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This circular is	For consultation	Respond by	30th May 2005
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This consultation seeks views on the scope and content of the ODPM's new electronic data collection system - the Incident Recording System (IRS).		

ODPM consultation on Incident Data to be collected from Local Authority Fire & Rescue Services

Issued by:

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Addressed to:

**The Commissioner of the London Fire and
Emergency Planning Authority**
The Chief Fire Officer
Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities

Summary

This Consultation seeks views on the scope and content of the new electronic data collection system to be introduced by ODPM – the Incident Recording System (IRS). We would welcome your responses to the 13 specific questions posed in this document and would also appreciate any other comments on the proposed system. Please send all responses back to the contact details provided by the deadline. After analysis of the responses we will produce a feedback document which will summarise the comments received and our responses to those comments. This will be available by mid-July.

This Consultation document will also be published on the ODPM website where you can also find the Informed Solutions IT Fire Data Collection and Transfer Scoping Study.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Detailed statistics have been collected on fire incidents attended by Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services for a number of years, some of the series going back as far as 1946. The current collection is largely paper-based and consists of the FDR1 return which collects details of each primary fire attended, the FDR3 return which collects monthly aggregate statistics on secondary fires, chimney fires and false alarms, and the annual OPS4 and 5 returns which collect aggregate information on special service incidents.
- 1.2 Some of the FDR1 data are already collected electronically from individual Fire and Rescue Services, but the process involved for Fire and Rescue Services to gain accreditation to provide data electronically is time-consuming and cumbersome. A project to convert the FDR1 form into an electronic reporting system was approved in 2002, but the industrial action in 2002/03 meant that the project did not start until late 2003. The initial stage was a review of the data collected in the FDR1, as the new system had to reflect current needs, not the ones current in 1994 when the FDR1 was introduced. The review took into consideration the conclusions of the Bain report (Independent Review of the Fire Service) and the Fire White Paper (Our Fire and Rescue Service).
- 1.3 The key recommendation of the review was that detailed information should be collected on all incidents attended by local authority Fire and Rescue Services. This would mean an expansion in the detailed data collection from some 220,000 primary fires per annum to some 1.2 million incidents per annum. Since the review, further work has taken place on identifying the precise information to be collected in the Incident Recording System (IRS). A data definition group consisting of representatives from Fire and Rescue Services, other ODPM fire related projects, other ODPM Divisions, Research Organisations and data users was established, and a series of meetings took place to discuss the content of the IRS. The conclusions of the group are presented in this consultation document. In addition to the Bain report and the White Paper, the review of data requirements took into account the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework, Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) and Fire Service Emergency Cover planning (FSEC).
- 1.4 The resulting proposed new collection will maintain the existing detail on fire incidents, but will also plug some of the gaps in coverage by providing, for example:
- Detail on the amount of time, manpower and equipment used in special service incidents, for example, road traffic accidents, search and rescue, and major flooding and transport incidents.
 - Coverage of fires in listed buildings and National Parks
 - Detail on causes of, and responses to false alarms
 - Better geo-coding of incident locations
 - Additional details of effectiveness of fire safety systems and facilities
 - Details of construction features contributing to fire damage
 - Information on building evacuations

- Additional information on road vehicle fires - whether the vehicle was reported stolen
- Information on severity of injury
- More data on the socio demography of victims of house fires, so that at-risk groups can be better identified and targeted for Community Fire Safety
- Data on attendance and fatalities at road traffic accidents, reflecting the wider role of FRS and providing information to underpin risk and effectiveness of attendance analysis.
- More data on the type of resources used when attending incidents, for example, house fires, which should assist in making the rescue of people more efficient and effective.

1.5 A Scoping Study has also recently been undertaken by Informed Solutions on behalf of the Fire Statistics and Research Division, ODPM, to assess the scope of, and best basis for, an IT solution that enables the incident data, collected by Fire and Rescue Services in the UK, to be supplied to ODPM by electronic means for the purposes of analysis and publication in a more effective and efficient manner. A full copy of this Scoping Study is available at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=4837&l=2

2.0 The Consultation Document.

2.1 The full Consultation Document can be downloaded from this link:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=752&l=1 and paper copies are available on request.

2.2 The details of the data that it is proposed to collect are set out in Annex D of the Consultation Document and are also available at the above link.

2.3 Specific areas where we are seeking views:

Q1. Is there a genuine need to collect information on all incidents individually? This will mean reporting on some 1.2 million incidents per annum, for a large Fire and Rescue Authority this could mean reporting on over 1,000 incidents per week.

Q2. Are there still gaps in the coverage that need to be taken into consideration?

Q3. Are there items in the proposed collection that should not be collected?

Q4. Are there items that it will be impossible to collect accurately, or simply impossible to collect?

Q5. Are we correct in assuming that questions marked in the Annex D attachment as 'C': 1-24, 26-30, 33 and 112 (false alarms) can come direct from the existing fire control system?

Q6. Are the drop down lists (menus) detailed enough for each incident type?

Q7. Are the drop down lists (menus) too detailed for each incident type?

Q8. Is any of the information requested already available from another reliable source?

Q9. Could any of the data be collected in any other way?

Q10. If a data user, how will you use these data?

Q11. Which of these data would you like to see published?

a. Quarterly, b) Annually.

2.4 General views and comments:

Q12. Does the overall approach make sense? Is it a practical data collection system?

Q13. Do you have any other comments on fire and rescue service incident data collection?

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