New Arrangements for the Recruitment of Firefighters and the Progression of Operational and Control Managers in the Fire and Rescue Service

Consultation Paper

September 2005
New Arrangements for the Recruitment of Firefighters and the Progression of Operational and Control Managers in the Fire and Rescue Service

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NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF FIREFIGHTERS AND THE PROGRESSION OF OPERATIONAL AND CONTROL MANAGERS IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

We are writing to invite you to participate in the consultation on new arrangements for the recruitment of firefighters and the progression of operational and control managers in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).

The repeal of the Fire Services (Appointments and Promotion) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004 has provided the FRS with the opportunity to review and modernise its recruitment and progression processes. To support the Service, the Government has led the development of new guidance material and assessment processes and is now consulting on how best the new systems for recruitment and progression should be implemented in the future.

This consultation document presents a number of options and questions in relation to the implementation of National Firefighter Selection (NFS) and Assessment Development Centre (ADC) processes for operational and control managers within the Service\(^1\). In particular the document asks whether the NFS and ADC processes should be applied nationally, the extent of quality assurance which should be applied and how renewal and maintenance might be achieved including who should be responsible for that. We welcome comments on the proposals from all stakeholders.

Subject to any comments received in response to this consultation, we propose that the next FRS National Framework would make it clear that all English FRAs should recruit and select staff in line with one of the options set out in this consultation document. We consider that either Option 1 or 2 would constitute a significant amendment to the Framework. ODPM would expect that ongoing national costs of around £50k – £250k (costs vary for each of the options as outlined in this consultation document) would be recouped from the Service.

Comments should be sent to Miss Georgie Thompson at ODPM by 2nd December 2005 although earlier responses would be appreciated. A summary of the responses will be available on the ODPM website within 3 months of the closing date of the consultation.

Yours sincerely

DEREK JOHNSON
IPDS Project Manager

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\(^{1}\) Please note that in June 2005, ODPM issued a Fire Service Circular (20/2005) introducing an interim ADC process toolkit that Fire and Rescue Authorities could use to assess potential for development for a new role. The interim toolkit should not be confused with the National ADC process toolkits discussed in this document.
This consultation document sets out proposals concerning the arrangements for recruitment and progression in the Fire and Rescue Service in England.

Consultees are invited to:

- Identify any specific aspects of the guidelines about which they have concerns.
- Provide any supporting evidence which they consider would be useful.
- Suggest amendments that might improve the document.

We consider that this draft strategy will place no (or in the case of the public sector, negligible) extra burdens on business, charities, the voluntary and public sectors – and therefore no Regulatory Impact Assessment has been produced.

Comments on the draft consultation document should be submitted to ODPM by e-mail to NFSADCconsultation@odpm.gsi.gov.uk by 2nd December 2005. Ministers have agreed to an eight-week consultation period given that consultees are familiar with the issues.

This consultation document can be accessed from the website at www.odpm.gov.uk

Any enquiries about this consultation document should be directed to:

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After the deadline date of 2nd December 2005, we will analyse the responses to the consultation and produce a feedback document within 3 months of the deadline date which summarises the:

- Received responses and comments.
- Any amendments to the draft guidelines as a result of the consultation.

All information in responses, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure under freedom of information legislation. If a correspondent requests confidentiality, this cannot be guaranteed and will only be possible if considered appropriate under the legislation. Any such request should explain why confidentiality is necessary. Any automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be considered as such a request unless you specifically include a request, with an explanation, in the main text of your response.

A list of individuals and organisations that have been invited to comment on the draft guidelines can be found at Annex A attached but comments are welcomed from anyone. You are invited to bring this Consultation to the attention of anyone else you think might be interested.
Executive Summary

1. The repeal of the Fire Services (Appointments and Promotion) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004 has provided the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) with the opportunity to review and modernise its recruitment and progression processes. The Government has supported the development of guidance material and assessment processes to support the Service to make these changes and is now consulting on how systems for recruitment and progression should be implemented in the future.

