



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS

A NEW APPROACH, A NEW POLICY

Community Safety

17/07/2009



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Five Year History of NFRS attending UFS

YEAR	TOTAL CALLS	UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS	PERCENTAGE OF CALLS
2004	18,891	4,466	24%
2005	18,115	4,498	25%
2006	18,103	4,456	25%
2007	17,500	4,625	26%
2008	15,807	4,743	30%



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Policy 2011 & 2025

Two approaches:

- 1) Reduced mobilising of fire engines
- 2) “Off-Line” policy

- Defined an UFS
- Detailed the impact of UFS on NFRS
- Unwanted Fire Signal Form
- Placing premises on “999’s”

Effectiveness of reducing the UFS that NFRS respond to is extremely limited with these current policies



COSTS TO OUR ORGANISATION

- 15,807 calls per year of which 4,743 were UFS (2008 figures)
- Estimated costs to our organisation:
 - A) Financial**
Many variables to consider
 - RDS £188 per call (hourly rate)
 - WDS £93 per call
 - Average £140.50 x 4558 = £640,399
 - B) Personnel hours**
 - Approx 30 minutes per call
 - Staff hours lost = 11,395 (5 crew x 30 mins per call)



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ESTIMATED COSTS BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS

- A South Wales brigade estimated £953 based on a typical PDA of 2 pumps and 1 special (total cost of UFS £4.7 million)
- Norfolk estimated £334 per appliance (average time 30 - 40 mins)
- Shropshire £300 per call
- Leicestershire £300 per call

Cheshire estimate £1,700 per appliance

DCLG estimates true costs to F&RS at £1,970 per call



Strategies of Other F&R Services

- CFOA Policy: Staged Approach.
- No AFA attendance, unless backed up by “999” call. *(Subject to certain criteria)*
 - Criteria based response *(sleeping risks, High risk)*
 - Ops crews unwanted fire signal form
 - Liaison with Responsible Person
 - CFRMIS database of repeat offenders
 - Call Challenging
 - Enforcement Action



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Key Elements of the New Policy

- Departmental Ownership (F.P.)
 - New Fire Control Procedure
- A Defined Operational Procedure
 - Clear Role Definition
 - Enforcement Hierarchy
 - Guidance Flow Charts



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Call Challenging

- Control challenge calls from A.R.C's (Alarm Receiving Centres) and Occupiers
 - List of premises exempt from policy
 - Confirming need for NFRS attendance
- Policy links to a new Fire Control Operational Procedure
 - Call logged as “false alarm - unattended”



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Legal Position

Legal advice has been taken regarding the contents of
“The Fire And Rescue Services Act 2004”.

- Under section 7 of the F&RSA 2004, a F&RS has a duty to make provision for the purpose of extinguishing fires in its area and protecting life and property in the event of fires. Such provision to include making arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel.
- This wording of the F&RSA 2004 gives any fire and rescue service considerable latitude in the arrangements it makes to discharge its function. **The law is quite clear that there is no duty on a F&RS to answer a call for assistance nor take care to do so (court of appeals decision in Capital and Counties PLC v Hampshire CC (1997)).**
- ***Therefore, a FRA is entitled to adopt an unwanted fire signal policy and there is no risk of claim against the FRA arising from its adoption.***

Browne & Jacobson (2009)



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Call Challenging Results

Avon	report a reduction of	25%
Oxfordshire	report a reduction of	29%
Leicestershire	report a reduction of	27%

LFRS reported in October 2008, Non-cashable savings of £177,300 in July and August 2008. (Based on DCLG figure of £1,970 per appliance)



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Implementation

- Support and training for Fire Control
- New procedural guide created for control
- AM, GM & Point of Contact officers Briefed
- Operational crews briefed on new policy
- Administrators briefed and trained on CFRMIS
- CFRMIS training/Access for watches
- Internet advice page for commercial premises
- Media press release
- 12 month performance review



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Looking Ahead

Call Challenge all AFA, AFD systems between set times ie (09:00 to 17:00)

**Not responding to any fire signal
(unless backed up by 999 call unless unoccupied)**

Proceed to check non-emergency approach

Regular updates to A.R.C's detailing new policy



**ATTENDANCES TO ALARM CALLS AT HOSPITALS BY HOUR OF DAY
FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2008**

	False Alarm	Fire	Special Service	Total
0.00	12	1	1	14
1.00	14	1	2	17
2.00	10	0	1	11
3.00	15	0	0	15
4.00	16	2	0	18
5.00	17	0	2	19
6.00	22	0	1	23
7.00	34	2	0	36
8.00	40	2	1	43
9.00	41	1	1	43
10.00	54	1	3	58
11.00	41	3	1	45
12.00	36	2	1	39
13.00	37	2	3	42
14.00	63	1	0	64
15.00	32	1	3	36
16.00	33	2	0	35
17.00	32	0	2	34
18.00	32	2	2	36
19.00	30	0	1	31
20.00	22	0	1	23
21.00	26	2	0	28
22.00	24	1	0	25
23.00	27	0	0	27
Total	710	26	26	762



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Thoughts & Views

