

Reductions to annual returns data collected from
Fire and Rescue Services and to Fires of Special
Interest reporting – Consultation
Summary of responses



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Section 1

Executive summary

This consultation was targeted at Fire and Rescue Services in England and other organisations with an interest in Fire and Rescue. Its purpose was to seek views on proposed reductions to: i) non-financial annual returns data collected from Fire and Rescue Services, and to ii) 'Fires of Special Interest' reporting forms.

Analysis of the responses indicated widespread support for the proposals. A very clear majority of respondents supported the proposed reduction in the annual data returns from Fire and Rescue Services to the Department, and for the termination of the majority of 'Fires of Special Interest' forms.

According to most respondents, the proposed data collection for the annual returns strikes the right balance between value and burden. However, ten of the 34 Fire and Rescue Authorities which responded, felt that the burden of the proposed data collection would still outweigh its value (Table 3).

A majority of respondents noted that they intend to use the data being collected (Table 2).

Among data for which it was proposed no longer to collect, sickness absence data received by far the most requests for retention, with a sizeable minority of Fire and Rescue Services in favour of retaining this for benchmarking. The Department would be happy to help these Fire and Rescue Services make contact with one another. Other requested data items are noted in the sections of this document that report the responses received to questions 1a and 1c.

A number of respondents highlighted the time required and the risks to accuracy from having to re-key data into the web form collection system used in recent years (in response to question 1f(ii)). The Department will implement data collection by spreadsheets for the Spring 2011 collection, thus allowing blocks of data to be pasted from Fire and Rescue Service's system outputs, avoiding the need to re-key data. These spreadsheets have in-built validation to assist in ensuring quality.

Other key themes included (relate to responses to question 1d):

- timeliness of data – the Department intends to bring forward publication of annual return data to August, from September (in 2010), compared to November in previous years

- the continued need to ensure data quality – the Department will continue to work closely with Fire and Rescue Services on validation of data provided, and remains keen to be alerted to practical issues around definitions, and will continue to seek to improve guidance
- a lack of awareness of how data are used – this was added onto the returns at the beginning of 2010, and has been noted in the new specification for the returns at Annex B of this document.

There was enthusiasm for the proposed opt-in email alert service to notify of future dates and to provide links to the Department's fire statistics publications (noted among responses to Question 3).

Section 2

Next steps

The Department will implement the new much reduced set of annual returns for the 2010/11 data collection for which the returns should be made by 4 June 2011. This includes only minor amendments from the specification proposed in the consultation document. The specification of the new returns is given at Annex B of this document. This is also available in tabular format on request.

The requirement on Fire and Rescue Services to send completed Fires of Special Interest forms to the Department will end for incidents after 31 March 2011, with the exception of the 'Fires of Special Interest A6' form, which will still be required. The Department's Crown Premises Inspection Group, which continues to need the information from the A6 return, intends to issue a redesigned form to reflect the ongoing requirements in due course.

As suggested in the proposals in the consultation document, the Department would like to continue to receive notification by phone to the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor duty officer (0303 444 4101) of instances of:

- multiple fatalities
- serious injury or death of a firefighter
- other significant incidents.

Enquiries on this notification process should be directed to:

ChiefFire&RescueAdvisers@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Other enquiries can be directed via :

FireResearchandStats@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Section 3

Background

The consultation ran from Friday 26 November 2010 to Friday 14 January 2011. It was based on proposals to reduce: i) non-financial annual returns data collected from Fire and Rescue Services from over 80¹ tables to 23², and ii) to cease the majority of Fires of Special Interest reporting.

The consultation was conducted according to the Code of Practice on Consultation. As a technical consultation targeted at a specific audience, and given the linked annual cycle of the Department's and the annual returns carried out by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy, the consultation was open for seven weeks rather than the twelve weeks standard for public consultations.

¹ It has been pointed out that among the previous arrange of tables, there were cases of large table or where tables were stacked together, so the 80 under represents the volume of data under the previous arrangement.

