



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

RESOURCING THE RETAINED REVIEW

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 23 October 2009

Purpose of Report:

To present Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's response to three of the recommendations within the Retained Review and to request appropriate resources for these responses to be actioned.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Frank Swann
Chief Fire Officer

Tel : 0115 967 0880

Email : frank.swann@notts-fire.gov.uk

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

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In response to the growing issues affecting the resilience and future of retained firefighters, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, with the endorsement of the Fire Authority, commissioned an independent review of the service within Nottinghamshire. The review took place over nine months during late 2008 and 2009, with the final document being presented to Elected Members on 31 July 2009 prior to formal publication.
- 1.2 The review highlighted much good practice within Nottinghamshire and also contained 25 recommendations of how the Service may improve its recruitment, retention, development and engagement with its retained staff. The recommendations were prioritised as immediate, intermediate and strategic actions indicating whether they were aspects which could be addressed in the short (1 year), medium (2 year) or long (3 year) term. This report details proposals of how to address three of the recommendations.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The final report was organised into six sections – retained duty system (RDS) recruitment and attraction; RDS retention; emergency response; RDS management and integration; RDS training, and community safety. This report proposes actions to respond to:

Recommendation 19 – complete a documented review of the recent Retained Support Officer (RSO) pilot scheme, including the removal of the RDS Station Manager and identify what is required to sustain and support the RDS section of the Fire and Rescue Service for the future.

Recommendation 24 – re-assess the budget calculation and how it is allocated for community fire safety activities for RDS stations, and ensure that the targets are achievable within the identified provision.

Recommendation 25 – complete a review and audit, jointly with a cost benefit analysis, on the operational procedure for home safety checks (HSCs). The review to concentrate on the workload impact it has upon station activities, and to explore other ways of working and how partnership opportunities, particularly with local authorities and agencies, could be utilised.

Review of the RSO Pilot Scheme

- 2.2 The RSO and Retained Liaison Manager (RLM) scheme came about following a clear need to support the retained employees. The arrangements in place prior to this were limited and a paper was taken to HR Committee in October 2008 following a pilot period seeking to establish seven part-time posts to undertake retained support. The outline structure with which these personnel operate is detailed at Appendix A.

- 2.3 Within the review it was identified that there was confusion as to the roles of the RLMs and RSOs within the District based structure. Questions were also raised around the reporting lines which were/are directly to the Area Manager (AM) Response. Additionally, the issue of resilience was raised with regard to the non-uniform categorisation of the role and exactly what the operating parameters are.
- 2.4 Whilst it may be considered that these comments did not fully appreciate the role, the issue of capacity to support the RDS within Notts with such limited resources was evident. Despite best efforts, many in post had stepped down and the Service still has in place only two RSOs. Additionally, a recent advert for the new Retained Liaison Managers posts had not resulted in significant applications or high calibre candidates.
- 2.5 To alleviate some of the impact of the lack of resources, members of SMT made the decision to reinstate the Station Manager Retained Liaison post as per the findings of the Retained Review. This was a cost-neutral decision with the role being vacant within the Response department. An appropriate job description and role was agreed and an appointment has been made following the recent Station Manager process.
- 2.6 The decision that now needs to be made is how the Service can respond to the recommendations made by the review and what structure needs to be put in place. Initially it is worth reflecting that the Retained Review identified a need to “complete a documented review of the recent RSO pilot scheme.” However, a further review at this stage may only identify what the Service has already found, which is a need to support the retained, a lack of clarity over the role of RLMs and RSOs, and a lack of resources due to high turnover and vacancies.
- 2.7 Therefore it is proposed that the Service makes a bold step to introduce the structure as proposed in Appendix B. The key areas are those highlighted in red, which show those roles which will be dedicated to retained support within the Response structure.
- 2.8 The key elements of this in summary are as follows:
- The re-introduction of the Retained Liaison Officers at Station Manager level, reporting to the AM on strategic retained issues. (This has already been agreed and actioned and is cost neutral;)
 - The creation of three new Watch Manager ‘B’ posts to act as Retained Liaison Managers within the Districts of South, North West and North East (the city has no retained responsibility).
 - The reduction of the RSOs and RLM posts through natural wastage.

