



The View From Here

This month we welcome the following contribution from CFO Bonney and use this opportunity to invite others to contribute to the newsletter.

I read with interest the RFU's newsletter of September and was fascinated to find myself the subject of a very well illustrated cartoon. Without misquoting Oscar Wilde, it was the Irish wit who stated "there's only one thing worse than being talked about and that is not being talked about!". So I was flattered to think that people would like to see more of me (presumably at their station). Looking through your own newsletter it should be no surprise that it's been a busy time for all recently and no less for a Chief Officer. It's no cliché to say that the whole of the fire service is changing. Who would have thought only two years ago we would see the end of the standards of fire cover, the fire service's discipline regulations, even the mainstay of the statutory promotion examinations. We now have new legal responsibilities to respond to massive terrorist attacks, major flooding and environmental threats.

In terms of people issues, we are entering a world where the Working Time Directive, the Disability Discrimination Act, new Pension Regulation and the Integrated Personal Development System will change forever the way we select, develop, promote and ultimately retire people from the service.



All of these changes will bring advantages to the way we do business. They will also bring personal challenges to our own preconceptions about who can be a firefighter and what that role will entail in the future.

Since some seem to doubt my physical presence, let me make a couple of very real promises. Firstly, I will not allow these changes to prevent people who wish to serve their community on a part time basis, as a firefighter, from doing so. Secondly, I am committed to working with all representative bodies to ensure that the implementation of new working practices and conditions of service are achieved in an open and inclusive way. But for those bodies, there needs to be a willingness to engage constructively and not just snipe from the sidelines.

It would be my ideal to speak to you all personally on the changes which will affect each and every one of us. As Chief though, steering through the change means I can't physically do that. Rest assured, out of sight is not out of mind and my station visits will continue.

The RFU newsletter—designed to educate, inform and entertain.

RFU *part of the solution not the problem*



Under Pressure

We thought here at Hampshire RFU that it would be great editorial to put the following two together. These two seemingly contradictory reports clearly identify the pressures which Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service are under to conform to the many governmental standards which are suddenly being thrown at them. It is easy to criticise HFRS for all the changes currently underway but, while we do think that there is room for improvement we do recognise that the government is propelling and forcing the change in HFRS at an unacceptable rate which does not always allow for clear and controlled project management.



NEW ROTA SYSTEM

HFRS have recently announced that a corporate rota system is to be rolled out throughout the county.

Quite a number of retained stations currently operate their own rota riding system. These can increase the motivation of those people who do not often get a ride, ensure equal experience and removes the pressure to take risks attending the station.

There are of course some drawbacks, however we do agree with HFRS that from a Health and Safety point of view ensuring that all riders receive a fair and equal opportunity to ride and so remain 'current' firefighters is the fairest system. However—what 'rota' system could be used?

It is the view of Hampshire RFU committee that rota riding systems do have a place on retained stations providing that the implementation is station driven and that there is a demonstrable need. However, SDO Butcher stated at the recent RFU/HFRS Consultative meeting "It is my intention to implement rota systems across the Service." Your RFU representatives at that meeting voiced their concern and cautioned that what may suit one station will not necessarily, for a multitude of reasons, suit another. SDO Butcher thanked the RFU representatives for their counsel.

The implementation of rota systems will impact on the drive to attend eighty per cent of calls in eight minutes across the county. For many types of calls, perhaps the majority, turnout times could be increased. Arguably, you may have to wait a set time for the next rota'd firefighter to attend, thus delaying turnout.

8/80—The story so far

As mentioned in previous editions of the newsletter a major project underway within HFRS is how to achieve the 8/80 criteria.

That is how HFRS as a service, can get to 80% of emergency calls within 8 minutes. Our June newsletter recorded the projects commencement and in August we were presented with 'the facts' which we presented back to you. This month we were allowed a preview to the report and its recommendations. It is important to note that these are recommendations and no decisions whatsoever have been made (so ignore the rumours)!

The results are not unexpected; Retained Fire Stations due to their necessity of having to call firefighters in and having larger fire grounds exceed the 8/80 requirements more than most.