² A handful of the tables have been split to simplify data entry. Had the tables been as previously presented, there would have been 23. This is the most accurate number in terms of reflecting the data burden relative to the previous arrangement of tables.

Section 4

Responses to the consultation

Responses were received from 41 organisations, of which 34 were Fire and Rescue Authorities, four were from trade associations, and the others being from the Chief Fire Officers Association, the Fire Brigades Unions and one from the Advanced Manufacturing Services Directorate of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

No respondent requested anonymity or confidentiality of response. A full list of responding organisations is shown in Annex A.

Table 1 – Numbers of respondents to the consultation

| Type of organisation | Number targeted by emails | Number of responses |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Fire and Rescue Authorities | 46 | 34 |
| Other public sector | 6 | 1 |
| Membership organisations/unions | 5 | 2 |
| Trade bodies | 5 | 4 |
| Total | 62 | 41 |

The responses to the consultation are summarised in the remainder of the document, structured according to the questions in the consultation document. A representative range of comments has been reproduced in the boxes.

Section 5

Comments on the annual returns

Question 1a

Are there any data items for which it is proposed to no longer collect, that you consider should be retained as national data sets?

Thirteen Fire and Rescue Services made requests for some more data to be collected than was proposed in the consultation document.

Among data items that some Fire and Rescue Services felt the Department should still collect, nine reported that sickness absence statistics (table HR8) were used for benchmarking and performance monitoring purposes and therefore should not be removed from the national data set.

Four Fire and Rescue Services called for the data on calls handled by to be retained, as they made use of the information, for example in relation to challenging calls.

Other items that some respondents felt should be retained included recruitment and training data. Some of the comments on the cases for the retention of such data items are highlighted below:

Sickness data (former table HR8)

“Sickness is a key performance indicator for any organisation. When efficiency and value for money are crucial it is essential to be able to benchmark our performance in this area. The annual returns provide us with figures for each Fire and Rescue Service, which are calculated in a common way”

“We have some concern that you are no longer collecting sickness data – national benchmarking on this is useful to inform our relative performance”

“Crucial to monitor and benchmark in times of financial pressures. Benchmarking will enable high performing fire authorities be identified and best practice be shared”

“Required for national benchmarking and comparison purposes, this is a key dataset for most Fire and Rescue Service’s”

“The proposals appear to suggest that sickness absence data will no longer be recorded. This is a useful source of benchmarking information which should continue at least at a summary level”

Calls handled (former table OP1)

“It would appear that OP1 is no longer required, although this is the only area that we report to DCLG call challenging as this is not shown in Incident Recording System submissions.”

“[Data is used]... to provide an indication of the total demand for services (including false alarms) services by the Brigades Control Room”

Recruitment

“We would agree with the removal of the majority of tables suggested except those relating to recruitment which remove the national dataset and the ability to analyse recruitment. Referring to equalities and diversity in particular, this removes the ability to establish best practice.”

Department’s response

The Department notes that nine Fire and Rescue Services expressed that they were keen to retain sickness absence data, as were a number for data on emergency calls and recruitment. Since this information is not needed by the Department, it would be inappropriate to request it from Fire and Rescue Services, because of: i) burden, and ii) the benefit of local ownership of what information is to be shared and how. The Department would be happy to put Fire and Rescue Services keen to share these data in touch with one another.

Question 1b

Of the data items for which it is proposed to continue to collect and compile into a national data set, which would you use?

The majority of respondents (26) stated that they would use some of the items compiled in a national dataset (either at national or local level), with health and safety statistics mentioned by 23 respondents, followed by Fire Safety audits and related activity (22).

Table 2 – Number of respondents stating that they would use the data

| Category | |
|--|----|
| Health and safety | 23 |
| Fire Safety Audits and related activity | 22 |
| Community fire safety | 21 |
| Numbers of staff and joiners | 20 |
| Leavers | 19 |
| Fire and Rescue Service vehicle incidents and casualties | 19 |
| No use of any of the proposed national data sets | 4 |

Thirteen respondents stated that they would potentially use all of the information from the annual returns.

