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This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular is to advise the English FRS of changes in the support arrangements for the Integrated Personal Development System.		

Changes in the support arrangements for the Integrated Personal Development System

Issued by:

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FRS 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:

Head of Training

Summary

In April 2009 the UK FRS will be joining the Skills for Justice Sector Skills Council. This circular is to advise the English FRS of changes in the support arrangements for IPDS that will take effect from that date. It sets out the broad arrangements and will be followed by a more detailed circular as soon as the information is available.

For further information, contact:

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Supporting the Integrated Personal Development System, including the national processes for recruitment and selection

1.0 Background

1.1 When the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) project closed in December 2007, the Organisational Development Centre at the Fire Service College continued to provide support and advice to the FRS and maintain the IPDS products. The support was funded through FRA subscriptions and a contribution from CLG for some specific work on the National Firefighter Selection process (NFS). This funding model was recommended by the Pathway Group for 2008/09 and was intended to be an interim arrangement.

2.0 Skills for Justice

2.1 Skills for Justice is a Sector Skills Council and a Standard Setting Body – one of 25 such bodies providing support for workforce development for some 85% of employees in the UK. Skills for Justice already works with the Police, the Prison Service, the Probation Service and a number of other organisations across UK. Their overarching role is to identify the skills priorities and actions required for workforce development.

2.2 SkillsPlus UK used to be the Standard Setting Body for the fire and rescue sector but this remit ceased in March 2008, in line with Government policy to transfer sectors into Sector Skills Councils, although interim support has remained in place. The fire and rescue sector, represented by the Fire and Rescue Sector Vocational Standards Group (FRSVSG) has been alert to this change and of the need to seek membership of a Sector Skills Council. After discussions with a number of Sector Skills Councils and a full evaluation by the FRSVSG, it was agreed that Skills for Justice would offer the best match for the FRS and this was endorsed by LGA, CFOA and CLG. An essential part of membership of any Council is that it is on a UK wide basis. This having been agreed with the Devolved Administrations, Skills for Justice were willing to take the sector into their 'footprint'. This transfer is in line with Government policy on expanding the footprint of Sector Skills Councils and incorporating parts of the economy which currently do not have a home into an appropriate Sector Skills Council.

2.3 Skills for Justice is funded partly by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and partly by subscription. The subscription level is £3.50 per employee per annum. To reflect our commitment to the training and development agenda, exceptionally, CLG has agreed to pay the subscription for the English Fire and Rescue Service for the first two years. We will be reviewing these arrangements for 2011/12. The Devolved Administrations have put in place similar arrangements.

3.0 IPDS

3.1 IPDS support in 2008/09 has been provided by the Organisational Development Centre. This arrangement will cease at the end of this financial year and, from April 2009, will be part of the service provided by Skills for Justice. This change will not affect the Centre for Leadership at the Fire Service College, which will continue in 2009/10.

- 3.2** The work required to maintain and support IPDS falls under the broad headings of national occupational standards, qualifications and guidance. The detail of the scope and level of support is currently being discussed between Skills for Justice and CLG, Scottish Government (for the Devolved Administrations), FRS Vocational Standards Group and SkillsPlus UK/LGE. The agreed support will be set out in a service level agreement with Skills for Justice. CFOA, LGA and CFRA are being consulted on the draft agreement.
- 3.3** Skills for Justice will provide some support for Assessment and Development Centres as part of the Service Level Agreement and we are in discussion about the details of that provision.
- 3.4** For 2009/10, support for the National Firefighter Selection process will be provided by CLG/FRD. This is an interim position for one year whilst we agree with stakeholders a more permanent arrangement for on-going support.
- 3.5** A further circular setting out these arrangements in more detail will be sent out as soon as the information is available. In addition Skills for Justice will be writing to FRSs to set out their role and the services that they will be providing.
- 4.0 Further Information**
- 4.1** Any queries with the contents of this circular should be addressed to Linda Hurford, FRS Development Division

Linda Hurford

FRS Development Division