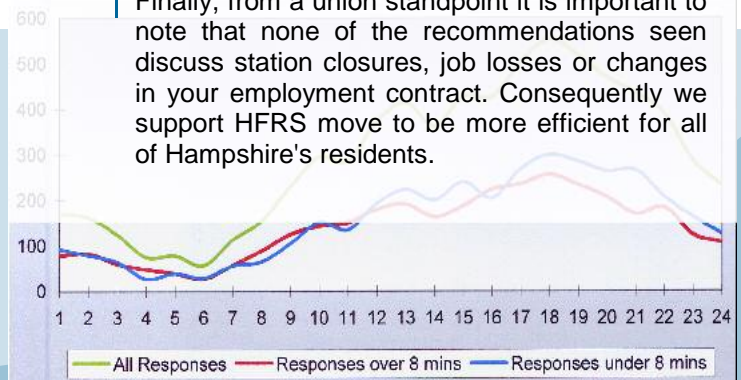
Consequently allot of the report is devoted to retained stations and ways in which they can be helped to improve. Some of the reports recommendations may have far reaching affects in how we expect the fire service to react to emergency calls and others are more down to earth however they all point towards a more efficient service in which Hampshire residents can expect a faster service from HFRS.

Finally, from a union standpoint it is important to note that none of the recommendations seen discuss station closures, job losses or changes in your employment contract. Consequently we support HFRS move to be more efficient for all of Hampshire's residents.

Carol Service



At the risk of offending those who want to 'Kick Christmas back into December' - there will be a Carol Service at Service HQ on Thursday 16th December. The theme will be the celebration of peace. The service will be multi denominational and will involve our local communities.





IPDS- LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

IPDS is just one of the many acronyms bandied around Hampshire Fire and Rescue and yet with all of its promotions many people still do not know what it is. Put simply Integrated Personal Development System. Training and development that will cover new trainee and support you throughout your fire service career. IPDS is however more than this, it is more proactive and supportive of the student and, if you want to get on will fully embrace and support your desires. Equally, if you are happy in your rank/role it will ensure that you are maintaining standards.

But there is more, much more...

IPDS is the first tangible project which proves that HFRS really is putting its money where its mouth is and treating Fire Fighters as exactly the same irrespective of the type of duty system they are on—be it retained or whole time. Simply put, as part of a phased introduction from January 2005 their will be a progressive integration of retained and whole time fire fighter. They will ultimately undertake exactly the same training and will be equally qualified in accordance with the National introduction of IPDS. How similar will the training be—how about both retained and wholetime trainee will be on the same course for the first module of 10 days? After this module retained trainee will have a (pre-defined) choice to continue on and do other modules with their wholetime colleagues or return back to work (with a ticket to ride) and continue their retained training over a long period.

Further modules (BA, First Aid and Trauma, RTA and Hazmat) will accept both wholetime and retained trainee. These modules will be available throughout the year so there will be plenty of opportunity. In the future there may even be the option to take the theoretical BTEC qualification.

POEST

Point Of Entry Selection Tests will be levelled also. Whether you want to be a wholetime or retained firefighter you will need to reach the same high standard to join.

Disadvantages

Really there is very little that we can comment on that detracts from this introduction. It will mean that the new trainee module A will be 10 days Monday to Friday and trainee will need up to a total of 20 days off during there three year development period and a further 10 days in their fourth year (if not completed earlier). HFRS assure us of offering flexibility and support (including representing the benefits to your employer) so in homogenising the standards we have to accept that to be considered equal to Wholetimers we should not always be treated separately.

What about existing firefighters?

If you are currently a firefighter training towards competency there will be no change—you will progress along the same development path until competency, these developments will only affect new trainees. If you are a competent firefighter and want to progress, in the next year you will be joining the IPDS helix as discussed below.

