



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

FIRST RESPONSE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 03 April 2009

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the current First Response Scheme and to inform them of the findings of the Communities and Local Government (CLG) report on Co-Responding.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : David Horton
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Tel : 0115 967 0880

Email : david.horton@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact : Elisabeth Reeson
(0115) 967 5889 elisabeth.reeson@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service introduced the concept of Co-Responding through its inaugural Integrated Risk Management Plan in 2004. Encouraged by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Fire and Rescue Services were encouraged to implement such schemes which result in improved rates of survival for victims.
- 1.2 Although a legal ruling deemed that it was not within a firefighter's contractual obligations, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service have committed to deliver a service in areas of need certified by the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS). This is done on a voluntary basis by staff employed at stations performing the function.
- 1.3 The Service has recognised, along with members of the Fire and Rescue Authority, that the value of the co-responding initiative is that it can profoundly assist the communities in Nottinghamshire and it is for this reason the Service is developing the initiative to ensure greater resilience and compatibility with our core service delivery.
- 1.4 Communities and Local Government (CLG) have published the product of a research project initiated to gather, collate and analyse information and opinion on activities, apparatus, practise and prospects for co-responding throughout England. This was a response to a Select Committee on the Fire and Rescue Services' recommendation that CLG in conjunction with the Department of Health (DoH) develop a national co-response protocol which includes guidance on how to pay for co-responding schemes.

2. REPORT

2.1 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Update

- 2.1.1 As part of standard procedures the Service reviews its operational policies to ensure they remain valid and effective. Following a recent trial utilising specifically equipped vehicles, the Co-Responding Scheme was amended and re-branded as a "First Response Scheme".
- 2.1.2 The use of smaller vehicles has allowed the Service to provide a response to the community without impacting on the overall provision of fire cover. An amended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is now in place with EMAS and internal policies and procedures have been updated.
- 2.1.3 The amended procedures also have the potential to reduce the number of appliance moves, thus reducing unnecessary risk to the community.

- 2.1.4 One notable attendance initiated under the Service's new arrangements recently saw a Southwell crew respond to a report of a gentleman reportedly suffering from cardiac arrest. Defibrillation took place and the gentleman survived. EMAS have commented positively on the incident and the speed of the response made by the Southwell crew.
- 2.1.5 Additionally the Service is now moving towards the provision of defibrillators on all appliances with the Service's dedicated trainer delivering first response training to all staff. This has been received as a positive move and crews have already deployed their skills at road traffic collisions
- 2.1.6 There is no requirement from EMAS for all areas of the Service to deliver First Response as a provision in conjunction with them. However, with the areas of need providing the service, along with all appliances having defibrillators, the overall delivery of intervention to the community is significant.

2.2 CLG Research

2.2.1 As stated in paragraph 1.4 above, the CLG research report was driven by a response to a Select Committee's enquiry as to a national protocol. The key findings of this report were:

- Over one third of front line appliances have defibrillators and that by the end of 2008/9 this figure is expected to rise to over 50% nationally, with further possible expansion beyond that.
- For nearly 70% of Category A (life threatening emergency) calls to which they respond, fire and rescue service responders in England reach patients within eight minutes, which is the target which the Ambulance Service sets for such life threatening cases.
- The number of fire stations utilising fire and rescue service responders has been growing. In 2000 there were 10; at the end of 2005 there were 62; and now there are 99.
- The research highlighted an average of 10 incident responses per station per month.
- Although defibrillators are often considered the centre piece of clinical equipment for co-response schemes, they are used in only 5% of co-response activities. Oxygen therapy and general first aid are used most often.

2.2.2 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's development of its original scheme into the current First Response Scheme reflects many of the practices and findings of the CLG report. The number of volunteer stations remains steady and meets current levels of demand from EMAS. Further stations are being considered at this time.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Service does budget for the costs of meeting First Response from within its budgets. The revised scheme does have some potential for reducing the impact, however this is unlikely to be cost neutral as more stations consider volunteering to support the scheme.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As members are no doubt aware, the High Court determined that participation in such schemes is not a contractual obligation by way of reference to the fire service role maps. Therefore all participants of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service First Response Scheme are volunteers.
- 4.2 Ongoing training is met by the Service in respect of defibrillators. EMAS have assisted in the additional vehicle training free of charge to ensure those responding are adequately trained.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial equality impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached at Appendix A.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct implications under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) or the subsequent Crime and Disorder Regulations (Statutory Instrument 1831) 2007.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The implication highlighted above in Section 4 has been assessed and complied with.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Service has no legal responsibilities with regard to co-responding schemes, however the absence of such a scheme would present a greater risk to members of the community. These risks are reduced by the provision of the scheme within Nottinghamshire.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Initial Equality Impact Assessment Questionnaire

This questionnaire will enable you to decide whether or not the new or proposed policy or service needs to go through a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Title of policy or service						
Name of Employee completing assessment: David Horton				Department and Section: Response		
1. State the purpose and aims of the policy or service. <i>This should identify “(the legitimate) aim” of the policy or service</i> The purpose of this report is to raise awareness of current service activity and national research.						
2. Who is responsible for implementing it? Response Directorate.						
3. Who is likely to be disproportionately affected by the proposal? People from which of the equality strands? (please tick)						
Age	Disability	Family Status	Gender	Race	Sexual Orientation	Religion or Belief
4. If no boxes are ticked – there is no need to continue the EIA						