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This circular is	<b>Relevant to the National Framework</b>		
Status	<b>Guidance in this circular should be used by Authorities when assessing staff for development for a new role within the Integrated Personal Development System.</b>		

# *IPDS: Personal Qualities and Attributes Framework for Managerial Levels (Operational).*

Issued by:

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Addressed to:

**The Commissioner of the London Fire and  
Emergency Planning Authority  
All Chief Fire Officers**

Please forward to:

**HR Managers  
Training and Development Managers  
IPDS Co-ordinators  
Internal Communications Managers**

Summary

This circular provides Authorities with a Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQA) Framework for operational staff at the three managerial levels within the Integrated Personal Development System. This Framework should form the basis of Authorities' assessment of people's potential for development for a new role.

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### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 You will be aware that, with the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Fire Services (Appointment and Promotion)(England and Wales) Regulations 2004 were repealed. This circular forms part of the guidance which replaces those regulations and is intended to help fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) ensure that they assess, develop and promote staff on the basis of good practice in accordance with legal requirements and the principles of IPDS.
- 1.2 The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2004/5 stated that FRAs should "use the nationally developed personal qualities and attributes for assessing the potential of candidates for a new operational ... role". The attached documents set out the "Personal Qualities and Attributes" (PQAs) for operational staff at the three managerial levels (supervisory, middle and strategic) within the IPDS role structure. These PQAs define the behaviours required for effective performance in managerial roles
- 1.3 The PQA framework should be used to assess people's potential to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to perform effectively in a new role. Within the IPDS system, the outcome of these assessments will determine access to development programmes and this, in turn, will help determine access to promotion opportunities. Together with other IPDS guidance material, the PQAs will also help inform development needs and learning objectives.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the analysis of the research data on which the PQA framework is based excludes incident management. This is because of the intention for PQAs ultimately to be applicable to all roles within the Fire and Rescue Service. Many of the PQAs set out in this framework will, nonetheless, be required for effective incident management. Where competence in incident management forms a core function of an employee's role, this should be specifically addressed through the development programmes (not the ADC process - until the validity of the PQA framework in respect of incident management is confirmed through further detailed work.) The PQA framework is due to be reviewed next year when further consideration will be given to the issue of incident management/response. Those managing people on development programmes are reminded of their responsibility, through personal development planning and review processes, to ensure that staff being developed have the knowledge, skills and understanding to do their jobs safely and effectively. This process is underpinned by individuals' personal responsibility to identify their own development needs and FRA development managers' responsibility to ensure organisational development needs are met.

### 2.0 How to use the PQA Framework

- 2.1 The PQA framework should now form the basis for all operational assessment and selection procedures. In the short term, this will involve the framework being used in one of two ways as set out in sections 3 and 4 below.

### **3.0 Using PQAs within Existing Assessment and Selection Tools**

- 3.1** Some FRAs are likely to have existing selection systems or assessment development centre (ADC) processes which are robust and legally defensible and which may work well within the IPDS role based system. Where you are confident, after objective examination, that this is the case, you should consider what adaptation may be needed to those systems to reflect the PQA framework.
- 3.2** You also need to ensure that your systems are consistent with Item A of DCOL 4/2003. This states that people holding passes in all written papers of statutory promotion examinations will be given recognition at the sift stage when they are being assessed through an ADC process. The full document can be found at [www.IPDS.co.uk](http://www.IPDS.co.uk).

### **4.0 Using PQAs with the Interim ADC Tool-Kit**

- 4.1** Where FRAs are not confident that their existing systems are suitable, they should consider how these might be strengthened (for example by collaborating with other FRAs). One option for FRAs will be to use the interim ADC tool-kit. This provides a package of guidance including a PQA based application questionnaire and a structured interview to test the extent to which people can demonstrate their potential against a sample of relevant PQAs. Most FRAs have already attended workshops about the tool-kit about which we will soon be consulting.
- 4.2** For planning purposes, please note that even where FRAs plan to use the structured interview tool-kit, those people conducting interviews should be appropriately trained and competent to conduct selection interviews. Annex A sets out the type of development which Authorities may wish to consider for staff involved in selection interviewing. ODPM will not endorse the use of the tool-kit by untrained staff.