For further information see the HFRS IPDS or the national IPDS www.ipds.co.uk

RECRUIT TRAINING

Module	Description	Length
A	Initial Training	10 days
	Key Skills (currently ticket to ride)	
B	BA	10 days
C	First Aid and Trauma care	5 days
D	RTA & HAZMAT	5 days
	Competent Fire Fighter	
E	Combined Drills & exercises	10 days

The Helix

You have probably already come across the wonderful IPDS helix and wondered what the hell it was all about. Simply put, your potential career through the service will follow a set process:

First you will attend an interview to assess your personal qualities and attributes (pqa).



If successful you start receiving development rated pay and receive safety critical training.



On successful completion you then receive the development rate of pay and continue your training with modular training based on your individual requirements.



On successful completion of your development program you will then move to the competent rate of pay.



With Thanks

We wholly welcome and support this development. Indeed parity between retained and wholetime firefighters has been a core driving force behind the RFU and a thought should be made for the many hours and dedication by both current and previous union representatives both locally and nationally who have been barracking, cajoling and encouraging government bodies and local fire services to accept retained fire fighters as dedicated and professional individuals who can stand proudly with their wholetime colleagues.

This is proof that the RFU works and works bloody hard for you. If your not already a member, show your appreciation and join up now! We have a long way to go yet!



We Need You!



We are currently looking for some new skills to help us here in Hampshire RFU—maybe this could be you!

- Press officer (reviewing all Hampshire RFU publications, establishing links with local media and ensuring the RFU views are properly presented.
- Data analyst—we currently have a one off requirement here—have you got time to help us go through some source data and establish some opinions?
- Station representatives—we must have a RFU rep in every station to stick a colour copy of this newsletter to your stations notice board, provide us with feedback of views and opinions at your station and to receive news updates from us. Note, although you are welcome, you will not be expected to attend meetings so this position should not take up much of your time.



From the RFU website...

FIRE STATISTICS MONITOR UK: Q1 2004

Latest national fire statistics covering the first quarter of 2004 and the year ending 31 March 2004 were issued today by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Fires

The UK fire and rescue service attended over 1 million fires and false fire alarms during 2003/04 – 4% more than in the previous year. The total number of fires attended increased by 9% to 592,300. Within this total, the number of "primary" fires (fires involving property, vehicles and/or casualties) fell by 6% to 206,600, however there was a 20% increase (to 375,200) in the number of "secondary" fires, (mainly because of an increase in grassland fires in the very warm spring and summer of 2003). There were 63,200 fires in the home, a fall of 2% compared with the previous year.

Deaths and Injuries

The provisional figure for the number of fire related deaths in 2003/04 is 612, 38 more than in 2002/03. This compares with 602 recorded in 2001/02, 568 in 2000/01, and 641 in 1999/00. Within this category there were 365 deaths from accidental dwelling fires, compared with 367 a year earlier. Injuries resulting from fires fell by 4% to 15,600.

False Alarms

The number of false fire alarms attended fell by 2% to 469,100. within this category the number of malicious false alarms fell by 13% to 57,500 whilst false alarms due to apparatus remained fairly constant at 282,000.

NOW IS THE TIME.....

If you are not a union member and think that the union is "not for you" then please spend a few minutes reading this.

Hampshire RFU is not a radical union who think that HFRS have a hidden agenda's but a group of retained firefighters who want to work with HFRS to help ensure that the many forthcoming changes will benefit the community and not lessen the quality of our work lives.

This months article on equal training and the possibility of further developments ensure that our profile is being taken more seriously and it is now of extreme importance that we represent the majority of retained fire fighters in this county.

Now, more than ever, we need new members so please support our efforts in improving **your** fire service and join the RFU.



Read ALL about it!

If you want another copy of this newsletter, a colour printed copy or a pdf emailed to you please just ask HRFU Secretary (Andy Needham on 01962 723020) or Chair (Rikki Noble on rikki@office-home.demon.co.uk).

Got something to shout about?

We would welcome your comments, opinions or thoughts, good or bad in our next issue. Just forward them to HRFU Secretary (Andy Needham on 01962 723020) or Chair (Rikki Noble on rikki@office-home.demon.co.uk).