- 2.9 The full budgetary implications for this proposal are contained within Section 3 below, however this proposal can be contained within the existing revenue provision.
- 2.10 The benefits that having these three permanent posts will bring are as follows:
- General day to day support and advice to retained;
 - Provide a link to SDC officers regarding RDS development;
 - Operate as a liaison for local employers;
 - Assist with exercise planning, Ops 1s and 7(2)d arrangements;
 - Audit monthly returns on community safety (CS) operations and other work;
 - Liaise with Finance over RDS payments;
 - Supplement ridership shortfall at supervisory level to keep retained appliances available.
 - Liaison with GMs over retained contribution to district planning.

Home Safety Check and Community Safety Activities

- 2.11 In recent years retained personnel have been encouraged to undertake more community safety work, including HSCs, within their respective areas and communities. Whilst improving the integration of retained within the Service, this has placed a huge burden on each section. Retained Managers have expressed concern on their ability to deliver and respond to the growing requests for HSCs. This is largely due to time, availability of staff, and the need to maintain operational competence.
- 2.12 From a managerial perspective it can also be considered an inefficient way to deliver services to the community where a whole appliance will need to be staffed to undertake a HSC. Although this is normal in wholetime employees' circumstances, the Service is already paying these salaries, for the retained it has the potential to multiply the hourly cost by four, five or six dependent on crew numbers.
- 2.13 In responding to both Recommendations 24 and 25, the Service has quickly looked at the budget calculations and how in the short term a more cost-effective way of delivering HSCs can be achieved.
- 2.14 The current budget specifically available for retained personnel for Community Safety work is £173,852 per annum. This in previous years has been spent to within £2k of the allocated budget. Therefore the option to better utilise this budget for a more effective CS delivery and in particular the delivery of HSCs, for which there is a backlog in retained areas, would be beneficial. The freeing up of time for retained to dedicate to operational matters is also essential.
- 2.15 It is therefore proposed that NFRS extends the concept currently employed within CS with the specialist HSC / Surestart operative role and employs individuals solely for the purpose of carrying out homes safety checks. Although there would be no requirement for specific engagement with

Surestart style projects, the HSC provision would ensure that all HSCs within retained areas are collected and actioned (this would not apply to those stations / station areas covered by wholetime and retained).

- 2.16 By employing two further persons (one North, one South) the Service would ensure that two employees, solely employed for the delivery of HSCs would be operating in these areas and with an estimated timeframe of one HSC per hour, could achieve up to 6 per day excluding breaks and travel time. A JE has been produced (attached as Appendix C) and has been assessed at Grade 1 (£11907 – £14197).
- 2.17 Initial amendments have been made to retained budgets to ascertain whether this approach would be affordable in the longer term and it is also offering the potential of some savings to the Service.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Review of the RSO Pilot Scheme

- 3.1 The current budgetary provisions for RDS support is as follows:

Ops Support Officers	£100k
Retained Support posts	£75k
Total:	£175k

An estimate of the pay budget for the Retained Support was £53k from the original provision of £75k and a small amount of the residual £22k has been allocated elsewhere. The £100k Ops Support budget has not been used and has resulted in underspend and carry forward for 18 months.

- 3.2 The costs of the three Watch Manager B posts would be £133,518 including on-costs (£44,506/post). The two RSO posts at 12hrs/contract would cost £17,470 (£8735/post). This would give a total cost of £150,988 per annum.
- 3.3 The Service currently has six Ford Focus vehicles left from those originally purchased for the mobile Watch Manager pilot scheme. The allocation of these would present zero cost to the Service. In addition, there would be some IT and telephone requirements, but this should fall within the original £175k budget, even taking account of some virement. Any difference could be met from pay award underspend.

HSC and Community Safety Initiatives

- 3.4 The current budgetary provision for retained community safety is £173,852 per annum. Based upon an assessment of 10-12 community safety events per annum, plus the costs associated with the proposal to employ two specific HSC operatives, the following revised figures are achievable:

Current budget : £173,852

Revised budget : £33k per district = £99k (for general CS activities)

Costs associated with HSC initiative = circa £40k
Net savings = circa £33k

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Review of the RSO Pilot Scheme

- 4.1 The Service would need to consider the following:
- The uniform establishment would increase by three posts at Watch Manager level;
 - The non uniform establishment would decrease by the seven posts identified within this report, five initially and the further two as appropriate.
- 4.2 All posts would require appropriate job descriptions and be advertised. If approval could be gained in October, then a January 2010 advert could maximise the outcomes from the Autumn 2009 supervisory managers assessment process.
- 4.3 As five of the posts to be disestablished are vacant and the others are to be addressed by natural wastage, there are no redundancy implications for the Service.