2. This consultation document presents three options and asks a number of questions in relation to the implementation of National Firefighter Selection (NFS) and Assessment Development Centre (ADC) processes for operational and control managers within the Service. In particular the document asks whether or not all Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) should use the national exercises to recruit and assess staff, the extent of quality assurance that should be applied, how renewal and maintenance of the exercises might be achieved, and where responsibility for all this should lie in the future.

3. The three options put forward in the document are: (i) that national NFS and ADC processes are applied in all Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs); (ii) that national quality standards for firefighter selection and ADC processes are applied in all FRAs; (iii) that nationally developed Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQAs) are used within the firefighter selection and ADC processes in all FRAs. We welcome comments on these proposals, which apply to FRAs in England only.

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2 NFS and ADC processes are very similar in that they both measure someone’s potential to perform a role safely and effectively. However, there are some differences so whilst in general this document relates to both, some sections relate solely to either NFS tests or ADCs and are prefaced accordingly.

3 Please note that in June 2005, ODPM issued a Fire Service Circular (20/2005) introducing an interim ADC process toolkit that FRAs could use to assess potential for development for a new role. The interim toolkit should not be confused with the National ADC toolkits discussed in this document.
SECTION ONE
Introduction

Background

4. The White Paper *Our Fire and Rescue Service* recognised that the FRS needed to improve its human resources systems. In particular there was a need to update practices in relation to recruitment and staff progression.

5. With the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act on 1 October 2004, the Appointments and Promotion Regulations were repealed. In the light of this and the introduction of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS), the Fire Services Examinations Board (FSEB) will cease activities following the final examinations in early 2006. FRAs are now able to recruit, develop and promote staff in line with the National Framework.

6. The 2005/6 Framework states that FRAs should use the national Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQA) Framework[^4] to assess people’s potential for new operational and control roles in the Service. The Government has supported this with the development of processes that FRAs may use for this purpose.

How Do the NFS and ADC Processes Work?

7. The processes involve participants taking part in a variety of job simulation exercises whilst being observed by a team of trained assessors. Interviews, psychometric tests and written exercises are also used. Extensive research has shown this approach to be the most objective and accurate method of assessing an individual’s potential to perform safely and effectively in any particular role.[^5] These processes will also help to ensure that recruitment and progression is relevant to the role, open and fair and reflect the FRS core values as expressed in the National Framework.

8. Whilst ADCs are good measures of potential for a new role, the IPDS requires this demonstration of potential at an ADC to be followed by an assessment of actual performance in the new role. The assessment of performance in the role will include an assessment of technical skills, knowledge and understanding. This workplace assessment is separate to the ADC and is therefore outside the scope of this consultation (although it is shown in the diagram in paragraph 15 and Appendix One). Therefore, as set out in the National Framework and in the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service, sixth edition

[^4]: The PQA Framework was first published in Fire Service Circular 51/2004 and subsequently revised by Circular 34/2005. These can be found on the ODPM web site: www.odpm.gov.uk

[^5]: ADCs are used by many large organisations including the Police, the BBC and ACAS.
2004 (Grey Book), a combination of assessment of potential and assessment in the workplace is the means of staff selection and progression in the FRS.  

9. The assessment processes are necessarily linked to the requirements of the FRS role maps which are the same regardless of the duty system worked. The processes have therefore been designed in a modular way, which will make it possible for FRAs to organise NFS or ADC processes in ways which suit staff working either a whole-time or retained duty system.

WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE WORK TO DATE

10. In the development of the processes, stakeholders have been engaged through steering groups and separate user fora. These groups have included representatives from the FRAs, Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Trades Unions, HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI), the Scottish Executive (SE) and ODPM.

WIDER CONTEXT TO THIS CONSULTATION

11. This document suggests a need for a national 'steward' for ADC and NFS processes. The National FRS Learning and Development Strategy for England consultation issued on 24 June 2005 covers the general issue of IPDS stewardship. The responses to both consultations will be used to inform the debate on stewardship of IPDS including ADC and NFS processes.