A number of respondents pointed out that various information would still be collected locally:

Would still collect similar data locally

“Information is collected in a number of systems providing local management information, a subset of which forms the basis of the annual data returns.”

“We will continue to gather more detailed and complete data about its activities for local use. This will be made available via corporate publications, Freedom of Information and other formal routes.”

“Leavers and joiners would be monitored on a local level in line with staffing requirements. This Service will continue to use the Fire Service Equality Framework as the basis for measuring progress on equality and diversity in the organisation, therefore Equality and Diversity data collation will still be viewed in line with local implementation.”

“Clearly at a local level we will still collect and assess this level of data, transform this into useful intelligence and will continue to support areas including equality and diversity work.”

Question 1c

Do you have any suggestions for alternative or additional data collection not included in this consultation?

The following suggestions were received:

Health and Safety (injuries)

"It would be helpful if there was some joined up working with the HSE to develop leading indicators rather than still report on 'lagging' indicators through the returns. It is interesting that training data (which could form some basis for a "leading" indicator) is being dropped altogether."

"A recent report from the Health and Safety Executive criticised the Fire and Rescue Service as a whole for only reporting on 'lagging' indicators in terms of health and safety issues and that Fire and Rescue Service should be reporting on 'leading' indicators for instance in terms of competency and training."

"Additional data should also include accident types i.e. slips/trips/falls, handling/lifting/carrying etc"

"We would also question why the DCLG only want data on fire fighters [injuries]. For an individual service like ours that has only a small number of incidents it is difficult to spot trends and draw valid conclusions. However, such data collected on a consistent basis nationally can have sufficient statistical validity to draw useful conclusions. It is not enough to say we can collect our own – we can but it so much more worthwhile if brought together"

Contracts

"Multiple contracts – Other contracts, [We] have some staff on three contracts which have resulted from flexible duty systems – how would these be accommodated? The definition would have to take into account multiple contracts and state very clearly how these must be reported."

Fire safety returns

"Workshop consultations took place earlier this year across the country. . . ., the outcomes of these workshops should be considered and adopted as appropriate."

Leavers

"Main historic use for us is comparing leavers by length of service especially for Retained Duty System – [proposed to be] no longer collected"

Smoke alarm replacement

"Would find useful to record defective smoke detectors that need replacement. As well as the reason or defect causing replacement. Help to identify trends both locally and nationally"

Department's response

In relation to **health and safety**, the new annual returns to the Department cover injuries to firefighters in order to continue to provide high level national monitoring. Such data has limited value, since by its nature, it does not provide detail of injuries. The lack of detail prevents analysis of the nature and causes of the injuries. These returns would therefore be dropped if Fire and Rescue Services were to put in place a mechanism to compile more detailed data on injuries nationally.

On the point raised about **contracts**, differing contract type for retained duty firefighter cover are reflected in the new returns.

Regarding **fire safety returns**, the workshops were part of a project whose findings are available at: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/FireResearchReport52010.

For **leavers**, the length of service dimension to leavers data required many tables, and so was inherently burdensome. It is no longer required by the Department.

With regard to **smoke alarm replacement**, the Department considers that providing a return on numbers of smoke alarms fitted and/or replaced would be an unnecessary burden, since, wherever appropriate, fitting these would always be a key part or follow-up to a home check. Insights into numbers of smoke alarms needing replacement ought not to merit national monitoring, since data from a single service, supplemented with that from a few other services, where appropriate, should be able to provide sufficient insight.

Question 1d

Do you have any further comments in relation to using the data from these Annual Returns? For example on the data themselves, or on the publication Fire and Rescue Operational Statistics and its accompanying data tables:

www.communities.gov.uk/fire/researchandstatistics/firestatistics/firerescue/

Timeliness of access to data and data quality were noted as key issues:

Access to data

"If data is shared openly with the sector, is accurate and gathered consistently, each Fire and Rescue Service can use that data for its own management information and benchmarking purposes."

