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This circular is	For information	No response required	
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2005/06 gave a commitment to publish the Retained Review Team's report and recommendations.		

Review of the Retained Duty System

Issued by:

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Fire and Rescue Service Directorate

Addressed to:

The Chief Executive to the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Fire and Civil Defence Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Civil Defence Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer
Head of Human Resources, the Fire & Rescue Service

Please forward to:

Heads of Human Resources

Summary

This Circular reports on the outcome of the Retained Review Team's examination of the Retained Duty System.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The White Paper *Our Fire and Rescue Service* acknowledged the significant contribution made by firefighters employed on the retained duty system (RDS) but also recognised that, nationally, this sector of the workforce was about 20% short of complement. The ongoing recruitment and retention challenges represented in that figure led to an announcement by ODPM Ministers in December 2003 of a review. A stakeholder group, the Retained Review Team (RRT), was tasked to examine the factors contributing to the difficulties in recruiting and keeping RDS staff and to deliver its conclusions to the Practitioners' Forum.

2.0 The Review Process

2.1 The initial findings of the review, presented to the Practitioners' Forum in June 2004, identified the key reasons for the long-standing recruitment and retention problems. These included:

- a lack of recognition of the disparity of the challenges facing each fire and rescue service
- fire and rescue services had failed to take ownership of the issues or to fully integrate wholetime and retained duty system personnel
- fire and rescue services rarely collaborated on retained duty system issues
- an absence of coherent strategies to raise the profile of the retained duty system and tackle the lack of public awareness
- no strategic approach to engagement with the business community
- the role of the retained duty system in community fire safety had yet to be adequately defined.

2.2 This was followed in July by the delivery of Part 1 of the RRT report to the Forum, which defined the strategic issues and the key priorities, namely:

- (i) Adopting appropriate terminology as a significant step in dismantling cultural barriers
- (ii) Acknowledging, internally and externally, the RDS contribution
- (iii) Utilising the opportunities for the RDS to contribute to the modernisation agenda
- (iv) Integrating the wholetime and retained duty systems within the workforce
- (v) Removing the barriers to recruitment and retention
- (vi) Setting up a process for making change happen.

2.3 Part 2 of the RRT's report, which provided the evidential basis for the conclusions emerging from the review, was considered by the Practitioners' Forum in September 2004 and subsequently, by the Business and Community Safety Forum. As a consequence, the Practitioners' Forum and the BCSF have set up a joint task and finish group to take forward the programme of work identified by the review.

3.0 Next Steps

3.1 Whilst there is much in the report that will require further work, there is a great deal that can be done by individual fire and rescue services now to improve recruitment and retention of RDS personnel. The task and finish group of the Practitioners' Forum will produce a project plan for implementation of the recommendations of the report by early Summer 2005. In the meantime fire and rescue services should complete a self audit against the recommendations and take action to address any issues raised. Fire and rescue authorities and services are reminded that they are required to conduct a Race Impact Assessment against any policy and procedure they intend to institute.

3.2 Findings from our recent survey on the primary employment status of retained duty system staff will be made available on the web in the Spring of 2005. This study will provide baseline information for fire and rescue services planning to develop better links with the business community, on the kinds of business sectors which currently support their staff, to undertake fire and rescue service responsibilities.

4.0 Publication of the Report

4.1 A copy of the report is included with this circular. Further copies can be obtained from ODPM distributors at a cost of £15 per copy. Orders should be placed with:

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PO Box 236
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS23 7NB
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The report can also be accessed from the ODPM website at: [Recruitment](#)

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