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## Ministerial Advisory Group Members

Copy to: Chief Fire Officers  
Convenors Forum Members

4 August 2010

Dear Colleague

I wanted to write and clarify some key points in relation to recent media coverage of the Firelink communications system.

The reports incorrectly claimed that on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July the Firelink system had lost both voice and data transfer capabilities. This was not the case.

Firelink maintained full voice capability by switching to its resilient back-up system, with only a short delay being experienced in restoring data transfer capability. Both police and fire colleagues have indicated that at no time were their abilities to mobilise officers and crews affected by this issue.


I would like to thank colleagues across the FRS for their prompt action to assist the Airwave technical teams in restoring full system functionality, and I am also grateful for CFOAS' ongoing statements of support for Firelink and its capabilities.

It was this same strong partnership working between fire and rescue stakeholders that ensured the Firelink project was delivered on time and within budget, and I hope that we will continue to work effectively together as the system moves through the in-life programme.

We are now working actively with Airwave management to ensure that lessons are learned and applied from last week, and your continued assistance in this process would be valuable.

I am sure you will share my view that such misinformed reporting only serves to cause concern among the public, and is an unwelcome distraction for everyone during these challenging times.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fergus Ewing". The signature is written in a cursive style with large, rounded loops for the letters 'F' and 'E'.

**FERGUS EWING**