

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

Version 1.0

Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	4
1.1	Executive summary	4
2.	Current System and Business Processes	6
2.1	Overview of Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service current business processes	6
2.2	Description of Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service current system	9
2.3	Issues with Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service current business processes and systems	9
3.	Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service involvement in the Pilot	10
3.1	What Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service hoped to learn from the pilot	10
3.2	What Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service did for the pilot	11
3.3	Lessons Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service learned from the pilot	11
4.	Proposed future system and business processes	12
4.1	What Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service plan to do to implement incident recording	12
4.2	Overview of Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service future business processes	13
4.3	IT impact	15
4.4	Training Requirements	16
4.5	Culture and Change management	16
4.6	Estimated costs of implementation	16
4.7	Benefits Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service hope to achieve	17
4.8	Critical Success Factors for Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service	18

1. Introduction

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service were members of the original Data Definition group and have been fervent supporters of the need to gather all incident data rather than just property fires. We have had our Risk Intelligence Manager, Matthew Stokes representing the Service and Deputy Chief Officer Alan House representing CFOA. Hampshire have always wanted to take an active role in the development of the IRS and therefore, Matthew Stokes has been “seconded” to the project to assist in the testing of the system on several occasions. As the project at some points went quiet we were concerned that the system would be implemented without comment on its content and therefore felt the best way of continuing with our involvement and providing feedback on the IRS was to become a pilot FRS.

1.1 Executive summary

For the purposes of the pilot, Hampshire were testing the online web input system. Due to our Command and Control manufactures not willing to look at providing a link to the web page this meant that we were entering everything from scratch which allowed us to test the absolute worst the system would be if we were not able to bridge the gap and provide an element of automatic completion.

During the eight week trial, Hampshire offered six fire stations. They were Hythe (RDS), Eastleigh (WT & RDS), Redbridge (WT), Winchester (DC & RDS), Alresford (RT) and Emsworth (RT).

We ensured that every type of duty system was covered to gauge the impact it would have on their time and that they had a single point of contact for any problems or queries during working hours, therefore, we have four members of staff that either currently or have had in the recent past a thorough knowledge of the FDR1 process. These were assigned two stations each for two of the staff and one each for the remaining less experienced staff. Those completing the system were encouraged to add comments to the notes section and report any faults either on the notes section or to their point of contact or help desk.

The main lesson learnt from the pilot was that the system could not remain as it was. Whilst this was the worst case we were testing and we hoped that some sort of interface could be found before ‘go-live’ the time needed to complete property fires was too long whilst it seemed that details on Special Service Calls and Road Traffic Collisions were too light. [However, following the meetings held in January to discuss the post pilot issues and my subsequent involvement with the project, the situation has been largely rectified with a more balanced approach to the main concern areas of RTC’s and SSC’s. Hampshire are now more comfortable with the questioning on Fire’s as many of the questions have been removed where concern was raised as to how the information was to be sourced and whilst there are a few abnormalities that still appear I am confident that these have been identified and will be amended before the system is launched.](#)

All incidents were completed on the web as well as continuing the current paper exercise including our own Incident Data Form (IDF) which is a requirement for all attendances.

Our preferred solution for the future collection of the IRS is to have a Management Information System (MIS) that automatically completes all the data available to the Control and that stations complete the rest on return from the incident.

Other solutions may be to use staff as a call centre and enter onto system via MIS, thus meaning that training issues and costs would be negligible and the onus is either on the call centre or the station to phone in to collect the details, 24hours a day. This would provide the dynamic reporting and availability of statistics required by HFRS personnel.

Further to the above comments, several developments have occurred. Firstly, our preferred solution is no longer to introduce a MIS due to the estimated cost that had been quoted to other FRS's and coupled with the growing need for more dynamic reporting of incidents in the partnership arena, we felt that as we currently have two inputters for our 4,000 FDR1's and about half of their time (i.e. one full time post) was taken up by chasing outstanding FDR1's or chasing individuals to discuss errors made on the forms. Therefore, if we were now looking at handling over 24,000 IRS "forms" then how many people would we need to chase up and maintain the new system? Therefore, our preferred option now is to have some sort of 24/7 facility to deal with the IRS.

The benefits we felt are as follows:

- Upon return from the incident the "centre" would contact the station and talk through the completion of the IRS. This would mean that details are fresh (unlike the current FDR1) and any details missing could be obtained quickly.
- This would mean that all incident data would be in within the hour and therefore able to be analysed or used in the desired dynamic way.
- We would not have to devise a way of training all of our 1700 operational firefighters and spend 6 months on stations
- No need for continuation training when new JO's come on line.
- Everything could be done by means of a powerpoint presentation for information only
- We would have a small number of "standards" instead of hundreds on stations. Therefore we believe that the data quality will be improved as the team will know what the question is after and they will be able to question the OIC to drill down to what is really required.
- Time to complete the forms would be drastically reduced as there would be a small finely trained unit collecting the data.
- The only queries would be from the CLG to our QA staff
- As they are done at the time there would be no outstanding forms or time wasted chasing.

The advantages of moving this way would be that we are aware of "residual" tasks that will be left to FRS's when RCC's go live and these tasks would be part of this teams remit.

Currently, there are several options on how to staff this both now and post RCC but no decisions or costings have been made.

2. Current System and Business Processes

2.1 Overview of <FRS> current business processes

Incident Type	Number of Incidents Attended 2006/07
FDR1	3256
FDR3	5559
Chimney	252
FA Good Intent	3080
AFA	5196
FAM	592
RTC	1372
SSC	2824
Co-Responder	2270
Total	24401

Hampshire currently still use paper FDR1's. All fire stations are required to complete the FDR1 at the station and forward to Service HQ where our data inputters check, amend (notifying author) and complete the remaining sections on the paper form. We also have an electronic FDR1 which is a module of the Command and Control database which was envisaged to be the successor to the paper version, but network issues and speed of completion meant that this was not a viable option.

Therefore, the process is:

During the incident, the incident commander or nominated individual makes the necessary notes needed to complete the FDR1. Within seven days a paper FDR1 is written and sent in prepaid and preaddressed envelopes to Service HQ. Two data inputters as part of their role, check, and amend the reports (all amendments are cleared either by telephone or via e-mail with the author to save time and the additional possibility of the report disappearing). When the report is deemed acceptable the inputters add the final pieces of information not available to the fireground and then code the report on our electronic FDR1 system.

The FDR1 is then kept in chronological order and towards the end of the month we run a program that gives each report its CLG Red call number. These are then hand written on and when there are less than 15 outstanding, arrangements are made to have all of the FDR1's microfilmed.

On return they are packaged up and sent with the covering CLG letter to the CLG.

