

Risk review leads to Hampshire Fire & Emergency service doing things differently



Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service has recently underpinned its comprehensive Risk Review project with evidence-based consulting services provided by Process Evolution. The outcome is a 5-tiered approach to capability covering both Local Intervention and Strategic Support.

Under the new model, the service is moving away from sending the traditional fire engine crewed by between four and six people to every incident regardless of the resources required to deal with it. The approach is enabled by an Activity Based Crewing model that aligns each fire station's crew numbers to the peaks in activity and demand. The new model results in greater flexibility and efficiency and an improved capability to resource incidents across Hampshire as a whole.

Key findings and recommendations

Findings

- Changing demand for fire and emergency services - with the number of fires attended halving over the last decade and the annual number of medical emergencies increasing to 10,000 (with fire crews co-responding alongside South Central Ambulance Service).
- Variation in the volume of demand in different fire grounds at different times of day.
- Protection work managed separately to prevention, resilience and response. This resulted in less effective mapping of services to risk, silo working and costly duplication of structures.

Recommendations

- A new five-tiered approach to capability, with teams allocated into two categories:
- Local Intervention Capability - incorporating First Response, Intermediate and Enhanced Capability teams.
- Strategic Support - incorporating Operational Support and Specialist Technical Support teams).
- Activity Based Crewing model, with each station placed in one of six categories (ABC 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6), according to the times of high demand and activity from that station ground.
- A range of different vehicles and crew sizes to match resources to demand more flexibly and efficiently.

The continuing government austerity measures are likely to mean that funding for the Fire and Rescue Service will continue to reduce by many millions of pounds in the coming years. Many of our Services have decided to treat these funding cuts as an opportunity to transform and improve the services they deliver. This has meant formulating clear proposals for new ways in which their Service can be structured and delivered. These need to be presented for consideration by the Service, the relevant Fire Authority or governing body and by the Public. To this end, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) embarked upon a comprehensive Risk Review Project in January 2014.

In addition to efficiencies made to the support and back office staff in previous years, the Risk Review encompassed every aspect of front line services including the management structure, policies, response capability, establishment and crewing models. The proposals that resulted have led to substantial improvements in the way HFRS approach Service Delivery.

The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Adopting the IRMP approach ensured that HFRS never lost sight of their primary purpose; to make life safer for everyone living, working and travelling in Hampshire. Anything that had the potential to make life unsafe in the county was viewed as a risk. To help focus their efforts, HFRS grouped known risks into three distinct categories:

- **Risks to Our People:** an event that restricts or prevents our staff from delivering our services in a safe, effective and efficient manner
- **Risks to Our Community:** an event that could make life unsafe for the people who live, work or travel through Hampshire
- **Risks to Our Organisation:** an event which adversely impacts the organisation's assets, financial stability or operations

During the Risk Review, consideration was given to all relevant options and did not limit the scope to Fire and Rescue; their statutory responsibilities. This is because opportunities existed for HFRS to work cooperatively with partners and organisations such as the Ambulance, Police and Health services within the county.

A phase of the Risk Review process also included 'Engagement 2014' which allowed members of staff, particularly from stations, to interact from the outset with the process and enable them to help develop and shape the future of their service. This was subsequently supported with 'Engagement 15' where ideas and suggestions for crewing and types of capability were considered by the Response and Risk Review Teams.

Methodology

Using a combination of data analysis from their own Knowledge Management Team, computer modelling software and professional judgement, they developed the strategic priorities for the Authority and the Service. HFRS applied a consistent methodology throughout for assessing the likelihood and impact of the risk associated with each of their strategic priorities; now and in the future. This evidence-based approach to decision making resulted in some changes to the new Service Plan for the period to 2018. The overall performance of county wide response time was modelled and improved significantly based on a new vehicle disposition and appropriate 'Activity Based Crewing' (ABC) model for each station. This was endorsed by Process Evolution; they combined the professional knowledge and judgement with their experience and expertise in applying the latest analytical techniques to help develop the practical and actionable proposals.

Uniquely, HFRS could accurately quantify the impact of jointly developed recommendations prior to implementation, whilst providing a clear rationale for change that stakeholders could easily understand and buy into. Updated 'Base Case' reports were made clear and precise by Process Evolution as the project headed towards the consultation phase in September 2015.

