

Circular number	37/2008	Date issued	30 July 2008
This circular is	For information	No response required	
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular informs fire and rescue services of the progress with the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery toolkit.		

Operational Assessment of Service Delivery Update

Issued by:

Sean Ruth

Office of the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser

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:

Summary

This update is to inform Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and staff in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) of progress with the further development of the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery toolkit.

For further information, contact:

Sean Ruth
Office of the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser
Fire and Resilience Directorate
Communities and Local Government
1/A2 Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6DE

Direct line **020 7944 5578**
Fax **020 7944 5599**
E-mail sean.ruth@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Website www.communities.gov.uk

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Operational Assessment of Service Delivery (OASD) was one of two aspects of the Audit Commission's 2006 Service Assessment of Fire and Rescue Authorities and was undertaken by Communities and Local Government.
- 1.2 OASD took the form of self assessment which each Fire and Rescue Authority in England undertook using a toolkit published by Communities and Local Government (CLG) in July 2006. The toolkit provided guidance to Fire and Rescue Authorities on how to complete a self-assessment and how to reach a judgement on their operational assessment of service delivery.
- 1.3 OASD provided FRAs and other stakeholders with assurance concerning the delivery of fire and rescue services and assisted FRAs with improvement planning to enhance service provision. The final score also linked into the broader 2006/7 Performance Framework developed by the Audit Commission. It was always intended that the scores should remain valid for at least three years until 2009.

2.0 Progress

- 2.1 A CFRA/CFOA working group has been established to assist in the further development of the toolkit with a view to publishing an amended version by the end of 2008 for use in the performance framework from 2009 onwards. The group comprises of representatives from the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's team, CFOA, fire and rescue services, together with observers and advisers including the Audit Commission, CFOA Wales and CFOA Scotland.
- 2.2 The toolkit has been revised to include the following key lines of enquiry:
 - Risk Management
 - Prevention
 - Protection
 - Response
 - Call Management and Incident Support
 - Health and Safety
 - Training and Development
- 2.3 The revised toolkit is being designed as a self assessment and peer review process that will be sector led. Self-assessment guidance will be provided together with a recommended model for peer-review in due course.

- 2.4** The Audit Commission will shortly be undertaking further consultation on the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process and will include in their proposals how the OASD toolkit fits in with the overall assessment process. The development of the CAA process has evolved over the past months and CLG/CFOA have been working with the Audit Commission to ensure OASD complements the finished process.
- 2.5** Discussions are ongoing to ensure the fire and rescue service receives a completed assessment package that is fit for purpose, reduces the assessment burden and improves the quality of service delivery through a self-assessment and peer review process. There are two main areas of work that require further development. These are to consider the inclusion of a scoring mechanism and the retention of the HSG 65 model that was used in the 2006 assessment process. There have been no decisions made on these two issues as yet and the views of the fire and rescue service, through a consultation exercise, will be important in making a final determination.
- 2.6** The proposals for the new approach will be consulted on later this year, and rolled out to the fire and rescue sector in spring 2009. If there are any views or comments in the meantime, particularly on the consideration for the inclusion of a scoring mechanism and the retention of the HSG 65 model, they would be most welcome and can be forwarded using the contact details above.

Sean Ruth

Office of the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser