

Circular number	17/2010	Date issued	31 March 2010
This circular is	For information	No response required	
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular advises the publication of a qualitative research study into the experiences of England's Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in participating effectively with the Local Area Agreement process; and research into likely trajectories for fire incidents and casualty indicators.		

Publication of Local Area Agreement research and Departmental Strategic Objectives Trajectories.

Issued by:

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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 circular advises the publication of a qualitative research study into the experiences of English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in participating effectively with the Local Area Agreement process; and research into likely trajectories for fire incidents and casualty indicators.

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Local Area Agreements Research

- 1.1 In 2009, Communities and Local Government (CLG) commissioned a qualitative research study to provide an insight into the experiences of, and processes used by, English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in participating effectively with statutory Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), and in negotiating the targets contained within the new statutory three-year local delivery plans called Local Area Agreements (LAAs).
- 2.0 FRAs have a statutory duty to promote fire safety, which includes working with other agencies and local partners to create safer communities. Fire and Rescue Circular 14/2010¹ advised that as part of the review of the National Indicator Set fire indicators NI 33 and Ni49 would cease to be collected from 1st April 2010.
- 3.0 Many FRAs have been successful in establishing their position in Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)/Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and successfully demonstrated the value the FRS can add to the delivery of a wide range of local priorities, including, but not exclusively, those with improved fire safety outcomes. One of the findings of the research is that that the lack of a visible fire-related target need not represent a barrier to the delivery of improved fire safety outcomes. The LAA toolkit therefore remains valid as a means of presenting evidence about fire as a local issue & prevention works contribution to the wider agenda and on construction of appropriate targets.
- 3.1 Going forward it is important for FRAs to develop and maintain enhanced partnership arrangements at the local level if they are to continue to consider innovative means of delivering their statutory duties to improve community fire safety outcomes.
- 4.0 The researchers carried out qualitative interviews with a range of stakeholders involved in negotiating LAAs, including representatives of FRAs, lead local authority officers and Government Office representatives and gathered information to provide good practice case studies.
- 5.0 Those included in the research saw the LAA process as a useful catalyst in terms of embedding partnership working, and promoting the Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) role at the LSP table. Several key themes emerged about ways in which FRAs could more effectively engage with partners in the LAA process, including:
 - **Choosing an appropriate (senior) representative to negotiate LAAs.** The representative sent by FRAs to the LAA negotiation table (and the LSP Board), their degree of local knowledge and ability to commit to a programme of action and resource was important, not only for negotiating LAAs, but in cementing the FRAs' position within the LSP more generally.
 - **Using evidence to secure targets.** Effective use of evidence was important in working with the LSP and securing fire targets in the LAA.
 - **Supporting wider community priorities as a vehicle through which fire safety risks can be addressed.** Supporting wider community priorities and the goals of other local partners could bring benefits to FRAs, both financial in securing joint outcomes and less tangible, for example gaining more of a presence on the LSP and in turn exerting more influence on targets chosen. Many FRAs recognised that LAAs reflected local priorities and accepted that fire would not always feature visibly in the LAA.
- 5.1 The report is called 'The experience of Fire and Rescue Services in negotiating Local Area Agreements' and was published on the CLG website on 26th March 2010. The report can be found at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/frsnegotiatinglaas>
- 5.2 Please contact Louise Upton if you have any questions about the research on 0303 444 2934.

¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/firecirculars>.

5.3 Departmental Strategic Objectives – Trajectories

5.4 The Department commissioned research into the likely effects of the economic downturn on its Fire indicator measures in Autumn 2008, and this work was subsequently updated in Autumn 2009.

5.5 CLG published the research report "DSO 6.1, 6.2 and PSA 3 fire trajectories to March 2012: Updated trajectories"
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firetrajectoriesmarch2012update> on 5 March 2010. This contains trajectories for the numbers of primary fires, fatal and non-fatal casualties and deliberate fires, based on data that were available in October 2009.

5.6 The method used to derive the trajectories was to analyse past relationships of how these indicators appear to have been driven by other data series. In all eight explanatory series were identified as having been closely related to the components of the five indicators (for primary fires and casualties: dwellings, other buildings, road vehicles and other outdoor, and for secondary fires: derelict buildings, abandoned vehicles, grasslands and refuse). The explanatory series included unemployment and the proportion of the population that smokes, for example. The researcher's expectation for these were then used to derive the forecasts for the indicators.

5.7 The trajectories contrast those produced previously
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firetrajectoriesmarch2011>, largely as a result of a revised expectation by the researcher on the level at which unemployment will peak, and their view now that scrap metal prices will remain well above the costs involved in collecting abandoned vehicles. Please contact Gavin Sayer if you have any questions about the research on 0303 444 2818.

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