HSC and Community Safety Initiatives

- 4.4 The recruitment of the two non-uniform community safety operatives will increase the non-uniform establishment by two full-time posts. These would need to be advertised and recruited in the appropriate way.
- 4.5 Post-recruitment there will be some training requirements with regard to safeguarding lone working and manual handling. This can be met by the organisation through access to appropriate courses.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial equality impact assessment shows that the outcomes of the Retained Review are likely to have a positive effect on all aspects of equality, including those most at risk from fire, who should see an improved service as a result of these actions.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Under Part 2, Section 6 and Section 7 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the following obligations are placed on the Fire and Rescue Service:

- A Fire and Rescue Authority must make provision for the purpose of providing fire safety advice in its area.
- A Fire and Rescue Authority must make arrangements to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to meet all normal requirements.

7.2 The proposals contained within this report are part of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's arrangements to meet their statutory duties.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service commissioned a review of its retained service provision to ensure that it can continue to provide a service to its community. The recommendations arising from the review therefore present solutions and options to ensure a resilient and robust service. Failure to respond to these recommendations could result in the Service failing to meet both its statutory duty and its service to the community.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve:

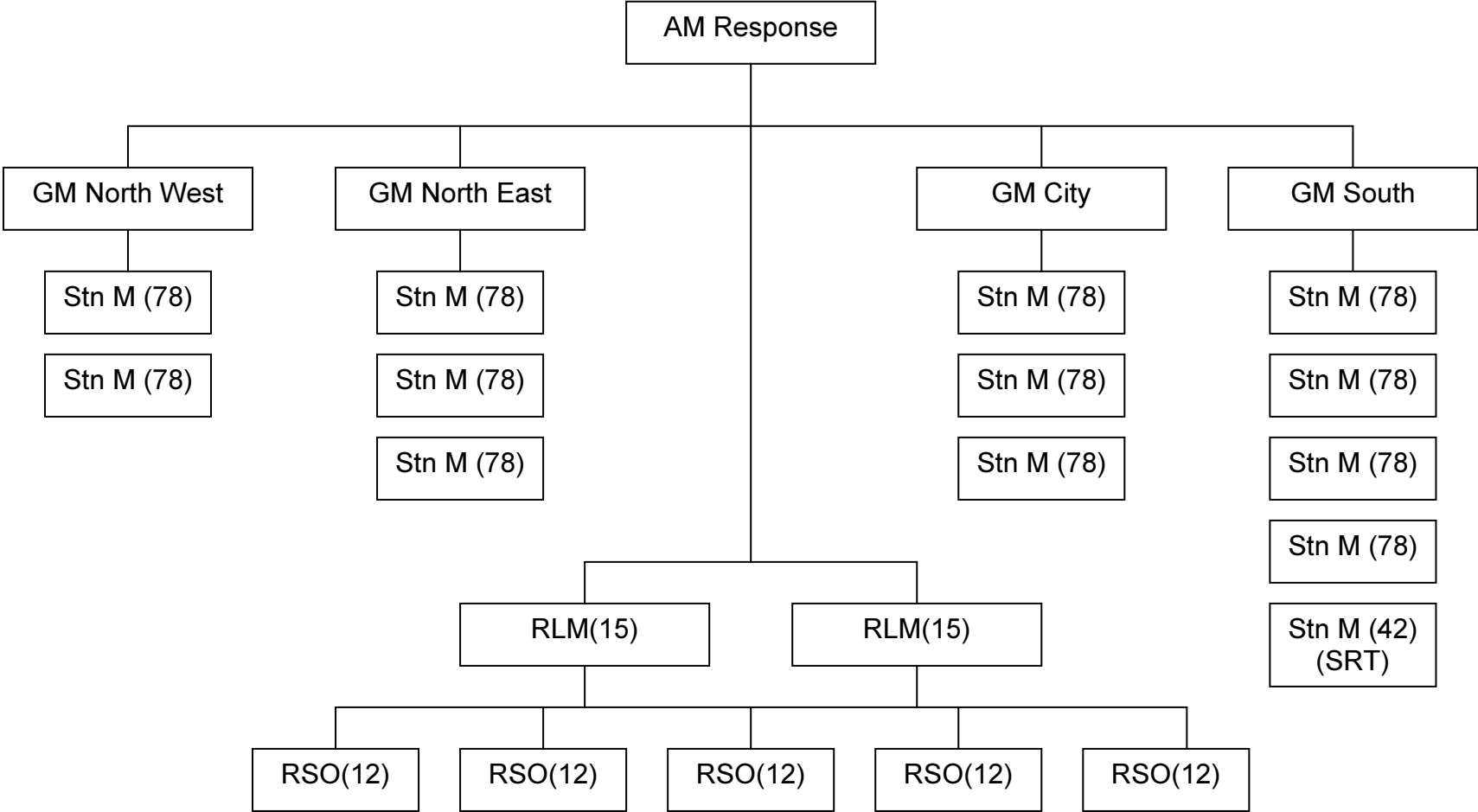
- 9.1 The establishment of three Watch Manager posts to undertake the role of Retained Liaison Managers and the disestablishment of the seven posts previously approved.
- 9.2 The establishment of two Home Risk Assessment Operatives to undertake home safety visits with retained areas.
- 9.3 The revision to the budget to accommodate recommendations at 9.1 and 9.2 above, from existing provision.