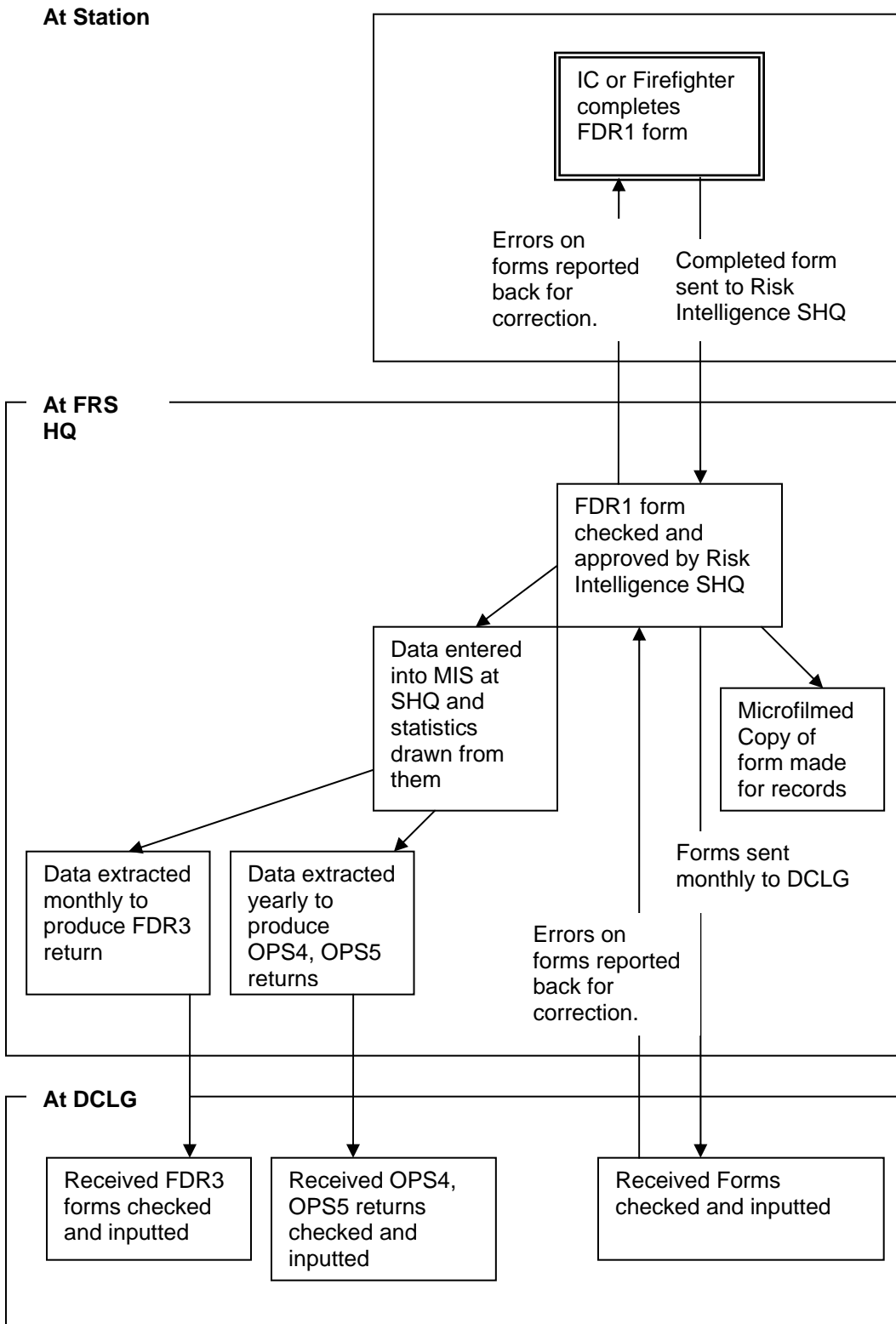
FDR2's follow in the same way. Those that come in during the same month will have the electronic system updated and will be microfilmed alongside it respective FDR1, those that come in later are photocopied and filed in a "Late" folder and forwarded to the CLG in the next batch.

Secondary fires or FDR3 reports are run at the beginning of the next month. We have a standard statistical report that runs against our Command and Control system and generates the numbers which are hand written onto the CLG's FDR3 form and submitted with the FDR1's.

For all other types of incidents, up to a few years ago there would have been a record of attendance but no further details. We have introduced a separate paper form called the Incident Data Form (IDF) which gathers additional information about these other incident types as well as additional information on fires that are not on the FDR1. This information is of a high level and all information is obtained by tick boxes to reduce the completion time.

All FDR1's are validated by our data inputters and frequently returned. If a FDR1 passes this check the electronic system has built in validation which would throw up any that have been missed or areas that we need to validate further. As a rough estimate around 40% of FDR1's require querying with the author.

Our incident data is used to ascertain the trends in activity. This will be used to underpin any analysis of the emergency response objectives within our IRMP. The data is also used to allow more proactive centered publicity campaigns. With the levels of activity and social demographics we can make a judgment as to where our risk areas are and where we need to focus our activities in the future as well as balancing our resources for the area.



HFRS Current Business Process

2.2 Description of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service current system

As detailed above HFRS still continue to primarily work with the paper FDR1 forms for the official side of the system but has as part of the Command and Control system a module for electronic fire reports.

The manufacturer of both our Control and E-FDR1 package is Vivista formally, Dopro and Securicor.

Data is extracted from the Command and Control system via Microsoft Access. We have range of databases created by an outside consultant to collect BVPI and management statistics as well as the annual statistics and an ad-hoc database full of queries and quick reports that have fallen outside of the 'official' reports.

HFRS does not have an integrated management information system for the production of statistics or FDR1's.

2.3 Issues with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service current business processes and systems

The current system of collection and validation of FDR1's has on the whole worked consistently well over the many years that FDR1's have been around. Considering how many pass through the system the problems have been relatively few and remarkably consistent!

The largest area of concern with the paper system is the problem of outstanding FDR1's. Most of our staff's time is taken with chasing outstanding FDR1's and when one is highlighted that it has already been completed and must have been lost in the post. The postal system is also an area of concern. Many reports go "missing" even though others in the same envelope arrive and then some actually do go missing. However, thankfully these are relatively few.