Changing needs to Service Delivery

Incidents in HFRS have almost halved in the last ten years. During this time, HFRS has undertaken medical intervention with co-responding duties and currently attend nearly 10,000 medical emergencies each year in support of South Central Ambulance Service. This demonstrated how changing needs within the community affects the demands upon our services and creates opportunities to apply these resources and expertise in new ways.

Structural changes to Community Response, Community Safety and Community Resilience

Within the existing HFRS model, the protection work was managed separately to prevention, resilience and response. This structure made the effective mapping of services to risk more difficult. It also encouraged silo working and created duplication of management structure resulting in unnecessary cost. The new approach took advantage of a single Community Response, Safety & Resilience management structure. The county has changed from nine to seven geographical groups with these aspects being managed by a single Group Manager. This was compatible with local and unitary authorities, and the Retained Duty System (RDS) crewing models. The new structure will result in more efficient and effective Service Delivery, and improve clarity in multi-agency work.

Taking advantage of income generation opportunities

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides scope for Fire and Rescue Authorities to charge for, or recover, the costs of providing certain non-fire 'Special Services'. HFRS plan to develop income generation activities which will see them sell services to other FRS, businesses and health and social care providers through their trading arm '3S Fire'.

Capability "Minimising the risks to our communities by providing them with the appropriate services" ...

The standard response to the majority of incidents is to send a 'traditional' fire engine to the scene. In recent years HFRS introduced alternative vehicles as part of the first response capability like the Small Fires Vehicle (SFV) which has proved to be more efficient and effective when responding to minor incidents.

HFRS developed a five-tiered approach to capability falling into two categories:

- Local Intervention Capability including a First Response, Intermediate and Enhanced Capability
- Strategic Support which includes our Operational Support and a Specialist Technical Support Capability

This has matched their resources to risk far more efficiently and will improve the way they respond to

incidents. The five-tiered approach is based upon levels of activity for each station including the quantity and types of calls; community safety initiatives and activities; assessing station risk profiles; crew number FTE (Full Time Equivalent) and shift patterns. As part of the Risk Review Engagement process, staff within each area of operations were able to recommend the type of vehicle that best matched this capability to the risk within their particular areas. They have also been given the opportunity to specify the most appropriate equipment that the vehicles should carry in order to provide an effective response to incidents in their area. This followed the promulgation of a detailed 'Station Profile' that identified the demand for each station and helped determine the number and types of incidents they attend and when.

HFRS technical and specialist response capability provide a valuable service throughout the county and forms part of the national resilience strategy. HFRS has now located some of these specialist resources in one central location with the help of the Facility Location Planner (FLP) software which has resulted in improvements in service delivery and integration, and has provided significant cost efficiencies.

More flexible and efficient activity-based crewing

HFRS plan to move away from sending a 'fire-engine', which carries between four and six personnel irrespective of the number that is actually needed, to every incident. This will increase the capability to resource incidents across the county appropriately and improve the service they provide. It will also deliver financial savings through natural staff attrition to the whole-time and retained establishment numbers. There was no need to implement compulsory redundancies, nor have they closed any fire stations.

HFRS has also developed an Activity Based Crewing model that is more efficient and flexible and can be adopted by every station. It used the station profiles to match the crew numbers to the peak times in activity and demand. Each station was placed in one of six categories; ABC 1, 2, 3, 4 5 or 6, according to the times of high demand from that station ground. The model identifies the total number of people required at each station.

The station personnel were given the option to design a crewing system around a specific FTE that suited them best and provided increased flexibility over their work schedules. This will result in an improved work/

life balance as part of the implementation phase post April 2016.

Implementation and evaluation

The 'Service Delivery Redesign' will take place from April 2016 following the final proposal sign off from the Fire Authority late February. This will be staged with many aspects being phased in over a period of time, whilst ensuring that the performance standards of 8/80 (80% of incidents attended in 8 minutes) for critical incidents are maintained as well as the 15/100 (100% of incidents attended in 15 minutes) for non-critical incidents.

HFRS believe that this new risk based IRMP will, make life safer for our people and the community we serve.

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