"Once data has been input via the web portal, it would be beneficial having the ability for Fire and Rescue Services to download data to the same level of detail to that input for use locally"

Data quality

"We have some concerns over the quality of data and the data audit processes that are in place in individual Fire and Rescue Service's. Therefore we have a natural "health warning" over any of the data produced in the annual report. That said we would use for comparison purposes but would seek further info from individual Fire and Rescue Service's in terms of process benchmarking."

"There have also been concerns in the Service about different data sets not being compatible and incomplete information being collected"

Overall, comments in response to this question could be grouped into the following themes:

| Theme | Department's response |
|--|--|
| i) Timeliness of publication/ access to the data | The publication date of the Operational Statistical Bulletin for England has been brought forward from November to September, now to the same schedule as the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability data return. Most of the lag to publication is the initial data collection period and the validation of data. With the smaller data return, we intend to publish by the end of August in the future. The Department acknowledges the suggestion that even more timely access would result from access to unvalidated data. The Department takes the view that use of unvalidated data carries risks – for example of misinformed decisions if data turn out to be inaccurate – that outweigh waiting a matter of weeks. |
| ii) The importance of data quality assurance | The Department plans to continue to work closely with Fire and Rescue Services on the validation of the information submitted. |
| iii) Calls for further improvement in the guidance | The content and presentation of the guidance has been improved substantially over recent years. Clarifications can continue to be sought by e-mail or telephone, and are the means by which issues can be identified and improvement to the guidance made. |
| iv) Size of the data collection to date | The new set of annual returns focuses on headline data and is much smaller than that previously collected. It is also worth noting that ahead of the collection in Spring 2010, the Department decreased the burden by reducing amount of annual return data collected from Fire and Rescue Services by around ten per cent, including streamlining alongside the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy return. Prior to 2010, the two returns contained some similar items. |
| v) Lack of awareness on how the data is used | Information on how each data item is used was added onto the forms in the data collection website at the beginning of 2010. The Department carried out a fresh assessment of need for the elements of annual return data before this consultation. Descriptions of these needs are included in Annex B. |

Question 1e (i)

Overall, how do you consider the balance between value and burden of the proposed new arrangement of 23 tables.

More than half of respondents deemed the proposed new arrangement of 23 tables to have struck the balance about right. Three organisations feeling that the value provided by the returns would be somewhat greater than the burden and ten respondents felt that the burden would still be greater than the value.

Table 3 – Fire and Rescue Services’ opinion on value relative to burden under new proposals

| Burden much greater than value | Burden somewhat greater than value | Balance about right | Value somewhat greater than burden | Value much greater than burden | Unable to say | No response | Total |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------|
| 2 | 8 | 17 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 34 |

Question 1e (ii)

Overall, how do you consider the balance between value and burden of the previous arrangement of over 80 tables.

The majority of respondents (29) stated that the burden previous arrangement was greater than the value, with only three consultees stating that the balance was either about right or that the value was somewhat greater than value.

Table 4 – Fire and Rescue Services’ opinion on value relative to burden under previous arrangements

| Burden much greater than value | Burden somewhat greater than value | Balance about right | Value somewhat greater than burden | Value much greater than burden | Unable to say | No response | Total |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------|
| 21 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 34 |

This result confirms the case for a substantial reduction relative the previous data collection arrangement as proposed in the consultation, and thus a reduction in the burden to Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Question 1f (i)

How much burden would be reduced under the proposed reductions?

A majority of the Fire and Rescue Authorities that responded to the consultation (22 out of 34) reported that the proposed reduction would provide a reduction of burden. Many noted that the extent of this burden was difficult to quantify. Three respondents felt that the proposed reductions would have minimal impact on the burden, as the data was still collected at local level.

Reduction of burden

“A large burden will be reduced in particular with the decrease in the time required to collate, removal of a large amount of cross-tabulation and reduction in data verification. In most Fire and Rescue Service’s there are no dedicated staff, who work full time on data collection and inputting.”

“A large burden will be reduced in particular with the removal of a large amount of cross-tabulation in the human resources returns.”