12. It should also be noted that the ODPM has been working with stakeholders to develop new arrangements for leadership development within the Service. This will include proposals for a Strategic Leadership Framework (SLF) and a High Potential Management Development Scheme. These proposals will be subject to a separate consultation exercise later in the year.

ROLES COVERED BY THIS CONSULTATION

13. The NFS processes have been designed to test the potential of people to work as firefighters across all duty systems but have not been designed to cover the control operator role. The ADC processes have been designed to test the potential of people to work in a wide range of managerial roles although validation work to date has been limited to operational and control roles. Please note that the ADC processes relate to existing control room managerial roles. Once role maps for the new regional control positions have been finalised, further work will be undertaken if necessary. The Chief Fire Officers’ Association (CFOA) is undertaking work on National Occupational Standards (NOS) for non-uniformed roles but until such work is completed, it is not possible to consider a PQA framework and related selection processes for these roles. 

We welcome comments on the issues relating to the recruitment and progression of people working in wider roles within the FRS.

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6 See also NJC Code of Practice for Assessment of Competence. This can be found on their website www.lg-employers.gov.uk

7 A role map is based on National Occupational Standards. It describes, in outcome terms, everything people need to do in their role.

8 The National FRS Learning and Development Strategy for England consultation document can be found on the Fire Service College website: www.fireservicecollege.ac.uk.
DEVALVED ADMINISTRATIONS

14. This consultation document does not cover Scotland and Wales, where responsibility for the FRS is now fully devolved. Nor do they cover Northern Ireland. The UK Government will continue to work closely with its partners in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
SECTION TWO
Summary of the Proposed New National Arrangements

15. ADC Model

The above model is shown in more detail at Appendix One.

INITIAL TEST OF POTENTIAL (ITOP)

This is a short sifting stage where participants are tested on a subset of the PQAs.

ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Those successful at the ITOP will take part in the full ADC (see Appendix Two for details). Participants with the highest scores will move to the next stage.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT

Successful participants will then work under supervision in the role, receive the appropriate development and be assessed against the requirements of the role.

CONFIRMATION IN POST

After all applicable functions have been assessed as having been achieved, the employee will have demonstrated competence in his or her role.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the detailed ADC process, please see the IPDS web site (www.ipds.co.uk) or contact Sue Evans (sue.evans@ipds.co.uk).
16. **NFS Model**

The above model is shown in more detail at Appendix Three.

**APPLICATION FORM (ASSESSMENT AND SIFT)**

This is the first formal stage of the application process – applicants complete a standardised form which is assessed against PQAs. This is the first sift phase.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL TESTS**

Those applicants who are successful at the first sift phase sit the National Firefighter Questionnaire and the National Firefighter Ability Tests. Those who pass the psychological tests then take the physical tests. (See Appendix Four).

Many aspects of the role of firefighter require a teamwork approach. However, to make a decision on the appointment of an applicant to the role it is necessary to identify their individual potential. For this reason the physical tests that have been developed are specifically designed as single-person tests.

**INTERVIEW**

Those who have successfully passed both the psychological and physical tests stages are then interviewed. Applicants are assessed against a range of the firefighter PQAs.

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT ETC**

If an applicant has been successful at all other stages it would still be an FRAs responsibility to carry out further checks before making the final decision on the offer of an appointment as a trainee firefighter including an Occupational Health Assessment and taking up references. Note that these final checks are not covered in this consultation document.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information on the detailed NFS process please e-mail Michelle Harrison to receive an information pack (Michelle.Harrison@odpm.gsi.gov.uk).
17. The seven operational roles in the FRS were introduced under the June 2003 pay and conditions agreement and are divided into four levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Levels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firefighter</td>
<td>Firefighter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crew Manager</td>
<td>Supervisory Management</td>
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<td>Watch Manager</td>
<td>Middle Management</td>
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<td>Station Manager</td>
<td>Strategic Management</td>
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<td>Group Manager</td>
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<td>Area Manager</td>
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<td>Brigade Manager</td>
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18. The full ADC process should be used where people wish to be considered for a role at a new level. However, the two roles within each of the three managerial levels share a number of similarities. Because of this, decisions about an individual's progression within their current management level should be based upon information gathered from the original ADC for that level, plus performance in the workplace and a snapshot of competencies. To provide this 'snapshot' the suite of assessment exercises includes a PQA-based structured interview\(^9\) although the process allows FRAs to supplement the interview with additional exercises if they wish. (See also paragraph 58)

