

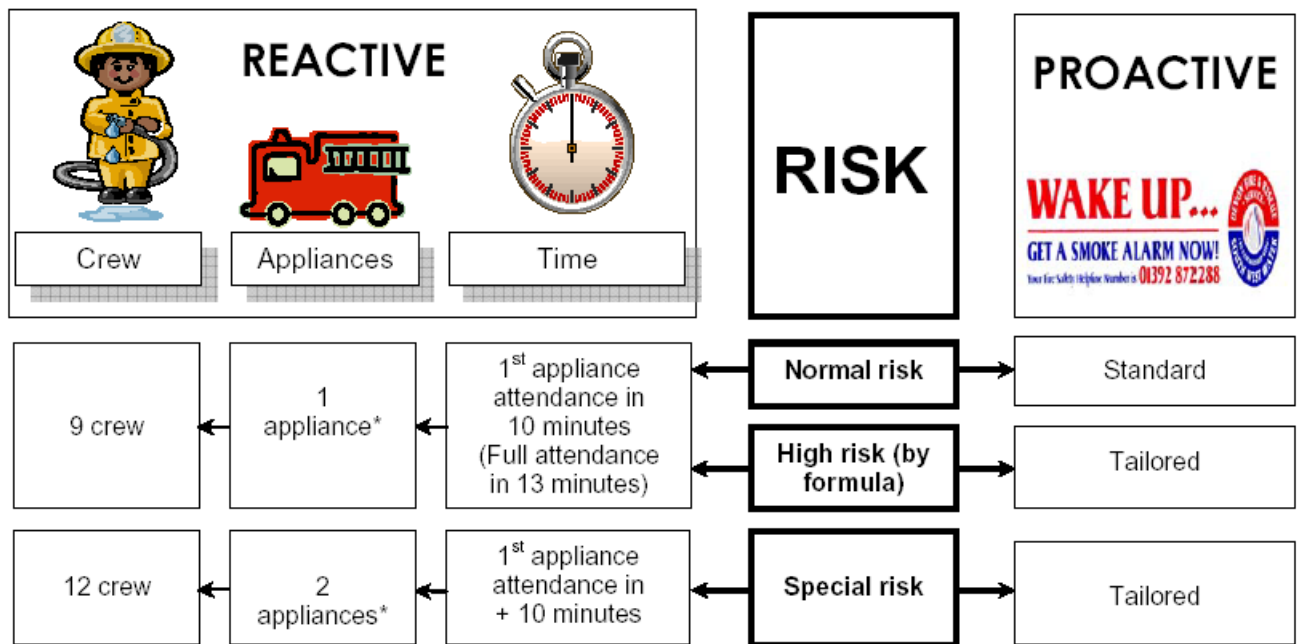
DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/09/2
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	22 JANUARY 2009
SUBJECT OF REPORT	COMMUNITY SAFETY PROACTIVE MEASURES
LEAD OFFICER	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Safety)
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the Committee supports the proposal set out within paragraphs 4 and 5 of this report for different employment contracts and conditions.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Following the introduction of enhanced response times for dwellings, there is an opportunity to implement a broader prevention strategy to provide targeted advice and visits for dwellings outside of the 10 minute response time. Additionally, the Service needs to continue to drive down risk amongst the highest risk communities who receive an emergency response within 10 minutes.</p> <p>This paper presents a proposal which supports this improvement to service delivery over the forthcoming planning year.</p> <p>If these proposals are implemented in their entirety they have the potential to improve the diversity of the Service's workforce.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	<p>The development of the advocate network can be met within existing CS budget codes for 09/10.</p> <p>The expansion of the CSAT model is an ongoing part of the Group planning process during 09/10.</p>
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment Methodology for Defining the Service's Risk Profile for Emergency Response and Proactive Work (CSCPC/37) • Draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12 (DSFRA/08/23).