Quality of data is always a huge concern, especially as all the junior officers received specific training back in 1993/94 with the introduction of the current form. However, with the ever evolving turnaround in staff and temporary promotions those that had the training soon moved on up the ladder leaving those following with no official training. We did produce a video to assist and always maintained communication links whenever and wherever requested but ultimately the quality of handed down training has affected the quality of returns.

In order to improve standards of FDR1 completion, we now run an introduction to the FDR1 for new Junior Officers.

As we also require an incident form completed for every incident the current two members of staff with FDR1's primarily within their remit unfortunately do not have the time to input these as well therefore, they check them but pass them on to Control to enter them onto a separate database of the Command and Control system. This information is still available to be extracted via Microsoft Access.

We do not feel that there is any duplication of effort within the system. We prefer to currently allow the completion of the FDR1's by the firefighters and ensure that they are correct and validated to the best of our knowledge by HQ staff before being entered into our electronic version. Whilst the plan was originally to replace the paper with this electronic version we felt that the network at the time could not have been able to cope and also that the standardisation of the forms completed would move away from the current department of 4 to literally anyone who could complete a FDR1 (around 1500) This decision has been backed up with the amount of time taken to electronically complete a form properly (instead of just putting any code down that vaguely fits) and the improved yet still noticeably slower performance of the network at station level.

HFRS does not allow any access to the FDR1 or incident data directly by any other area of the service, i.e. Station Managers. The information can be requested and is indeed transferred to individuals or other databases for their use but not the live data.

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3. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service involvement in the Pilot

3.1 What Hampshire hoped to learn from the pilot

- HFRS were founder members of the Data definition group wished to continue to the end of the project.
- HFRS felt that the only way to fully influence the direction of the IRS was to be part of the project groups and pilot.
- HFRS between the two individuals representing the service and CFOA had a number of years experience, not only operationally but also the process and management of the process.
- HFRS wanted to be in a position of knowing what was coming and what would be needed well in advance of others.
- HFRS wanted to ensure that FRS's had a voice in the project and that what was being asked of FRS's was fair and achievable.

<List the reasons why you wanted to be involved in the pilot.

Detail the issues that you expected to resolve or learn more about. How will this be used to support the full roll out in Summer 2007 >

I think it is fair to say that with Hampshire's involvement in the project that we knew pretty much what was coming and how it would effect us, therefore, for HFRS the issues were all about the effects on the personnel completing the system. We had and still have reservations on the scale of the questioning within the incident types and how long each form would take to complete on station bearing in mind IT skills and network speeds. This was an issue on all forms as we were expecting duplication for FDR1's and the IRS and our own Incident Data Form which didn't go down well, coupled with newly introduced 'Work Routines' on stations there were no allowances in the system for administration which frustrated the firefighters as they didn't know what the priorities were. The mapping page was an issue but most people didn't use this, those that did liked the idea but when it failed to deliver they avoided it. We appreciate that this has and will be improved for the actual system.

3.2 What <Hampshire> did for the pilot

Hampshire for the pilot used the online forms, mainly to test how long the worst case scenario would take to complete but also mindful that our Command and Control manufacturers did not want to develop an interface for the system. This meant that we would have no automatic completion of known and available data and individuals would have to enter from scratch all the incident details.

As detailed in earlier sections, Hampshire used a total of six fire stations for the trial. These stations covered all duty crewing systems currently in place within the county. All junior officers were selected and a convenient time was arranged to walk through the system with each of them. This involved training in the region of 50 personnel as well as the 4 HQ trainers who would then be responsible for between one and two stations each. They would then be the stations first point of contact for queries or further training.

Hampshire maintained its own help desk log in Microsoft Excel and this was forwarded on a weekly basis to the help desk. The reason that it was only weekly was that we hoped that the HQ QA staff would be able to address any small issues.

3.3 Lessons <FRS> learned from the pilot

Users throughout the trial were encouraged to note any concerns or problems on the notes section of the online form which would then be picked up by QA staff checking them for publishing to the CLG. Some personnel did this religiously, others just wanted to reach the end of the form as quickly as possible.

