

SHOUT!

The magazine of Hampshire Retained Firefighters Union

Friday, 08 May 2009



The View From Here

South Central Ambulance Services NHS Trust and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service have joined forces in 2004 to introduce the Co-Responder Scheme, initially on just 3 stations and then expanded again in 2006 with 3 more stations going on the run. Such has been the success that the scheme is being expanded again, this time with 8 more stations. This expansion provides for the possibility of Hampshire firefighters attending up to 10,000 calls per annum in the future. Training as always is being provided by the trust itself which should remove any claims in certain circles that these community spirited 'volunteers' are being forced to carry out the task without adequate training.

A significant step such as this can only mean one thing..... Communities covered by these stations can now receive a swifter response than was previously the case, ambulance paramedics will continue to respond but a swift local intervention by trained fire personnel might well make the difference in buying time for ambulance 'professionals' to do their important job when they arrive on scene.



The RFU congratulates the South Central Ambulance Services NHS Trust and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service on its joint effort in expanding the scheme, we support and encourage our members who take part by not limiting any of the member benefits and will provide full legal protection and support whilst they carry out this important task.



Do remember that if you are a co-responder then the RFU are the **only union that fully supports your activities and recognises this activity as an essential component intrinsic in Retained Fire Stations. The RFU will provide comprehensive help, support and representation for any members relating to Co-Responder duties. The FBU will not support their members undertaking co-responder duties.**

See an article inside "FBU Chairman Opposes New Co-Responders In Hampshire"

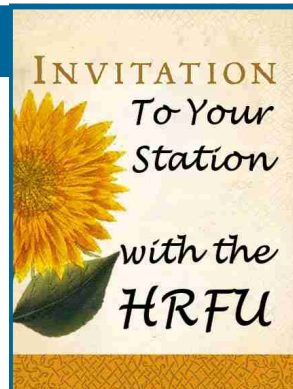
Invite Us To Your Station

With so much change going on around the service you may be wondering how the Retained Service fits in with the future of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service?

Well why not invite us to your station one evening for a visit and we will be happy to give you a 'warts and all' view.

Consider the new RMS system, Efficient and Flexible Crewing, Transfer Opportunities, New Fitness Requirements, Home Fire Safety Visits - what are the threats and the opportunities!

Contact us now at admin@hrfu.org.uk or phone 0798 555 9243 to arrange your visit.



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

RFU *part of the solution not the problem*



Efficient & Flexible Crewing

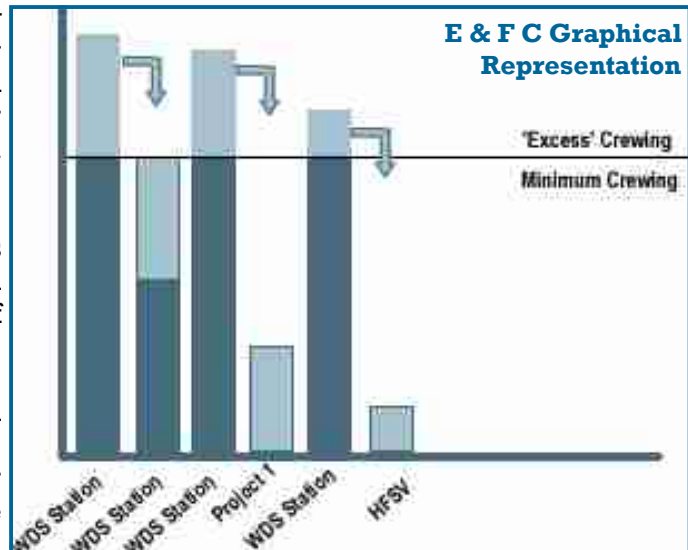
You are going to hear a lot about the above over the forthcoming months as it considers changing the way which WDS Fire Fighters may work. It does not affect the way RDS work but it has been identified that there may be some great opportunities for us we thought we would offer you a brief explanation.

Efficient & Flexible crewing has been commissioned for two main reasons a) As HFRS receive funding from the tax payer there is a duty to ensure that we are working as efficiently as possible and b) as an employer HFRS must offer their employees more flexible ways to work being family friendly or recognising an individuals requirements may be slightly different from the services requirements of them.

Now the facts: consider that there are 13 Wholetime stations who employ 640 individuals, next consider that to crew the equipment at these stations we require 384 individuals you can see that it could be described that HFRS over employ 256 individuals or 40% of their workforce (640-384=256). Now obviously these figures are not absolute, any business needs to have more than the minimum number of employees required to cover sickness, holidays, training etc. However HFRS are trying to now employ individuals more intelligently, by removing the excess of employees at a specific station on a specific shift (those that take crewing over minimum) and divert them to other more useful tasks such as specific projects, HFSV's etc.

HFRS Senior Management stress that redundancies are not predicted through using Efficient and Flexible Crewing, just a more intelligent usage of its workforce.

Please do note that this is a very simplified overview of Efficient and Flexible Crewing do not make assumptions from what you read here! Rather keep an eye out as presentations are being made throughout the service.



FBU Chairman Opposes New Co-Responders In Hampshire

The Fire Authority meeting held on 10th December 2008 received a deputation from Eddie Burrows, the newly appointed Hampshire Chairman of the Fire Brigades Union, opposing the extension of the Co-responder schemes within Hampshire.

From December 2008 the number of Co-responder schemes expanded from 6 to 14. The Ambulance Service fully funded the schemes at the new stations last year and will fully fund all stations in 2009. With the reduction in calls the Co-responder scheme utilises the inherent RDS skills and enthusiasm for supporting our local communities. After all, our communities are our families our workmates and our friends so the demonstrable success of Co-responder schemes should be applauded and extended and not be the subject of cheap political point scoring by the FBU.





HFRS Plan 2009-2012 Proposed Corporate Objectives

Objective 2

The review of the delivery of services to the public in areas covered by Bishop's Waltham, Botley, Droxford and Wickham Fire Stations caused not a little concern. However as the Objective 2 summary states "Once staff and public were assured that this objective centred on improving the delivery of our services and not closing fire stations –they could see the benefits of the objective."



The public, during the consultation, felt that HFRS should raise its profile to the public. Suggestions to do this included:

- Firefighters and/or stations to adopt a school
- Open RDS stations as community bases
- Host post offices
- Adverts in local/parish newsletters and magazines.
- Combined presence with the police
- Parking appliance in community and allowing communities to meet firefighters.

Further ideas would be welcome as well as news of any local initiatives in place or being considered.

Objective 6

Does your station need the exterior painting or is the drill yard and it's surroundings in need of some investment?

Objective 6 is entitled "Strategy for resolving our buildings maintenance needs." The inadequate funding of station maintenance has been raised numerous times by your Hampshire RFU representatives. This representation culminated in the Fire Authority voting an annual £50 000 budget to be targeted at RDS stations. It seems now that this money is not enough because of the huge backlog of remedial work required. The overall maintenance budget for 2009-2010 is £200 000.



RDS Firefighters Pay Huge Overspend.

A £160 000 overspend has emerged as a result of the un-budgeted Continuous Personal Development payments (£58 000) and Personal Development Review (£40 000). These payments together with the shortfall in funding the RDS pump at St Mary's have created this deficit.

The strange thing is that these items were never budgeted for in the first place but were intended to be covered by expected shortfalls in RDS staffing levels and recruitment. Last year the 17% reduction in the number of incidents helped out the "budget" I wonder what is planned for 2009?



New Transfer Opportunities Are Here!



As part of HFRS ongoing management of its establishment they have identified an opportunity to offer the transfer from the Retained Duty System to the Wholetime Duty System for a maximum of six full time equivalent firefighter roles based at various locations within the county. At present the vacancies are for Competent firefighters. Please note that RDS personnel currently undertaking a higher role may apply for transfer as a firefighter, but will not be eligible to carry over the higher level 'rank' to the alternative duty system. Completed application forms need to be received no later than 15 05 09, using the form available online.

Successful candidates will be required to complete an additional development programme at firefighter level, but will receive the competent rate of pay. Please refer to the Transfer Service Order for further details.

The HRFU recently wrote to John Bonney and congratulated him on this initiative. Already practised by other Fire Services it recognises John's statement made years ago in our interview (Shout Newsletter June 2005) recognising that Fire Fighters were all the same just working under different contracts. Good Luck to all those who apply!

Pandemic Information

A pandemic (from Greek παν pan all + δήμος demos people) is an epidemic of infectious disease that spreads through populations across a large region; for instance a continent, or even worldwide.

From HFRS website:

In accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act, the Service is required to have a Business Continuity plan to ensure continued delivery of service in the event of unforeseen circumstances. A business continuity framework has been agreed by Service Management Team (SMT) and all internal departments have agreed plans which clearly identify the measures that need to be in place to counter any event that may prevent HFRS from delivering its service. These plans are periodically tested.



We have asked for more information on how HFRS hope to deliver their services in the event of a pandemic and hope to bring you this information in the next edition.

RFU claim victory as no agreement reached on the Working Time Directive

If you want to know what the RFU does with your funds - this is a brilliant example. Thanks to your subscriptions the RFU put a massive amount of effort and resources into making sure that every MP understood the major implications that removing the Opt Out would have on the UK Fire Service. We are very pleased to now inform you that:

The 3rd WTD conciliation committee broke down tonight (27 April) ending the round of negotiations without agreement. The Council and European Parliament were unable to agree, in particular on the issue of the opt-out. With the deadline for reaching an agreement rapidly approaching and the differences between the parties so great, it was agreed there was no value in continuing the negotiations any further.

Is this the end of it? No! The negotiations failed this time but these for removal will regroup and return stronger than ever in about three years time.

