

Incident Recording System Pilot Impact Assessment for Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

Version 1.0

Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
23/02/07	1	Draft	T.Parkins
20/03/07	2	Final Draft	T Parkins
18/05/07	3	Amended for CLG to Circulate	T.Parkins

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1. Introduction

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service believes it can offer continued support to DCLG by being involved in the pilot IRS scheme.

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service wanted to be involved with the establishment of a nationally utilized incident data recording system from the pilot stage through to national delivery.

1.1 Executive summary

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service trialed the pilot IRS system at 1 of its 20 fire stations. Aylesbury Fire Station was selected because it is a whole time station attached to Brigade headquarters, with 4 watches who crew 2 pumps plus RDS staff who crew 1 pump and 2 special appliances.

The main lessons learnt included:

1. The need to record all incidents
2. Length of time required to train staff – (3 hours per person)
3. Length of time taken to complete form – (20 minutes – 2hours)
4. Additional data that now needs recording – (not all data can be pre-populated)
5. The need for internal Quality control
6. Limited funding for implementation

The current way forward with the trial is to await the results of the software upgrades and data requirements recommended at the 2 day review held at Allington Towers, London in January 2007.

2. Current System and Business Processes

2.1 Overview of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service current business processes

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service received 20756 emergency calls and responded to 9903 incidents in 2006. 2000 incidents were recorded as primary fires, 1964 incidents were recorded as secondary fires, 4274 were false alarms and 1628 were special service incidents.

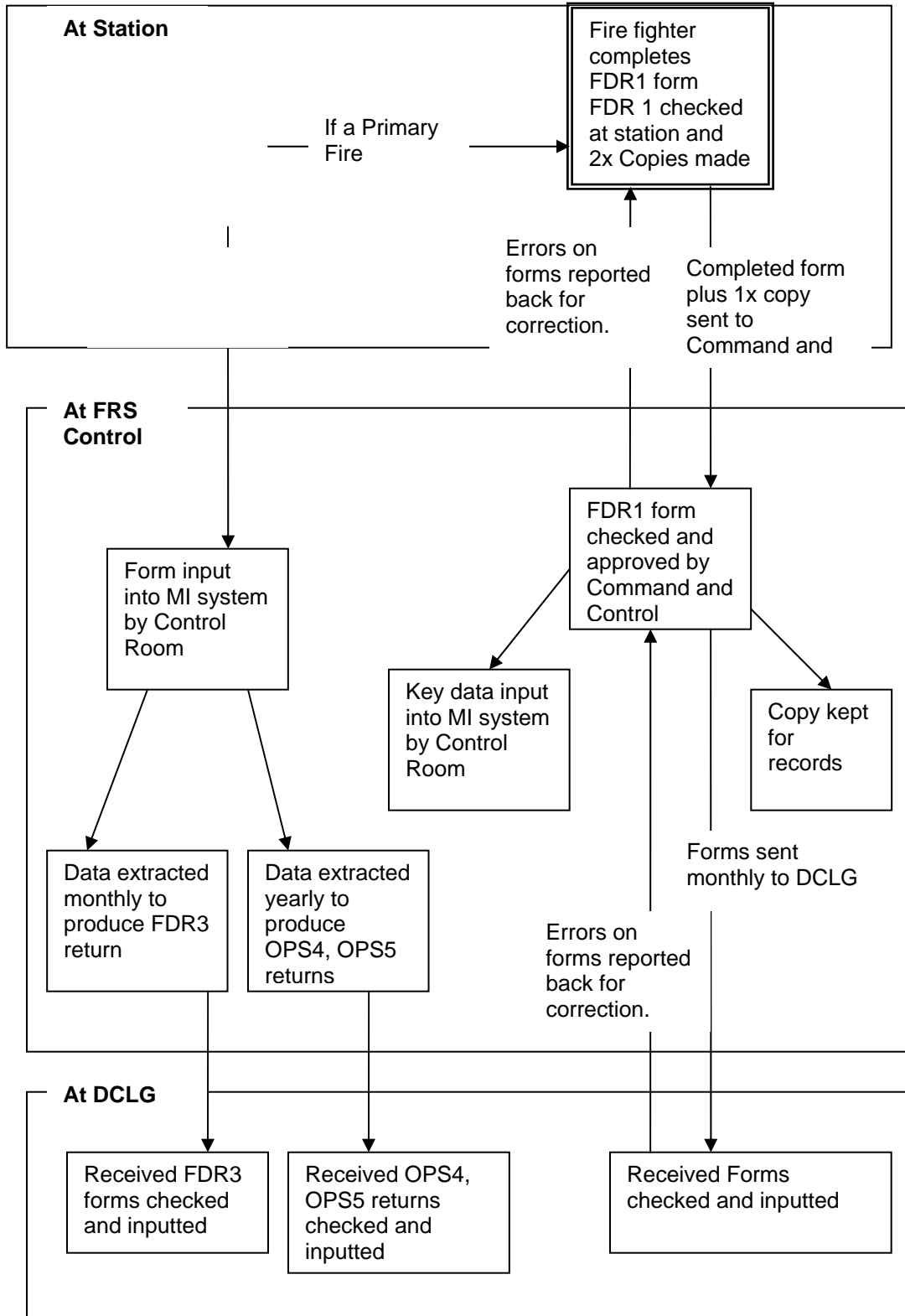
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service currently records their attendance to primary and secondary fires by completing hand written reports on forms FDR1, FDR2 and FDR3. The data for these forms is collected by crews at the incident and supplemented by mobilizing data provided by BFRS using the FIRES 3 system supplied by Fortek. At the end of each calendar month completed forms are sent to Command and Control for review and then forwarded to Fire stats at BRE, Garston.