“Over 50%”

“Difficult to provide an exact indication, however based on previous experience, estimated 40% time reduction on current requirements”

“Estimated at 15 days work per year.”

“Difficult to quantify, although a welcomed reduction”

“It is difficult to quantify in exact hours the time taken to complete the returns. It is a big task that is well planned in any given year.”

“All those [returns] lost are seen as a welcome reduction in burden and unnecessary to this Service in light of local issue which will be focused on in the foreseeable future. The current government view on localism has enabled us to focus on what is happening in our communities, and the value that these communities puts on services we deliver is the driver behind our current data collation and reporting.”

Question 1f (ii)

Do you have any other comments from the perspective of supplying these data?

A number of Fire and Rescue Services noted the additional burden and risks of error of having to manually key in data, as was required on the web data collection system.

Department's response

The Department will implement the collection of new reduced annual returns by spreadsheets with in-built validation. These will permit pasting blocks of data from Fire and Rescue Services' own systems, thereby removing the task of manual keying in of data.

Mechanism of data collection

"The process used in previous years has been very reliant on manual data entry. This is not good data management practice and introduces a potential source of error into the data. A robust electronic method of submission should be considered."

"To eliminate possible errors, it would be preferable if the data could be uploaded directly from source databases or via an Excel spreadsheet which could be uploaded directly into the DCLG database."

"To ensure data integrity and accuracy and to improve efficiency, data should be uploaded from source databases"

"The effort of re inputting data that we already hold in our own systems is significant."

"We do believe that most if not all data items will still be collected by most Fire and Rescue Services and that the costs associated have primarily been issues around data re-input into existing technologies provided by DCLG"

Data entry website

"Too many people accessing the site at the same time causes issues. It is difficult to enter data efficiently and the design does not lend itself to efficiently populate."

"The data collection process had been improved in recent years by the move to entering data on the dedicated website rather than the previous process of completing excel files and sending a zip file of data with a large delay before DCLG reconciliation of this data"

Several Fire and Rescue Services pointed to the need for maximum lead time for changes to the data items collected, and to the benefits of stability of the data required.

Department's response

The Department continues to support these principles, particularly for the lead time for new data items. The reductions to the annual returns for the period 2010/11 will produce a substantial reduction of burden with minimal issues, despite the short notice, since they are, almost without exception, a subset of data in previous annual returns.

Lead time for notification of the changes

"If changes are planned to data collection requirements they must be notified well in advance. We are not equipped to make swift changes to data collection systems."

"Changes to the returns should have as long a lead time as possible allowing software providers sufficient time to develop and test changes made to support the returns."

"It would be beneficial if Fire and Rescue Services were advised in advance of the collection year to which changes are being proposed, particularly where additional data is being requested."

Stability of data requirements

"[We] hope that the requirements do not change further."

"Don't change the data required or the data definitions each year"

"Once the decisions are made a period of stability in terms of data collection would be welcome"

Section 6

Comments on Fires of Special Interest forms

Question 2a

Do you think there will be any significant gaps in available data caused by the removal of the requirement to submit completed forms to the Department. If so, please explain what they are.

Twenty six of the thirty one respondents who commented on the proposals to terminate the majority of the information collected on 'Fires of Special Interest' forms felt that this would not cause any significant gaps in available data, with the Incident Recording System capturing related information.

Support for the removal of Fires of Special Interest

"There will be no significant gaps in available data caused by the removal of the requirement to submit completed Fires of Special Interest forms to the Department."

"As it has been identified that there are significant issues with the reliability and validity of this data collection, it would seem logical to cease reporting"

"There are significant issues with the reliability and validity of this data collection, it would seem logical to cease reporting. In most cases locally, the data is not used and is provided for DCLG purposes only. Some of the data is also included in Incident Recording System data and is therefore duplicated."

"Most of the information required for fires of special interest reporting is now collected on the Incident Recording System forms and is accessible to DCLG. We therefore welcome the removal of the requirement to complete and return Fires of Special Interest forms as this will reduce unnecessary duplication."

