

Circular number	20/2009	Date issued	30 March 2009
This circular is	For information	No response required	
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular provides information on grant funding totalling £2.3m awarded to FRAs in relation to the New Dimension Programme and decontamination of body bags capability.		

New Dimension and Decontamination of Body Bags Grant

Issued by:

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New Dimension Policy

Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer**

Please forward to:

**Treasurers
Directors of Finance**

Summary

This circular provides information on grant funding being awarded to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in relation to the New Dimension Programme for training for USAR, DIM and HVP; ECS crewing; upgrade of USAR PPE; decontamination of body bags project and PPE procurement.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The New Dimension Programme, as a collaboration between Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), has enhanced the ability of the FRS to respond to major disruptive events, whatever their cause, involving chemicals, biological radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials, collapsed or unstable structures, and to displace large volumes of water.
- 1.2 Government has made over £300m investment plus on-going costs for the continuing delivery of the New Dimension capability. Most of this investment has been directly spent through national procurement of equipment, training and other areas. In line with the new burdens principle, CLG is committed to provide new burdens funding in recognition of the additional costs faced by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) as a result of hosting, and in due course owning, New Dimension assets. (A separate consultation on transfer of ownership of New Dimension assets was issued this month via Fire Service Circular 16/2009.)
- 1.3 As part of cross-government resilience capabilities work, the FRS is developing a capability to decontaminate body bags. This is being led by London Fire Brigade.
- 1.4 This Circular sets out the funding that is being awarded to FRAs for expenditure incurred or to be incurred. The areas which this Circular covers include:
- Training for urban search and rescue (USAR), detection, identification and monitoring (DIM) and high volume pumping (HVP).
 - Enhanced command support (ECS) crewing.
 - USAR personal protective equipment (PPE) upgrade.
 - Decontamination of body bags project.
 - PPE procurement for the decontamination of body bags.

2.0 Funding Approach

- 2.1 Fire Service Circular 36/2008 (published July 2008) outlined the funding for FRAs in support of New Dimension over the next three years, to 2010/11. Following this, the first grant for 2008/09 was issued in December 2008 covering various aspects of New Dimension including training funding for incident response units (IRUs) and ECS trainers, USAR crewing and other USAR costs, and the Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre. Further information on this grant can be found in Circular 68/2008.
- 2.2 This Circular provides information on the second, and final, New Dimension grant for 2008/09. A copy of the 'New Dimension and Decontamination of Body Bags Grant Determination 2008/09 (No. 31/1340)', detailing amounts for individual FRAs, is attached. Payment of all funding has been processed by CLG, to arrive in FRA accounts on 31 March 2009 via BACS.

2.3 In the longer term, CLG will examine changing the funding mechanism for New Dimension from direct grants to Formula Grant. We will consider this as part of the formula review of the formula grant distribution, which will involve local authority representation.

3.0 Training

3.1 The New Dimension project has provided FRSs across the country with USAR, DIM and HVP capabilities. Previously, CLG arranged and funded initial training for these capabilities. However FRAs are now being funded directly to ensure continuation training and maintenance of skills so that these capabilities remain operationally fit for purpose. The amounts payable to FRAs hosting these capabilities are £35,526 per USAR team, £28,500 per DIM team and £4,889 per HVP team. West Sussex, which hosts the USAR strategic reserve, is funded at 50% of a full USAR team. Total funding in recognition of these costs amounts to **£1,397,262** between all FRAs.

3.2 In addition to this, and as outlined in Circular 36/2008, funding for training is also being provided to the CFOA-led National Resilience Assurance Body which is seeking to ensure that New Dimension capabilities remain fit for purpose and interoperable in the long-term. It was previously agreed that a proportion of the training funds should continue to be held centrally under the control of the National Resilience Assurance Body to provide for a number of training courses which need to be allocated nationally to ensure resilience across England. These courses are managed by the National Resilience Assurance Team, which also allows greater buying power for specialised courses and courses with small numbers of potential attendees to be viable. The National Resilience Assurance Body has negotiated directly with the Fire Service College to arrange these courses up to 2010/11.

4.0 ECS Crewing

4.1 The ECS capability, which is the final operational element of the New Dimension project to be delivered, is designed and equipped to support the management of the significant numbers of resources needed to respond to serious emergencies, such as the floods of summer 2007, a 7/7 type incident, or a CBRN incident. In a serious emergency, ECS vehicles would be deployed to strategic holding areas, where FRS resources would be held pending deployment to the incident site. Crews need to be trained and available to deploy to an incident at any time of day or night, and be able to maintain that response level for seven days.

4.2 Total funding in recognition of costs incurred by host FRSs in training personnel to crew the ECS capability has been calculated as £50,364 per ECS team and **£453,276** overall. Owing to a delay in the delivery of the ECS vehicles, due to technical problems, the training requirements for the ECS capability during 2008/09 may not have been as heavy as expected. We would expect any savings this year to be used to offset any additional training requirements next year, for which CLG will not provide any additional funds beyond what has already been indicated to FRSs. The funding for 2009/10 will be as advised in Circular 36/2008.

5.0 USAR (PPE)

- 5.1 CLG has previously provided FRAs with funding for the purchase and on-going maintenance of USAR PPE. Following the recent outcome of CLG commissioned research, the Department has agreed to upgrade the current USAR PPE to increase the protection provided in high dust environments, which are likely to be encountered during the rescue of people from trapped buildings.
- 5.2 The upgrade will improve the respiratory protection by providing quantitative face fit testing and extending the longevity of canister performance by the fitting of pre-filters. The upgrade will also improve the skin protection by the provision of hoods to protect the head and the provision of interface seals to improve the sealing between the individual items of the PPE ensemble. This represents a cost effective solution, which can be implemented quickly, leading to immediate improved protection, ensuring that the PPE is fit for purpose for high dust environments. Details of the upgrade required will be provided to the USAR teams via the USAR National Working Group. The CLG Resilience Research Branch will continue to provide scientific and technical advice to the national working group on the upgrade as appropriate.
- 5.3 Total funding for this upgrade is £2880 per USAR team, with the exception of West Sussex, which hosts the USAR strategic reserve, and which is funded at 50% of a full team (receiving £1440). There is also an additional £6000 for those five USAR teams hosting the quantitative respiratory protection assessment equipment (Avon, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, London and Merseyside), to be used by all the USAR FRSs. Total funding for this element of the grant is therefore **£86,160**. This funding is in addition to that announced in Circular 36/2008.

6.0 Decontamination of Body Bags Project

- 6.1 London Fire Brigade is leading, on behalf of the FRS, the development of safe and effective, evidence-based procedures for decontaminating body bags following a CBRN incident. LFB started this project in 2007/08 and expect it to be completed in July 2009. Funding of **£115,000** is being provided to London Fire Brigade in recognition of the costs incurred in leading this project.

7.0 Decontamination of Body Bags Procurement of PPE

- 7.1 In further support of the work being led by London Fire Brigade, referred to in para 6.1 above, additional funding of **£250,000** is being provided for procuring suitable PPE for use when decontaminating body bags. London will be the first FRS to receive funding for this purpose and, as the project develops over the coming months, we will be considering whether other FRSs will require similar funding to be provided.

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