We currently collate Special Service data via the Management Information system linked to FIRES III in Command and Control.

The process of collecting data for secondary fires and false alarms is achieved by downloading information held on the MIS in Command and Control and by completing hand written internal forms which are then forwarded to our Arson Task Force, Technical Fire Safety offices – (unwanted fire signals) and Central Intelligence Unit for Statistical recording.

Data is quality assured by Command and Control staff using mobilizing data and the FDR guidance manual during the monthly review of completed FDR 1s. All discrepancies are dealt with by Command and Control. 10% of completed returned forms generate some form of follow up action.

All data is collated by the Central Intelligence Unit and then made available for the various directorates to use as a resource for implementing guidance, strategy, IRMPs or available to the public via our web site – bucksfire.gov.uk.



Example Current Business Process

2.2 Description of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service current system

At station all incidents are recorded electronically using a Call Display programme. This software programme was provided by an external provider and does not link in with other systems.

The mobilizing system used by BFRS is the Fortek FIRES III. Mobilising data is stored on this system and forwarded by teleprinter as a hard copy to the responding station with the incident details and mobilizing times once the incident has been closed to enable completion of FDR 1 and internal forms i.e., Arson liaison, Unwanted fire signal.

The Management Information system is a module of FIRES III. The Central Intelligence Unit has access to this system to enable them to extract all required data and statistics. These current systems are integrated

2.3 Issues with Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service current business processes and systems

FIRES III is the mobilizing system CMS 7. Modernisation of this system requires upgrade to Vision but due to the cost of an upgrade and the imminent transition to a Regional Control Centre it would be hard for the authority to build a justifiable business case to support this purchase.

There is limited access for stations or Station Managers – (they request permission through a territorial Group Manager) to data held on FIRES III, although duplication of data exists as stations use a separate system to record attendance to incidents, this is the Call Display programme. Call Display records all incidents attended by the station and enables them to transfer that data to graphs and maps. The station can then use this data to identify areas of activity and determine strategies for Community Safety.

3. Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service involvement in the Pilot

3.1 What Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service hoped to learn from the pilot

The reasons Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service wanted to be involved in the pilot were:

1. To continue to support the Modernisation Agenda.
2. To assist with the development of a pilot Scheme.
3. To assist and influence the direction and outcome of the pilot scheme.
4. To be involved in a National project from the pilot to inception.
5. To be able to anticipate the change in business process i.e., IT upgrades and new software.

The issues we expected to resolve or learn more about were:

1. The process of implementation of a national electronic data recording system.
2. The type of incident data required by DCLG - (now and in the future).
3. Location of incidents attended and resources used.
4. Time frames – duration of incidents, times of day, frequency of calls.

