plan.	Reports produced bi-annually, in consultation with the Lead Member for Strategy & Performance	Performance & Scrutiny Committee 5th November 2015 - complete and 19th May 2016	Aim – Excellent People	Lead Member – Strategy & Performance – Cllr Barbara Murray Deb Appleton – Director of Strategy & Performance
Environmental Performance	To enable regular scrutiny of performance in relation to Environmental targets.	Reports produced bi-annually, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance, Assets & Efficiency	Performance & Scrutiny Committee 17th March 2016	Relevant to all Aims	Lead Member Finance, Assets & Efficiency – Cllr Jean Stapleton John McNeil – AM: Strategic Change and Resources
Health, Safety & Welfare Annual Report	To enable regular scrutiny of performance in relation to Health, Safety and Welfare matters.	Report produced annually/ bi-annually, in consultation with the Lead Member for Operational Response (whose remit covers Health and Safety)	Performance & Scrutiny Committee 5th November 2015 COMPLETE	Relevant to all Aims	Lead Member Operational Response – Cllr Ray Halpin AM Dave Mottram – Operational Response

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