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This circular is	For information	No response required	
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular announces the publication of the research report 'Co-Responding: Current Practice and Potential' on the CLG website.		

Publication of Research Report on Co-Responding

Issued by:

Raphael Smith

Fire and Rescue Service Development Division

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:

Officers responsible for co-responding policy

Summary

This circular is to advise Fire and Rescue Authorities of the availability of the research report 'Co-Responding: Current Practice and Potential' on the CLG website.

For further information, contact:

**Rafal Pisula
Fire Experimental Unit
Fire Research and Statistics Division
Fire and Resilience Directorate
c/o Fire Service College
Moreton-in-Marsh
Gloucestershire
GL56 0RH**

Direct line **01608 650004**
Fax **01608 651281**
E-mail rafal.pisula@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Publication of Research Report on Co-Responding

1.0 Background

- 1.1 CLG commissioned a research project with consultants Operational Research in Health (ORH) to gather, collate and analyse information and opinion on activities, apparatus, practice and prospects for co-responding throughout England. The research project was steered by an Advisory Board with representatives from CLG, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), DH, the Local Government Association and the Ambulance Trusts.
- 1.2 The research project was in response to the Select Committee on the Fire and Rescue Service's (FRS) recommendation that Communities and Local Government (CLG), in conjunction with the Department of Health (DH), develop a national co-response protocol which includes guidance on how to pay for co-responding schemes.
- 1.3 The Government's response to the Select Committee confirmed that it was fully supportive of co-responder schemes and would wish to see FRAs working in partnership with their local Ambulance Service NHS Trusts to introduce such schemes if that was appropriate locally. Assessment of outcomes has shown that firefighters, working in partnership with their local Ambulance NHS Trusts on co-responding schemes, have had an impact on patient outcomes. However, the introduction and maintenance of such schemes is a matter for Fire and Rescue Authorities, based on local needs, risks and resources and discussion with partners.

2.0 Research Findings

- 2.1 The research report entitled 'Co-Responding: Current Practice and Potential', which provides a baseline on co-responder schemes across England, has been published on the CLG website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/frscoresponding>. The report provides a baseline on co-responder schemes across England as in the second half of 2007.
- 2.2 Amongst the findings of the report are that:
 - There were 99 co-responding stations in 18 FRSs with about 600 retained duty system firefighters, who volunteer for co-responding;
 - All fire and rescue crews are already trained in basic first aid and life-saving, with all front-line appliances having equipment to match, including oxygen and first aid kits;
 - Over one-third of front-line appliances have defibrillators, (which is six times the number in co-responder schemes), and that by the end of 2008-09 this figure is expected to rise to over 50%, with further possible expansion beyond that;
 - For nearly 70% of Category A (life-threatening emergency) calls to which they respond, FRS co-responders in England reach patients within 8 minutes, which is the target which the Ambulance Service sets for such life-threatening cases.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 CLG will use the information in the report to work further with stakeholders in its consideration of whether the development of a national protocol is feasible, or if not, what alternative central guidance and support can be provided for co-responder schemes across England. We are working up a project plan for this future work, in conjunction with key stakeholders, to shape future outcomes as appropriate.

Raphael Smith

Fire and Rescue Service Development Division