In general, the users felt that this was the way to go, however, they did not like the length of time taken to complete the form and whilst they thought that property fires were too long they also felt that incidents such as RTC's were a waste of time as all they were completing was the times, addresses and appliances. So this would back up our earlier comment regarding RTC's and SSC's need more relevant questions. These issues we feel have been addressed in the later versions of the system and that the questioning is now more balanced.

Some users found the system easier than the current paper version.

Users were unhappy that the system would crash on the longer pages and when they returned to the page all the information had gone.

They wanted consistent approaches to completion, some pages changed the completion format which confused some as well as when you return to the original page it sends you to the top of the page rather than to the bottom (or wherever you left it)

The network itself held up well throughout the system, however, with more and more of the daily work now on the computer, for example the completion of forms, training records, planning training, riders and planning cover users felt that they would need a dedicated PC for IRS. They were concerned that if they had some IRS entries to make yet the Watch Manager was using the PC for other duties that this would quickly create a backlog. There was and no doubt will be some issues with IT literacy in the future, but others on the watch were able to assist and as time goes by these individuals will be less and less.

We have to bear in mind that the introduction of any new system especially in the current climate of constant change will be viewed negatively on stations. It will be felt that it doesn't really save time or reduce work and after the pilot, some will have that view, others outside of the pilot will hopefully see that it doesn't take as long as some might have suggested. Benefits will be that we will be able to reduce the amount of administration on stations slightly. Hopefully, individuals will want to keep on top of their incidents so they will start to complete them as they return from the incident so the benefit will be to the users of the data in creating more timely returns and hopefully identification of trends that much sooner.

Training issues – I am still a firm believer that the future for this type of training will require everybody to undertake the training and be able to complete the IRS, even if it is to share out the burden on busy watches and stations. Therefore, there will need to be some way of continually keeping new members trained to the same standard but without the need of those such as Junior officers having to do the training who may pass on bad habits. There would need to be a system such as an interactive DVD which provides scenario based training that could be assessable and added to with further more difficult scenarios at regular intervals for those with greater experience. This could be part of the Training Assessment Record for individuals and provide continuation training for all.

As far as terminology goes, this is generally not a problem but the FRS's and CLG must agree on terminology / definitions and maintain them so everybody knows what is required.

The major area of concern we have is that we must not lose sight of the individual completing the form. Some users were taking over an hour to complete a simple fire because the system threw them out and other technical issues. If the form is too long or too onerous they will lose faith in it and then it will be a struggle to get them back on board with it but make it short and snappy, and they will say .." Is that it?" and they will not mind doing it. If it takes as long as the pilot to complete a fire then we will seriously have masses of flawed and inaccurate data when surely it might have been better to start with a concise amount of base questions to get everyone used to completing the system and then over time add more questions to the system

4. Proposed future system and business processes

4.1 What <Hampshire> plan to do to implement incident recording

As of yet most of the decisions based around the future of IRS within Hampshire are to be decided.

The future may go in completely different ways as regards to how we complete the forms. But however it goes we must have some interface with the existing Control room database in order to automate the process. Whether this is part of a Management Information System or just by paying a consultant to link the on line pages to the Command and Control system is to be decided.

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One of our preferred approaches is to purchase an MIS and have a single system that provides access to all the data within the FRS. The key benefits of this approach are that it covers all data not just incident data and by having a consistent user interface and access to all systems will simplify training needs.

We are currently doing a more detailed impact assessment and business case on this approach.

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As to timescales, I see the IRS project as a sole individuals task to push forward and depending on the recommendations for progression, I hope to see Hampshire being ready by April 2008.

4.2 Overview of Hampshire's future business processes

The collection of data and statistics has never been a high priority within Hampshire, but if we are to move towards an IRMP and evidence based approach then the timeliness and priority of good quality data has to be of paramount importance.

Our preferred solution is no longer to introduce a MIS due to the estimated cost that had been quoted to other FRS's and coupled with the growing need for more dynamic reporting of incidents in the partnership arena. Therefore, our preferred option now is to have some sort of 24/7 facility to deal with the IRS.

The benefits we felt are as follows:

- Upon return from the incident the "centre" would contact the station and talk through the completion of the IRS. This would mean that details are fresh (unlike the current FDR1) and any details missing could be obtained quickly.
- This would mean that all incident data would be in within the hour and therefore able to be analysed or used in the desired dynamic way.
- We would not have to devise a way of training all of our 1700 operational firefighters and spend 6 months on stations
- No need for continuation training when new JO's come on line.
- Everything could be done by means of a powerpoint presentation for information only
- We would have a small number of "standards" instead of hundreds on stations. Therefore we believe that the data quality will be improved as the team will know what the question is after and they will be able to question the OIC to drill down to what is really required.