Question 2b (i)

For Fire and Rescue Services only:

How much burden would be reduced under the proposed reductions?

As for the annual returns, most of the Fire and Rescue Services who responded could not accurately quantify how much burden would be reduced. The consensus seemed to be that the reduction in burden under the proposals would be modest.

Burden reduced

"We submit around 40 forms per annum. Any proposal to reduce the amount of forms that need to be completed/returned is welcomed [...] Fire and Rescue Authority although the impact wouldn't be huge since DCLG are still expecting to be notified of fires in Crown premises."

"Estimated at 0.25 days work per month."

"Minimal impact due to the low number of Fires of Special Interest returns sent in a year."

"We don't believe that these forms create a burden and in fact can provide the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor office with important information that would be delayed by other means."

"If we are still supplying the data for Category A6 and information on serious injury or death of firefighters, and significant incidents and/or multiple fatalities then there is little overall reduction in the burden on us, particularly if we continue to collect them for local purposes."

"In terms of Fires of Special Interest monthly returns there will be no time saving if we still have to complete it for Category A6"

Question 2b (ii)

Do you have any other comments from the perspective of supplying these data?

Several respondents noted that attacks on firefighters that occurred away from incidents (fires, non-fire incidents and false alarms) would not be recorded any longer. Such attacks are a small minority and can be reported to the duty officer of the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor is deemed significant.

Several respondents, though notably not Fire and Rescue Services, noted that they were keen for some form of a Fires of Special Interest reporting system to be retained.

Definition of ‘incident of special interest’

“In summary we conclude that a new flexible and adaptable Fires of Special Interest system is required that meets current and as yet unspecified future requirements to periodically review aspects of fire safety performance, in systems or products, to better protect the public and gain safety efficiencies in building construction and consumer protection”

“A more modern, flexible approach should be taken to defining an “incident of special interest”, and collecting data relating to those incidents

- *There is special interest in fires involving automatic fire suppression systems.*
- *There is special interest in fires in timber framed buildings.*
- *There is special interest in fires that spread through partial penetrations of fire resisting construction.”*

Department’s response

The case for a renewed Fires of Special Interest reporting system is not clear. The new arrangements cover both i) rapid, and ii) detailed reporting of incidents: rapid reporting is covered as Fire and Rescue Services should report incidents of significance to the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor Duty Officer, and detailed analysis is possible via the Incident Recording System – this captures details of fires in much more detail than a parallel system could.

Finally, six respondents commented on the proposal to retain the Fires of Special Interest Crown premises form:

Fires in Crown premises (A6)

"[There is some] difficulty [...] in correct and consistent identification of Crown premises. Services are reliant on their own data in order to provide this return, but the additional information to the consultation makes reference to a Crown Premises Inspection Group premises database. Making these data available to services in order to improve their own data would be a more beneficial piece of work."

"We don't agree that A6 fires in Crown premises can't also be taken from the Incident Reporting System. As [we] input directly into the System via the web form you have notification at the same time as we do. It is as easy for the center to run a report on fires in prisons as it is for each Fire and Rescue Service to do so and will be much more efficient if done centrally."

"Also reporting on A6 remains impossible – the Incident Reporting System does not identify a Crown premises and our crews will not always know at time of incident. In reality this means reporting at prisons as these are the only ones that are clearly Crown. Why not insert a field on the System that matches the Crown Premises Inspection Group database against the System gazetteer and inputs whether a Crown premises?"

"... the Fire and Rescue Service may not identify a premise as being Crown because it is not always obvious and/or made known to the operational crew attending the incident."

Departmental response

The reason for retaining the Crown Premises Fires of Special Interest reporting form is for rapid reporting with little detail to the Department's Crown Premises Inspection Group is required to allow for early investigation. At present the Incident Recording System has been implemented by Fire and Rescue Services such that records should be completed within two weeks of the date of the incident. Furthermore, some Fire and Rescue Services who have their own implementation of the Incident Recording System, choose to transmit records in batches only after data have been quality assured some time later.

