



Service Policy FINPOL01 Charging Policy

Document Control

Description and Purpose

This document is intended to give guidance to personnel with regards application of the Authority's Charging Policy.

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01.03.2021	01.04.2022	I Cummins	I Cummins	TBC
Permanent	X	Temporary	If temporary, review date must be 3 months or less.	

Amendment History

Version	Date	Reasons for Change	Amended by
		Not applicable	

Risk Assessment (if applicable)

Date Completed	Review Date	Assessed by	Document location	Verified by(H&S)

Equalities Impact Assessment

Date	Reviewed by	Document location
		Not applicable

Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment (if applicable)

Date	Assessed by	Document location

Related Documents

Doc. Type	Ref. No.	Title	Document location
Policy	PREPOL07	Spate Conditions	MFRS Intranet Portal/Ops Preparedness
SI	0773	Charging for Services of the Fire Authority	MFRS Intranet Portal/Service Instructions
SI	0881	Consultation and Engagement Framework	MFRS Intranet Portal/Service Instructions
SI	0803	Special Service Incidents	MFRS Intranet Portal/Service Instructions

Contact

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Target audience

All MFRS	X	Ops Crews	Fire Protection	Fire Prevention
Principal officers		Senior officers	Non uniformed	

Relevant legislation (if any)

Fire & Rescue Services (England) Order 2004

The Localism Act 2011

1. Policy Introduction and Background

- 1.1. Fire Authorities are entitled to recover income from a range of discretionary fees and charges. This is in accordance with the schedule of authorised charges issued under the Fire & Rescue Services (England) Order 2004. The Authority may only charge for services as permitted by this Order.
- 1.2. The Localism Act 2011 amended the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 by allowing the Authority to charge a person or organisation for any action taken by the Authority on a cost recovery basis only.
- 1.3. The Service raises approximately 1,000 sales invoices per year for fees, charges, contributions and rent. This equates to income of approximately £2.5m and helps balance the annual budget. Any loss or reduction in the amount of budgeted income would require compensatory savings to be made elsewhere in order to balance the budget.
- 1.4. Consistent with its strategy for prudent financial management, the Authority will continue to recover income from the permitted range of discretionary fees and charges.
- 1.5. This policy formalises those arrangements, provides details about the fees and charges and how they are calculated, and sets out the treatment of Chargeable Special Services at operational incidents.
- 1.6. There is an obligation to ensure that discretionary fees and charges are recovered to prevent the Authority becoming the 'supplier of choice' due to providing some services 'free of charge,' in direct competition with businesses providing similar services. This results both in the loss of business for such organisations and for the Authority a loss of revenue to HMRC due to the lack of VAT collected.

2. Policy Explanation

- 2.1. As part of its Medium-Term Financial Plan to deliver a balanced budget (and in accordance with Financial Regulations), the Authority will seek to ensure that all income is recovered from discretionary fees and charges, based on the principle of cost recovery.
- 2.2. The charges and their calculation will be both proportionate and transparent and so the charges that can be levied are applied consistently and equitably across all service users.
- 2.3. Details about the 'Charging Policy' will be published on the Authority's website and service users signposted to that where appropriate.
- 2.4. The Authority currently charges for:
 - Commercial Training
 - Conference Facilities
 - Special Services
 - Incident Reports \ Interviews (Videos \ Photographs)
 - Private Hydrants \ Dry Riser Tests
 - Fire Safety Equipment

- Explosive Licences \ Amendments
- Petrol Certificates
- Cadet Uniforms
- Automatic Fire Alarms
- Reinforcing Moves
- Events

2.5. Where new charges are proposed there is a requirement to consult with any persons considered appropriate. Advice about who to consult with and how consultation should be undertaken will be provided by Strategy & Performance. No new charge will be made without prior consultation as required.

3. Policy Implementation

3.1. The Authority will continue to collect discretionary fees and charges in those areas it does currently.

3.2. The methodology for calculating discretionary fees and charges is set out in SI0773 (Charging for Services of the Fire & Rescue Authority). This also includes details about how rates are uplifted annually, where appropriate.

3.3. The charges include those for 'Special Services'. Fire services attend both emergency and non-emergency incidents. They cannot charge for attendance at emergency incidents but they do have discretion to charge for attendance at some types of non-emergency incidents. These non-emergency incidents are referred to as 'Special Services' and only a limited range of these are permitted to be 'Chargeable Special Services' as defined by the Fire and Rescue Services (England) Order 2004.

3.4. Details about attending 'Special Services' and the treatment of those that are deemed chargeable are set out in SI0803 (Special Service Incidents).

3.5. For other services (i.e. Commercial Training and Automatic Fire Alarms) formal contracts and licence agreements are in place that explain the contractual arrangements under which fees and charges are made. The basis of those charges is consistent with the principals set out in SI0773.