- Time to complete the forms would be drastically reduced as there would be a small finely trained unit collecting the data.
- The only queries would be from the CLG to our QA staff
- As they are done at the time there would be no outstanding forms or time wasted chasing.

The advantages of moving this way would be that we are aware of “residual” tasks that will be left to FRS’s when RCC’s go live and these tasks would be part of this teams remit.

Currently, there are several options on how to staff this both now and post RCC but no decisions or costings have been made.

Our only other option would be to continue with the completion of the IRS from Stations via the web form interface providing Sunguard Vivista were able to provide pre-population.

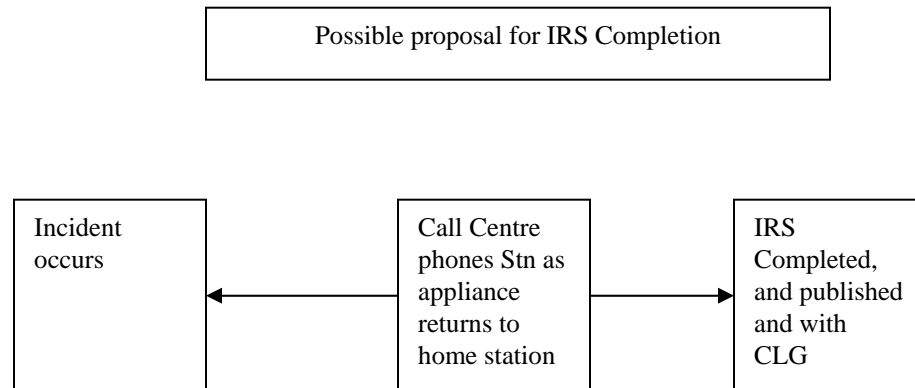
The benefits would be:

- That there’s little change in what they currently do.

But the disadvantages would be:

- That considerable training would be required
- The quality of the data may not improve
- More resources are needed within the QA section to process the forms
- More resources would be needed to ensure that all forms are received
- Would need to ensure continuation training to pick up the new JO’s in the future
- Time needed on station to complete forms

These proposals are currently being costed and whilst it is clear that whatever solution is chosen for the future will be an additional burden for Hampshire, the 24/7 solution will be the most cost effective approach whilst allowing us to improve our current data/statistics issues.



4.3 IT impact

Whatever way Hampshire decide to go with the IT of the new system there will be changes and improvements needed. This will mean the purchase of a new MIS to handle the interface between Control and the IRS and also if we need to use the web pages that this provides us with a copy of the data collected rather than relying on the CLG to send data back or us downloading data in incompatible formats to our current databases.

We may need to consider if the IRS is to remain completed on the station at purchasing additional PC's purely for the completion of the IRS. I cannot see the need at retained stations but with the amount of work now PC based we would not want to create the argument that the IRS is not being completed because of other vital work being worked on such as the new daily work routines (Home Fire Safety Visit job cards, Training planners and records, ridership rotas.

I believe that the network will be sufficient to handle the traffic although the speed will be an issue as stations have traditionally suffered from slower speeds than those at Service HQ. This will undoubtedly lead to frustration in the completion of the IRS.

As everybody will have their own personal logon we would recommend that the IRS could be completed remotely, i.e. at home. During the pilot each retained station was given a logon for the station as a whole, whilst wholtime stations were given a logon per watch. We felt that issuing personal logons for the pilot was not required due to the effort of creating them for such a short amount of time, however would still be looking to issue personal logons if the decision was taken to continue station completion.

4.4 < Training Requirements

Without knowing which path Hampshire will take it is difficult to approach the training subject. However, ideally with the amount of incidents to be completed and the added workload for the crew and watch managers if IRS was solely their responsibility it would be good personal development if every member of the crew was able to complete the system, This would require a massive amount of training and one that would be continually required, impacting on either the QA staff or the training departments.

The service would probably look to provide some sort of e-learning package if the CLG could not.