5. How to train staff and who requires training.
6. What funding would be available to implement:
 - A. The pilot scheme
 - B. The final approved scheme

Convergence with other projects – How the IRS pilot fits in with the implementation of other projects such as the delivery of FiReControl and FireLink.

3.2 What Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service did for the pilot

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service formed an internal team of 2 x officers from departments and 1x IT trainer based at BHQ. The team liaised with DCLG, IRS helpdesk and Firestats office and attended 6 meetings and various presentations.

The team trained the users.

Due to the scheme being a pilot project with a limited timescale and no funding, we used the online forms. No interface was built.

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service used 1 Fire Station to participate in the IRS pilot scheme. This station has 70 staff on site that provides a combination of whole time and RDS cover. The participating station entered the details of 86 incidents attended during a 21 day period. All 86 incidents were published.

Only the Watch and Crew Managers were trained to use the online forms. 20 station staff, 3 Officers who provide flexi duty cover in the area, 3 staff who work at headquarters plus the station administration clerk were trained to use the system (27 in total). 5 sessions were organised, 1 for each shift, each session lasted 3 hours and included the handing out of a guidance book, use of the on line form on the training page on the IRS website and completion of 3 scenarios including feedback.

3.3 Lessons Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service learned from the pilot

The lessons learned from the pilot and following feedback from delegates attending training courses included:

1. The format of the form was popular.
2. The web based form was popular because access was easy and enabled the user to complete the form at work or at home – useful for RDS staff.
3. The length of time taken to complete the form was not popular. Based upon the statistics collected by DCLG from Buckinghamshire during the trial entries could take on average between 20 – 30 minutes to complete, some entries took 66 – 90 minutes to complete (depending upon the nature of the incident). The time taken to enter data could be due to people becoming familiar with the IRS system but further compounded by a lack of pre populated information, all data was manually entered.

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is likely to implement an interface for the live system that provides partial prepopulation.

4. The IRS helpdesk was good but offered limited support due to the number of hours it was available.

IT issues arising from the pilot included the need to consider email addresses for all Watch and Crew Managers, currently they do not have an email address if they are shift based attached to a station.

The benefits of being involved with this scheme from the pilot stage through to delivery included early awareness of the format of the form, the type of data required by DCLG, the training needs identified plus an indicator of the resources and funding required to implement this scheme.

To deliver the training for this scheme we allocated 1 person 3 hours of initial training with input including background history, issue of guidance manual and completion of 3 exercises using the training page on the web site. The training was provided by 3 people to an average group size of 5 people. We included an I.T.trainer within the training group (rather than assume everyone has IT skills).

We provided a meeting room with a P.C.with internet access for each person attending the course and issued a guidance booklet plus mouse mats and leaflets detailing internal support and external support i.e., IRS helpdesk.

The areas of concern that we feel others should be made aware of include:

- The resources, impact, duration and programme required to deliver training to the staff that will be required to complete reports after an incident.
- Funding Issues that may arise through:
 - Having to upgrade or make systems compatible.
 - Payment to RDS staff for completing entries for every incident attended.
- Compatibility with the FiReControl and Firelink projects.
- Compatibility with other internal software – asset management, Technical fire safety inspections, Community safety activities, unwanted fire signals and Arson liaison.

The reality of supporting this scheme is that no funding has been made available for participating Fire and Rescue Services. Involvement in the pilot scheme has been as a result of individual's goodwill and prudence from brigade managers which has allowed us to continue to participate. Future progress will need to address and secure the financial resource required to fully implement the scheme.

The legal implications are what and how can we record information to ensure compliance with Freedom of information and Data protection. Can we charge people still for copies of these new electronic forms? Will there be a national charge for this information?

4. Proposed future system and business processes

4.1 What Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service plan to do to implement incident recording

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service currently awaits the outcome of the pilot IRS.

The option we plan to consider will be made following the outcomes of the pilot scheme.

We intend for the system to be established to allow access to users and integrate all internal data requirements.

No High level timescale or plan currently exists as we are awaiting the learning outcomes of the trial.

