

Regional Centres of Excellence (RCE) Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) January 2007



This bulletin is for CFOs and other officers involved in driving efficiency in the Fire and Rescue Services

Overview

The Regional Centres of Excellence (RCEs), funded by CLG, support local authorities to deliver efficiency gains. Each RCE also takes the lead in one or more efficiency workstreams on a national basis. The South West RCE (SW RCE) is the national lead for Fire and Rescue Services and this bulletin is intended to provide an update on what is being done to support this national workstream.

How can the RCEs support Fire and Rescue services?

The RCEs provide a key link between the efficiency work of local government and similar work in the Fire and Rescue services, particularly in the areas of **corporate services** and **non-operational procurement**. The RCEs also provide funding for a number of efficiency projects.

National Context

Procurement and corporate services form an important part of anticipated savings in the Fire and Rescue service: up to 12% of all savings for 2005/06 and increasing to 19% in 2006/07. The table below shows this in more detail.

Region	2005 / 2006 Total Efficiencies*	2006 / 2007 Total Efficiencies*
Corporate Services	8%	14%
Procurement	4%	5%
Other	88%	81%
Total	£57.3m	£41.6m

**Forward-looking efficiency statements*

The table also shows that the contribution from corporate services is set to further increase.

Fire and Rescue Service on-line national discussion forum

In partnership with CLG, the RCEs have set up a national on-line Fire and Rescue Service discussion forum. The forum provides an ideal opportunity to ask questions and exchange ideas specific to the Fire and Rescue Service. The forum is moderated by the SW RCE.

Registration for the on-line forum, hosted by esd-toolkit, can be found at <http://www.esd.org.uk/esdtoolkit/Register.aspx>

The Fire and Rescue Service Centre of Excellence (FRS CoE)

Although there is no official link between the RCEs and the FRS CoE, each keeps the other informed of progress to avoid duplication. The FRS CoE is mainly concerned with skills development and leadership in the FRS, whereas the RCEs are delivering efficiency programmes in local government.

RCEs offer practical levels of support for FRS

Nearly all the RCEs have been individually supporting and funding FRS initiatives within their regions, often involving substantial investments. Typical examples of these initiatives include:

- Free of charge participation in regional spend analysis (SW, SE, NE RCEs)
- FRS regional procurement manager and network (East of England RCE)
- FRS regional procurement card programme (SW RCE)
- Contracts and relationship management, strategic supplier intelligence initiatives (London RCE)
- Performance management programme (East Midlands RCE)
- Stores rationalisation (West Midlands RCE)

Review of FRS Common and Specialist Services – East Midlands

Commissioned by the East Midlands Regional Management Board, the local RCE has provided funding for a review of common services in the East Midlands regional area. The review will particularly focus on models for future delivery of these services. Nottinghamshire FRS is leading the review and it is intended that the results will be available nationally.

- A summary of the 'As is' position
- An assessment of the strategic options for the future including processes, systems, people organisation and outsourcing
- A review of the typical risks with appropriate mitigation plans
- An indicative business case based on current available data
- A cost benefits analysis showing efficiency gains and time scales
- A pay back model indicating likely period for return on investment.

Due to the way that Nottinghamshire FRS have tendered the study, the same review will be available to other regions at a much reduced rate in the March 2007 timeframe.

How to contact your local RCE

Most RCEs have a FRS representative on their regional Management Board. Please contact your local RCE either directly using the key RCE contacts below or through the SW RCE.

To find out more about the RCEs nationally and in your region go to <http://www.rcoe.gov.uk/>.

Key RCE contacts:

- Julian Morley, South West RCE, j.morley@dorsetcc.gov.uk Fire and Rescue lead
- Dr Andrew Larner, South East RCE, andrew.larner@sece.gov.uk
- Andy Hancox, West Midlands RCE, ahancox@wmcoe.gov.uk
- Chris Allison, East Midlands RCE, chris.allison@nottsc.gov.uk
- Colin Cram, North West RCE, colin.cram@tameside.gov.uk
- David Wright, North East RCE, davidwright@gateshead.gov.uk
- Ken Cole, London RCE, ken.cole@alg.gov.uk
- Mike Worrton, East of England RCE, michael.worrton@norfolk.gov.uk
- Tony Wiltshire, Y&H RCE, tony.wiltshire@leeds.gov.uk