The Department will look into the feasibility of developing the functionality of the Incident Recording System as suggested to include Crown Premises Inspection data, taking account of cost and the priority relative to the case for other developments.

Section 7

Other comments relating to Fire and Rescue Statistics

The consultation invited any other comments, including on the Department's publications and user engagement.

Timeliness was again a key theme:

Timing of the publications

"The range of publications provided by DCLG need to be published in a timely way in order that they can inform improvement plans."

"Publication of documents should be sufficiently timely to have meaning/value within individual Fire and Rescue Services."

Departmental response

As noted, these non-financial annual return data are published in *Fire and Rescue Service Operational Statistics*. Publication is planned to be by the end of August, compared to September in 2010, and in November in previous years. The timeliness of publication of fire and rescue incident and casualty statistics has also been improving following the switch to the Incident Recording System, with time lags to publication halved.

In respect of other comments made in relation to Fire statistics publications, it is worth noting that the Department has been moving to the reporting to financial year periods, rather than calendar years, and that the Department intends to continue to develop the cross-cutting nature of its annual fire statistics publication.

Use of the publications

“All reporting of publications should be based on the financial year rather than the calendar year.”

“The current set of publications allows useful ‘top level’ benchmarking between services.”

“It is important that DCLG continues to monitoring trends and activities across the whole Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that best practice is shared across Services.”

“Where possible, documents should be consolidated.”

“Services are responsible for their performance and data analysis is one of the methods employed in order to understand their business better [...] Given the drive to localism and sector led improvement, it should be the responsibility of the service itself to publish regular reports on the fire and rescue service performance.”

Three respondents highlighted the value of sector-led performance management, and of various groups which carry out analysis and benchmarking, noting that these endeavours were well integrated.

Departmental response

The Department understands that increased availability of incident data would help here, hence the outline proposals sent out to Fire and Rescue Service Chief Officers and Chairs on 4 February 2011 for comment.

Respondents highlighted that the proposed opt-in e-mail notification to receive publication would be useful. The Department intends to implement such a service from summer 2011.

Opt-in

“The opt-in email notification facility would be useful”

“Email notification would be very useful to multiple addresses via ‘opt in’ as suggested”

“An opt-in e-mail notification facility for all Fire and Rescue Statistics would be advantageous particularly as the statistics cover all different areas of the service. This would make it easier to disseminate the information to the appropriate department.”

Annex A

Respondents to the consultation

| Name of organisation | Type of organisation |
|---|---------------------------|
| Avon Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Advanced Manufacturing Services Directorate, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) | Other Public Sector |
| The Business Sprinkler Alliance (BSA) | Trade bodies/association |
| Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) | Membership organisation |
| Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Cleveland Fire Brigade | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Dorset Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Essex County Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| European Fire Sprinkler Network | Trade bodies/association |
| Fire Brigade Union (FBU) | Membership organisation |
| Federation of British Fire Organisations (FOBFO) | Trade bodies/association |
| Fire Protection Association (FPA) | Trade bodies/association |
| Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Humberside Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Kent Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue | Fire and Rescue Authority |

| Name of organisation | Type of organisation |
|---|---------------------------|
| London Fire Brigade | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| West Midlands Fire Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue | Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority |

Annex B

New reduced non-financial annual returns from Fire and Rescue Services from Spring 2011 (for 2010/11 collection)

HR1 – Staff strength by role and contract type

For monitoring trends in staffing levels and an essential input for modelling of pay bill and pension fund

| Contract type | Category |
|---|---|
| a. Wholetime Strength Full-time Equivalent | Brigade Manager, Area Manager, Group Manager, Station Manager, Watch Manager, Crew Manager, Firefighter |
| Retained Duty System Strength (24 hour units of cover): b. All staff c. RDS: Of which also wholetime but on separate contract d. RDS: Of which part of wholetime contract e. Fire Control staff | Group Manager, Station Manager, Watch Manager, Crew Manager, Firefighter |
| Support/Full-time Equivalent (FTE) | Support staff |

HR2-5 Staffing numbers by equality and diversity strands

The need for HR2-5 links to the Department's responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010