4.2 Overview of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service future business processes

The future business process introduced following the completion of training and implementation of the scheme will see the attending Incident Commander complete and input the data.

At this current time consideration is being given to the process of QA.

The data held within the system will be extracted and used to support:

FSEC

Performance Information sheets – (HOWARD)

Key Performance Indicators

Local Performance Indicators

Asset Management

Arson Liaison

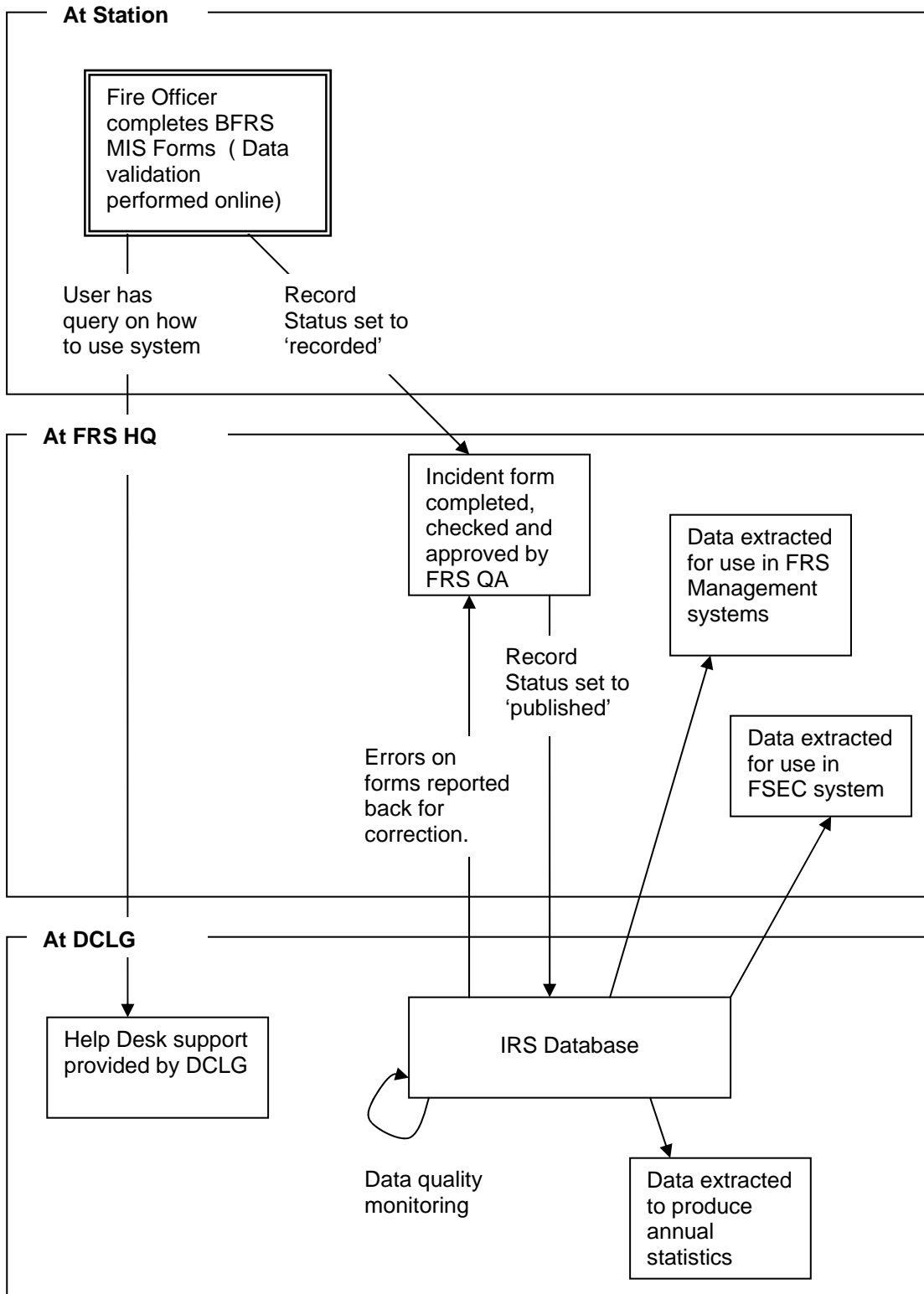
Health and Safety – accident and injury investigations

FOSIs

Fire Safety Inspections

Community Safety Initiatives

Integrated Risk Management Plan



New Business Process – using Online Forms system

4.3 IT impact

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service will consider the web based form and a XML interface from BFRS system into the IRS system. The existing brigade wide area network provided by third party suppliers has sufficient capacity to support this application.

