

Circular number	9/2008	Date issued	18 March 2008
This circular is	For information	No response required	
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular provides details of the arrangements for 2007/08 Best Value Performance Plans		

Best Value Performance Plans for 2007/08

Issued by:

Gillian Verrall

Fire and Resilience Programmes, Finance and Performance 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:

Performance Managers

Summary

The required content of Best Value Performance Plans for their final year will be limited to reporting of 2007/08 outturn performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators and certification of compliance with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters.

For further information, contact:

Gillian Verrall or Andy Swyer
Fire and Resilience Directorate
Department for Communities and Local Government
Zone 1/F1 Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London, SW1E 6DE

Direct line **020 7944 4524 / 020 7944 4400 x17045**

Fax

E-mail [**Gillian.Verrall@communities.gsi.gov.uk**](mailto:Gillian.Verrall@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

[**Andy.Swyer@communities.gsi.gov.uk**](mailto:Andy.Swyer@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

Website [**www.communities.gov.uk**](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) are already aware that Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) will cease to exist after 2007/08, with the introduction of the new performance framework contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

2.0 Reporting BVPI outturn for 2007/08

2.1 The 2007 Act removes the requirement for best value authorities to compile and publish an annual best value performance plan (BVPP). The Department intends to commence this provision from 1 April 2008. However, the BVPP is the mechanism by which best value authorities (including FRAs) publish, amongst other things, details of their outturn performance against BVPIs for the preceding year.

2.2 To remedy this shortfall, the Department intends, when commencing the relevant provisions of the 2007 Act, to make savings provisions which will retain the requirement for best value authorities to compile a BVPP for a further year, i.e. by June 2008. The content of this BVPP will be restricted to the reporting of outturn performance data on the 2007/08 BVPIs and a statement certifying compliance with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters (see section 3 below).

3.0 Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts

3.1 Best value authorities are required to certify in their BVPPs that individual contracts entered into comply with best value requirements, including workforce requirements in the Code of Practice and the accompanying statutory guidance. As part of the final BVPP outturn report on BVPIs, fire and rescue authorities will also be required to certify that individual contracts entered into in 2007/08 comply with best value requirements, including workforce requirements in the Code of Practice. The Department will be consulting, in due course, on how future certification arrangements for the Code of Practice might operate.

4.0 Content of Best Value Performance Plans

4.1 It will be for the discretion of FRAs as to how to publish or otherwise make available the information set out above. FRAs should, however, ensure that it is available to relevant stakeholders, for instance employee representatives in the case of the compliance certification. FRAs should also continue to make available to their auditor the BVPI data. The Audit Commission will use this BVPI data to inform the Direction of Travel assessment for 2008. During July and August the Commission will collect and verify this data. The Commission will write separately to FRAs explaining how this process will work. Whilst the Department will not be retaining the specific requirement for the 2007/08 BVPP to be audited, auditors will continue to consider data quality arrangements as part of their Code of Audit Practice responsibilities.

- 4.2** This is a short term one-off measure to enable the completion of the current 2007/08 BVPI process and the certification of 2007/08 contracts as well as the smooth transition from the old best value regime to that of the new local performance framework.

Gillian Verrall

Finance and Performance Division