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

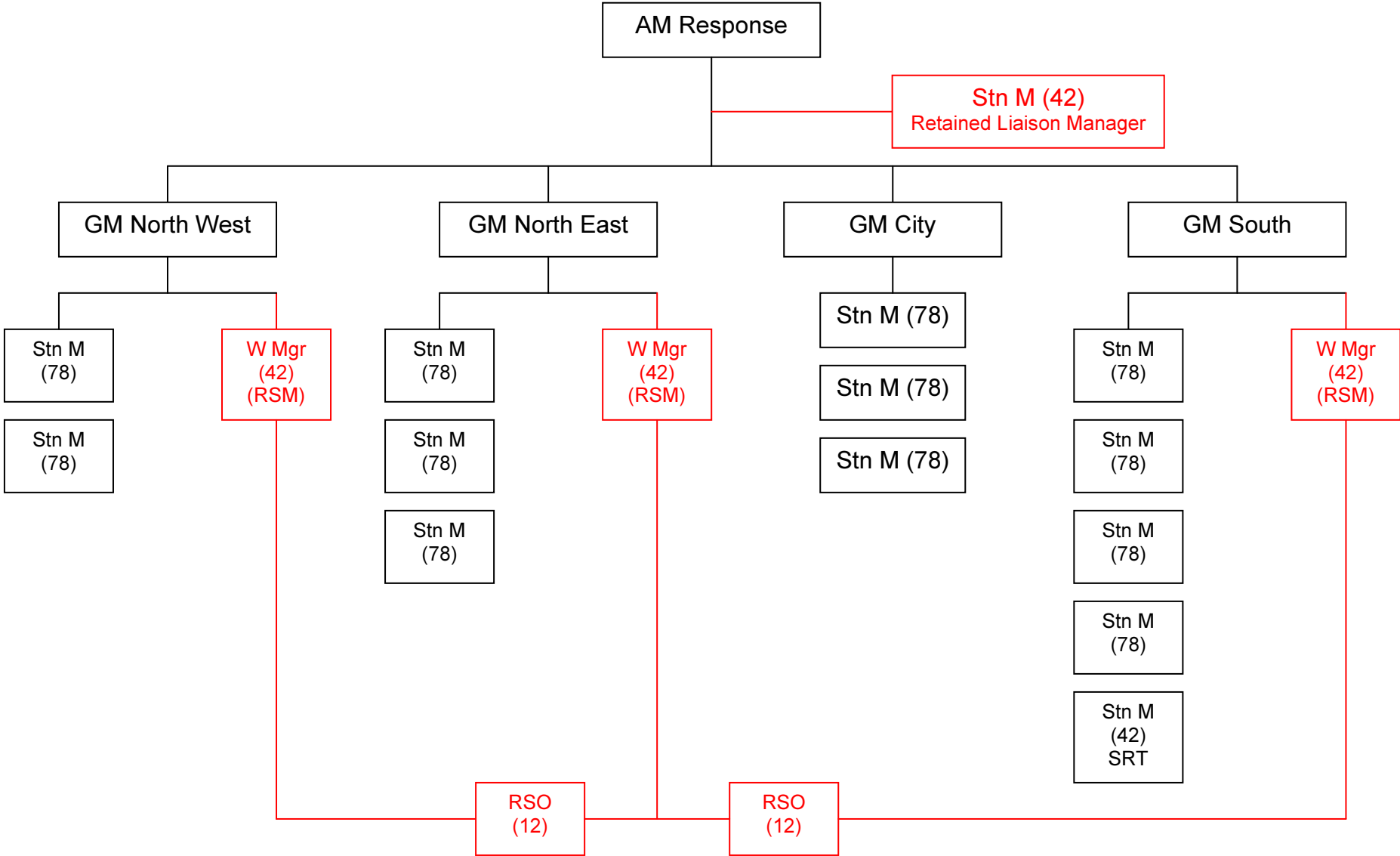
- The Retained Duty System – A Strategic Review within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

CURRENT
RETAINED SUPPORT STRUCTURE



**PROPOSED
RETAINED SUPPORT STRUCTURE**



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
JOB DESCRIPTION

Post: Home Safety Check Operative

Grade: Grade

Post Reference:

Conditions of Service: NJC for Local Government
Services National Scheme of Conditions of Service

Responsible to:

General Description of Post

Undertake Home Safety Checks within the communities of Nottinghamshire.

Provide home safety advice to householders.

Specific duties

Undertake Home Safety Checks in households.

Provide clear safety advice to individual householders and the general public at a variety of locations.

Install and securely fit safety equipment such as smoke alarms, child safety equipment and other appropriate safety adaptations.

Drive and maintain associated vehicle on a day to day basis, ensuring security of vehicle and contents both in transportations and when left unattended.

Maintain safe working practices when using tools and personal protective equipment provided to install and fit safety equipment.

Maintain associated administrative records.

Specific Health & Safety Responsibilities

Assist in the implementation of practices and procedures to ensure that RDS sections/stations comply fully with the Health and Safety Policies of the Service.

General Responsibilities (all employees)

(a) **Health and Safety**

To take reasonable care for your own health and safety and work and that of other persons who may be affected by your work activities.

To co-operate with Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue's attempts to comply with health and safety legislation. Where appropriate you must safeguard the health and safety of all persons affected by the work activities you supervise at any premises you have control over.

To work in a safe manner in which you have been trained and instructed and advise your line manager of any health and safety problems you become aware of.

To familiarise yourself with the contents of the Service's Written Safety Policy, as well as any technical information provided to assist you to operate appliances or equipment or to handle hazardous substances.

To wear personal protective equipment supplied to you by the Service in the manner in which you have been instructed to do so.

(b) Use of equipment and other appliances

To take proper care in handling, operation and safeguarding of any equipment, vehicles or appliance, used or issued by the Service or provided or issued by a third party for individual or collective use in the performance of the job holder's duties

(c) Equalities

To uphold the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Fairness at Work and Equal Opportunities policies and practices and to treat all colleagues, service users and contacts with respect and in accordance with the expectations laid down by the Service.

To promote and deliver fair and quality services that are sensitive and responsive to all service users.

(d) Code of Conduct

To adhere to the standards of the Code of Conduct established by the Service.

(e) Personal Development

To keep up to date with current practice, undertake training and Continuous Professional Development as appropriate.

(f) Information Technology

To comply with security measures to protect against unauthorised access to, alteration or disclosure of information held on computer and ensure adherence to the principles of the Data Protection Act.

To undertake any training and operation of new technologies and associated systems as required.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

PERSON SPECIFICATION

**HOME SAFETY CHECK OPERATIVE
GRADE – TBC**

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	Method of Assessment
Experience	Experience of working un-supervised.	Experience of providing verbal information and presentations to the public	Application & Interview
	Experience of working and communicating with members public	Experience of working within diverse communities	Application & Interview
Skills	Experience of using tools and fitting equipment to a high standard in households	Formal qualification in building trade or similar field	Application & Interview
	Experience of maintaining records		Application & Interview
	Elementary IT skills		Application & Interview
Knowledge	Understanding of Home Safety Issues	Knowledge of Home Safety Issues	Application & Interview
		Knowledge of Accident Prevention agenda	Application & Interview
Education and Training	Valid Driving Licence	Undertaken and successfully completed workplace safety training (NVQ)	Application & Interview
Other requirements	Understanding of Health & Safety issue	Formal Health & Safety qualification	Application & Interview