### **5.0 How Will the PQA Framework Evolve?**

- 5.1** Work is currently underway to determine the extent to which this PQA framework applies to managerial control roles. A circular will be issued on this in due course.
- 5.2** A set of PQAs for the role of fire fighter and control room operator will be published in Spring 2005.
- 5.3** The PQAs for managerial levels are due to be reviewed as part of the full ADC project which is now underway.
- 5.4** Whilst PQAs and ADC processes will continue to evolve within IPDS, Authorities should now act on this circular either by adapting their existing systems or by working towards the introduction of appropriate new systems such as the interim ADC process. (Further information on the interim ADC process can be obtained from the IPDS Hub – see contact details below.)

**6.0 Queries**

- 6.1 You will be aware that ODPM has funded the establishment of a greatly expanded IPDS Hub at the Fire Service College. This includes the three regional teams which provide advice and support to the Service as it implements IPDS. If you have any queries about this circular, please speak to your usual contact at the IPDS Hub or e-mail [ipdsreception@fireservicecollege.ac.uk](mailto:ipdsreception@fireservicecollege.ac.uk)

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## Annex A

### ASSESSING STAFF AGAINST THE PERSONAL QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES FRAMEWORK – IDENTIFYING TRAINING NEEDS FOR THOSE INVOLVED.

#### Background

Whilst workshops have been held on the interim ADC tool-kit including use of the structured interview, these workshops were not designed to provide training in interview skills. A level of prior knowledge and skill is essential on the part of any interviewer using either the structured interview within the tool-kit or an FRA's own assessment and selection processes. Others involved in the selection process will also have particular knowledge and skill requirements. The following table indicates the areas of knowledge and skills that would be anticipated of a competent interviewer and others within the human resource function who are involved in the processes of assessment and selection.

FRA's are invited to consider these areas and review whether any knowledge or skill gap exists amongst people who will be expected to assess people's potential to fulfill a role using the PQA framework. Where a knowledge or skill-gap is apparent, FRA's will wish to consider how to address this. One option may be additional training or development - possibly through independent or external trainers - to address identified learning needs. (Typically for interview skills of the sort which would be required to use the structured interview model within the interim ADC tool-kit, this might take the form of a 2 day course.) Please note that a small number of appropriately trained people who interview on a regular basis are likely to offer greater competence than a larger number of less frequent interviewers.

FRA's will, of course, have different approaches to organising the range of responsibilities set out in the table below - this annex is intended to help you consider training and development needs not to prescribe or limit the way you organise your selection processes.

Knowledge and Skill Areas	
Area	Description
Overview of IPDS system	Awareness and understanding of the assessment system being used within the FRA <sup>1</sup> and of the wider IPDS approach.
Legislation/ Tribunal cases	Understanding of key elements of relevant law: Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Data Protection Act. Awareness of relevant industrial tribunals arising from alleged inappropriate recruitment/interview practice.
Advertising procedure	Understanding of process which the FRA is using to advertise relevant opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Workshops will be available on the interim structured interview process.

Interview approach	<p>Understanding of issues relating to interview design and implementation:</p> <p>Rationale for structured interviews (where these are being used) - validity and reliability issues.</p> <p>Questioning approaches: open, closed, probing, multiple, etc., the importance of standardisation.</p> <p>Active and effective listening.</p> <p>Interviewer biases and how to overcome them.</p> <p>Dealing with specific problems e.g. evasive, excessive talkers etc.</p> <p>Recording information during the interview.</p> <p>Evaluating evidence against criteria.</p> <p>Using marking system consistently and appropriately.</p>
Practical application	<p>Experience of using interview system with role players prior to live interviews – demonstration of doing so fairly, accurately and consistently.</p> <p>Experience of assessing/evaluating using interview system – demonstration of doing so fairly, accurately and consistently.</p>
Managing administration	<p>Time-tabling of interviews.</p> <p>Venue management.</p> <p>Managing candidate disabilities/needs.</p>
Candidate feedback	<p>Providing clear, accurate, supportive and constructive feedback to candidates.</p>
Ethical considerations	<p>Supporting candidates – pre-assessment, during assessment and post-assessment.</p> <p>Security of materials.</p> <p>Access to materials.</p> <p>Lifespan of information.</p> <p>Data protection.</p>
Quality assurance/ Monitoring	<p>Understanding of quality assurance/monitoring process:</p> <p>Ensuring interview quality is achieved and maintained through monitoring, feedback and guidance to interview panels.</p> <p>Reviewing and addressing assessment outcomes in terms of equalities and diversity.</p> <p>Statistical evaluation of score profiles.</p>
Process appeal system	<p>Overview of process (if relevant).</p>