HR2 – Wholetime firefighters by role and equality and diversity strand (Headcount)

| Equality and diversity strands | Category |
|--|---|
| a. Gender: Men, Women b. Ethnic origin: White British or Irish, any other White background, Mixed Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese, Any other Minority Ethnic Background, ethnic origin not stated c. Age: 17-24, 25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66+, age not stated d. Sexual orientation: Bisexual, Gay/Lesbian, Heterosexual, sexual orientation not stated e. Disability: Disabled, Not Disabled, disability not stated f. Religion: Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Other, None, religion not stated | Brigade Manager, Area Manager, Group Manager, Station Manager, Watch Manager, Crew Manager, Firefighter |

HR3 – Retained duty system firefighters by role and equality and diversity strand (Headcount), and HR4 – Fire control staff by role and equality and diversity strand (Headcount)

| Equality and diversity strands | Category |
|--------------------------------|--|
| As per HR2 | Group Manager, Station Manager, Watch Manager, Crew Manager, Firefighter |

HR5 – Support staff by role and equality and diversity strand (Headcount)

| Equality and diversity strand | Category |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| As per HR2 | Total headcount |

Vehicle Incidents (VE1)

For high level monitoring of trends of vehicle incidents in relation to public safety

| Accident information | Category |
|---|--|
| Total number of accidents | Fire appliances (on and off blue light), cars and vans (on and off blue light), other appliances |
| Total number of fire and rescue service vehicles involved | |
| Number of "vehicle damage only" | |
| Number of service personnel killed | |
| Number of service personnel injured | |
| Number of non-service personnel killed | |
| Number of non-service personnel injured | |

Leavers (LE1-4)

An essential input for modelling of pay bill and pension fund

LE1 – Number of wholetime firefighters leaving by role and reasons

| Reasons for leaving | Category |
|---|---|
| Dismissal on disciplinary grounds, Medical discharge, Resignation due to harassment or discrimination, Poor performance/efficiency, Resignation to take other employment outside the Fire and Rescue Service, Compulsory redundancy, Voluntary redundancy, Early retirement, Normal retirement, Re-employment by another Fire and Rescue Service, Re-employment as non-uniformed personnel within the same Fire and Rescue Service, Deceased, Other | Brigade Manager, Area Manager, Group Manager, Station Manager, Watch Manager, Crew Manager, Firefighter |

LE2 – Number of retained firefighters leaving by role and reasons

LE3 – Number of fire control staff leaving by role and reasons

LE4 – Number of support staff leaving by role and reasons

| Reasons for leaving | Category |
|---------------------|--|
| As LE1 | Group Manager, Station Manager, Watch Manager, Crew Manager, Firefighter |

Fire Prevention (FP1)

FP1 – Campaigns and initiatives and home fire safety risk checks

High level monitoring of community fire safety activity, and in particular home fire safety checks, and of some groups that are a priority nationwide

| Campaigns and initiatives | Category |
|--|--|
| All campaigns and initiatives, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Firesetter and anti-social behaviour schemes and other youth diversion, – Other youth fire safety programmes | Number of Visits Undertaken/Activities, and personnel hours spent on |
| Home Fire Safety Checks | Category |
| Total Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) carried out by FRS: of which elderly (65+), and of which disabled | Numbers of Home Fire Safety Checks, and hours spent |
| If known: Total Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) carried out by partners: of which elderly (65+), and of which disabled | Numbers of Home Fire Safety Checks, and hours spent |

Fire Safety Audits and related activity (FS1-9)

To monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

| Unchanged from previous years' returns: FS1: Fire Safety Audits and Outcomes FS2: Enforcement Activity (Other than fire safety audits reported on FS1) FS3: Alterations Notices FS4: Enforcement Notices FS5: Prohibition Notices FS6: Non-compliance resulting in action of any type (excluding prosecutions) FS7: Prosecutions FS8a: Prosecutions – convictions FS8b: Prosecutions – acquittals FS9: Petroleum, explosives and dangerous substances |
|---|