There will be no firm decision made about the further provision of IT systems and software until the decision and outcomes of the pilot have been published.

The security implications of this scheme will require us to reinforce our ICT structure for QA procedures. To avoid issues such as quality control, time taken to complete entries and hardware virus etc we will require staff to complete the form reporting process when they return to station upon conclusion of an incident.

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service would prefer implementing a scheme that was work based rather than home based so that all entries would be forwarded for QA before submitting to DCLG.

4.4 Training Requirements

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is concerned at the significant costs that will be incurred for the training of its staff to use this scheme.

A training impact analysis will be completed to identify:

1. Staff to deliver training
2. Staff to be trained
3. Duration of programme
4. Location of suitable venue for training
5. Provision of equipment

Consultation will need to be undertaken with the Representative Bodies for ICT training.

Further coaching, support from the QA operating an internal helpline and the use of E learning could be considered to assist with the implementation of the scheme.

4.5 Culture and Change management

Due to Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service participation in the pilot scheme and the scheme being described in various newsletters etc, many of our staff are aware of the development and adoption of an electronic incident reporting process.

Cultural change for our organisation will include:

1. The need for operational managers to complete a report for every incident attended
2. Directional change from a hard copy report to an electronic system which collates data.
3. Increased incident information used as data to be recorded
4. The impact on daily operational activities – more time spent in office inputting data following return from incident
5. The process of QA.

4.6 Estimated costs of implementation

DCLG state in Fire Service Circular 34/2006 that this project and scheme is not a new burden therefore no funding has been made available for participation in the pilot and therefore it is not currently possible to provide costings and only provide an estimate. The delivery of the pilot to the brigade has been completed by a team of 3 people who have been seconded from other departments - (Response department, Training department and Central intelligence unit); they have committed 20% of their normal responsibilities to this project from July 2006 to June 2007. The training of the Station who participated in this Pilot was completed by the team of 2 plus support from an IT trainer.

The internal cost of covering the salaries for providing the 3 x trainers currently stands at an estimated £13000.

1 x dedicated training room with 5 PCs for 3 hours per session. The cost for this room was £1250. Although this was our own room, the use of it still incurs an internal budget code. The preparation and provision of learning materials and resources has also been included.

The total cost for the implementation of the pilot was £16000.

For us to train all our Supervisory Managers from 20 stations and 38 flexi duty officers would mean the team continuing to function until July 2008. The current costings for delivering just the training would mean an estimated cost of implementation for Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service of approximately £20,000.

4.7 Benefits Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service hope to achieve

The benefits as identified by DCLG for an electronic reporting system are listed below:

- Increased data coverage, allowing better risk management planning/ Business Intelligence (other uses of data)
- Improved data quality
- Reduction in time taken to produce data
- Reduction in number of incidents being queried
- Reduction in effort required to quality assure data and chase missing incidents
- Ability to provide extracts of information quickly and easily.
- Simplification of FSEC data production

BFRS would wish to complete a benefits realization exercise to quantify these benefits. The time frame for this exercise would be identified by the Senior Management team.

4.8 Critical Success Factors for Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

The factors that will be key to the successful implementation of IRS within Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service will be:

1. Time to assess internal budgetary requirements to assure delivery of a system for July 2008.
2. The successful integration of this project with other projects i.e., FiReControl.

3. 3 – 4 months to implement scheme and complete the training of staff ready for implementation by July 2008.
4. Establishment of internal support system (local help desk) and external support (Help desk)
5. Consultation with Representative bodies.
6. Appointment of QA staff.
7. Retention of the team involved in the Pilot, with their current background knowledge, to deliver the IRS. If other staff are utilized some consistency could be lost.