1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Service adopted new response time for fires in dwellings recently and this improvement to service delivery resulted in better response standards for many rural communities. The former long-standing 'standards of fire cover' ¹ included an intention to reach rural dwellings with a single appliance within 20 minutes – this description was formerly known as the 'D risk' category. There was also a 'remote rural' category for which there was no specific response time, and these properties relied on the 'best efforts' of the Service.
- 1.2 The introduction of integrated risk management planning resulted in each Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) identifying and analysing its own risks and to subsequently develop a plan to respond to those identified risks in the most efficient and effective way. Devon & Somerset FRS undertook research and worked in conjunction with Dorset FRS and the University of Exeter to develop response standards for all dwellings across the Service area.
- 1.3 This paper and the proposal set out within it was considered by the Community Safety and Corporate Planning Committee at its meeting on 14 January 2009 (Report CSCP/09/1 refers)



2. **ASSESSING THE RISKS**

- 2.1 Across Devon and Somerset there are approximately 124,000 known dwellings beyond the 10 minute response time areas, many of which are on the fringes of the main conurbations but there are some considered to be 'remote rural'. The University research identified a range of risk types and categorised them into five groups. The first two groups are considered to be those presenting the highest risk of experiencing a fire and suffering as a consequence (e.g. the elderly living alone, disabled, etc). The Fire Standards of Emergency Cover (FSEC) tool-kit identifies that these two highest risk groups account for 150,761 residents (9.6% of the total population).

¹ Formulation of the national standards of fire cover was first laid down in 1936 and later implemented in 1947, following the Second World War They were subsequently reviewed in 1958 and 1985, but were never significantly changed. They were repealed on the introduction of the requirement for Service's to undertake local Integrated Risk Management Planning in 2003.

2.2 Working on this basis, it is reasonable to assume that approximately 10% of the total dwellings (approx 12,400) outside the 10 minute response time are likely to contain at least one member of the two highest risk groups.

2.3 The location of these most vulnerable members of our population is not easily identifiable. However, there are data-sets available in the public and commercial domain which can be combined by using well-developed software solutions. Such systems are able to draw on information such as levels of deprivation, public health figures, economy and income related statistics, and other social demographic data.

3. **THE DELIVERY PROPOSAL**

3.1 Initially, the Service will need to improve its ability to access and analyse risk information in order to prioritise those wards with the greatest predominance of high risk groups and to then ensure that readily accessible information and advice is made available to those populations.

3.2 The Service will then need to improve its delivery provision by developing a delivery strategy which builds on the excellent work of our station-based employees and our Community Safety Action Teams. Further to this, the Service will introduce the concept of community fire safety advocates. Over the forthcoming 12 month period the Service will assemble a body of skilled employees and advocates to target these highest risk groups. Those falling within the same high risk groups within the 10 minute response time areas will continue to receive the attention of the station-based staff who will deliver a Home Safety Visit for each property, which will include the installation of a 10 year smoke alarm on each level of the property.

3.3 All such risk areas will be offered advice and those falling within the risk groups will receive a visit, whilst those deemed to fall within the normal or lower risk bands (three to five) will be offered suitable information which will enable them to assess the hazards within their home.

4. **COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION TEAMS (CSAT)**

4.1 The CSAT is a concept that offers preventative work on a secondary contract for any employee of the Service. The individuals are selected on the basis of their capability to provide a sufficient number of hours and their ability to engage with members of the public through the delivery of a range of activities, such as Home Safety Visits, Hot Strikes, School Talks, etc.

4.2 The CSAT currently exists in West Somerset and North Devon. Further teams are being developed in West Devon and South Devon areas (these are presently at the stage of appointing new members). This delivery option provides a very efficient and reliable means of delivering preventative activities in more rural areas by Service employees.

5. **ADVOCATES**

5.1 Advocates are representative of the communities within which they serve and would typically work in partnership with community groups, external agencies and fire station personnel to identify vulnerable residents and subsequently deliver the most appropriate intervention. Experience from other Service's with similar schemes would suggest that advocates used in this way have a well-developed knowledge of their community and are capable of delivering a preventative message to minority groups in a way that is sensitive to the environment and the community's needs.

5.2 Advocates could also originate from within rural communities or from specific hard-to-reach minority groups. This would present unique opportunities which would advance the Service's capability to engage with the full spectrum of residents across Devon and Somerset.

6. **DEVELOPING AND EVALUATING THE DELIVERY METHODS**

6.1 The Community Safety Department at Service Headquarters will initiate a project to improve the targeting of the highest risk groups and subsequently, to develop the above mentioned delivery methods to advance the intervention to those priority groups. Within the first year (2009/10) the cost of these developments can be met from the existing CS delivery budget codes. The project will apply a staged review to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery methods.

6.2 The review process will seek to measure any added value in terms of the Service's mode of delivery and will assess the impact of the CSAT and the Advocates on the targeted communities of Devon and Somerset.

7. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 That the Committee supports the proposal set out within paragraphs 4 and 5 of this report for different employment contracts and conditions.