We could also provide DVD and web lecture packs for stations and use a mixture of site visits and central training facilities. We also have QA staff at hand available to answer queries and generally assist and I so not see that changing if the system stayed on station.

In readiness for the pilot, each Junior officer was given a two hour slot to firstly see a demonstration of the IRS with an QA member completing a report then a hands on approach completing it from a recent incident and the QA member explaining why the question is asked and detailing what is happening as they moved through the system. At the time the two hours seemed enough and it did depend on what examples were being used. However, it was clear when the pilot came into force that maybe a different approach was needed as some had problems in remembering what was imparted at the training.

We do not see the QA staff's role changing from its current checking and validating role if the decision is taken to continue with stations completing the IRS. If it moves to a call centre then the current QA staff may have different roles within the organisation or take up positions within the call centre. This has all to be decided.

4.5 Culture and Change management

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There could be a huge culture change should be move to a central completion centre. However, I feel that this would be welcome as the question was asked in a HFRS questionnaire following the pilot. 90% of those replying said they would welcome this move (20 replies) This move would take time to bed in but currently other FRS's have their control rooms completing the FDR1's so its not a huge radical decision.

4.6 Estimated costs of implementation

It is envisaged that the IRS will mainly run on existing hardware but that there will be some additional unknown cost of providing an interface with our Command and Control database.

There will be hidden costs of developing any e-learning / lecture pack presentations within the Risk Intelligence and Training departments and depending on the system chosen there will be considerable

amounts of overtime in delivering the training to stations.

Staff costs – the service has 2 data inputters that as part of the daily work they maintain the FDR1's but this is a small percentage of what they will be required to do when it moves to the IRS. If we want good accurate data we will require these staff to quality check either all or a large percentage of the incidents. This will mean taking on more staff to address this or if Hampshire goes along the call centre approach then there will be the cost of providing a 24hr support line but considerable costs saved in training.

Currently, 50% of the Inputters time is taken up with the checking, amending and chasing of 4000 FDR1's, this equates to 100% of one inputters time. We could take the decision to batch publish all AFA's, FDR3's, Good Intentions and False Alarm Malicious incidents which will reduce the validation but it would still mean an increase of at least 6,000 incidents on top of the current 4,000 FDR1's. This workload could be offset by the call centre approach as they would complete and publish at the same time as the process would do the QA role.

There will be a dedicated person seconded for the deliverance of the IRS into the Service which will require a secondment into the office.

4.7 Benefits Hampshire hope to achieve

Hampshire hopes that the IRS will be simple enough to provide quality accurate data that can and will be used in the delivery of the IRMP. We hope that the data given will be more meaningful and have a purpose at national and local level.

We would like to say that the system will speed the process up and be quicker to complete but currently and depending on which way we proceed with the IRS this is not the case. WE do hope that the CLG lead from the front and provide definitive guidance and definitions in all levels to ensure that a fire in Hampshire is recorded and understood the same in Northumberland. This data is paramount in allowing a fair comparison across FRS's.

We hope that future additions and deletions will be managed by a cross FRS / CLG board to ensure that the document does not collect out of date data or meaningless information historically.

We hope that the system will seamlessly integrate with other CLG provided packages i.e. FSEC and simplify the process of uploading data and reduce the amount of time and resources needed for this and other tasks.

We hope that all other departments have been consulted and that a consensus has been reached on using the same codes for causes of incidents, property types and fatal and non-fatal casualties to improve partnership working and so departments locally and nationally can share and use the same data.

We hope that other FRS's IRS data (in statistical form) can be obtained via a national database so that FRS statistics teams can speed up information exchanges for CFS activities and comparison requirements without having to go through the CLG for them.

4.8 Critical Success Factors for Hampshire

The main areas that will signal a success in FRS's will be that each incident is simple and quick to complete and that it asks for data that is achievable at the incident ground. If it asks for too many estimates and guestimates then the support will be quickly and easily lost and then its very hard to get it back and the data will suffer.

Personnel will question the benefit of the system especially if each incident requires considerable amounts of questions that they cannot easily complete or have to go elsewhere for the information. As long as they see some return from the system, albeit through an increase in available statistics or a reduction in administration then the personnel will be on board with the IRS. We are pleased to see that many of these issues have been addressed in the subsequent pilot meetings and are confident that the majority of questions that cannot be answered by the OIC will have been removed.