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\(^9\) The national structured interview is shown in Appendix Two. FRAs may supplement this with additional exercises.
19. The 2005/6 National Framework states that FRAs should assess people against the national PQA framework but does not suggest that FRAs should use any particular process to do so. However, Government believes that there is merit in, and benefits to be gained from, a consistent approach. For example:

- FRAs will find it easier to collaborate and share resources and expertise in the running of NFS and ADC processes, resulting in greater efficiency and less duplication. This will be particularly beneficial in the areas of positive action and recruitment initiatives.

- There will be less likelihood of a legal challenge if all FRAs are working to the same principles and practices. FRAs can be assured that national recruitment and progression processes are relevant to the role, open, fair and equitable, reflect the FRS core values and have been impact assessed.

- It will facilitate the arrangements for the transfer of staff between FRAs thereby reducing the costs of re-testing by the importing FRA.

- National trends and local variations can be identified through the consistent collection of data and a greater amount of standard data can be collected thereby increasing its validity. This should assist in workforce planning.

- Quality assurance and benchmarking will be more straightforward.

- Training requirements and provision can be standardised.

- The cost to FRAs of sharing suitable processes nationally is likely to be much less than local or even regional bespoke solutions.

**Do you agree with these potential benefits?**

**Do you see any further benefits or significant drawbacks?**
QUALITY STANDARDS

20. The stakeholders involved in developing the NFS and ADC processes recommended that, whichever option is adopted, the quality standards applying to NFS and ADC processes should include the following points. They should:

- Assess participants against the national PQAs.
- Meet the British Psychological Society (BPS) Best Practice Guidelines.10
- Be relevant to the role, open, fair and equitable and reflect the FRS core values.
- Be designed so that participants require no prior knowledge of the FRS.
- Provide a modular structure that can be organised in ways which suit the working patterns of staff on different duty systems.
- Meet the physical requirements for the firefighter role.11
- Provide a robust system consistent with relevant employment and equalities legislation.

We welcome comments on the Quality Standards.

OPTIONS

21. This paper outlines three options with regard to processes for recruitment and progression in the FRS. The costs for each option are discussed in Section Five.

OPTION ONE

22. National NFS and ADC processes should be used in all FRAs. This would have efficiency and effectiveness advantages and reduce risk of local challenge to procedures. Necessary review and revision arrangements would be dealt with at national level. (The subject of national co-ordination is discussed in Section Four.) This option would have the greatest likelihood of realising all the benefits set out at paragraph 19.

OPTION TWO

23. National quality standards with FRAs given flexibility in how to achieve them. This would require FRAs, individually or collaboratively, to provide their own NFS and ADC exercises and develop their own processes. FRAs could still choose to use the nationally produced processes whilst those continued to be available and valid.12 There would need to be national oversight, through on-going quality checks, to

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10 The British Psychological Society Best Practice Guidelines can be found on their web site. www.psychtesting.org.uk.
11 As defined in ODPM's NFS Project.
12 The exercises are based on the current roles and working practices of the FRS and are therefore likely to remain valid for some years. However, participant should not sit the same exercises twice – see also paragraph 59.
ensure that the many different processes FRAs might choose to use, meet the quality standards. This option seems unlikely to realise the breadth of national benefits which Option One appears to offer.

OPTION THREE

24. Continuation of the current principle of assessing people against the national PQAs with the quality standards issued as guidance only. This would give FRAs the maximum freedom but would almost certainly result in a range of different exercises and processes too wide to be recognisable as a ‘national’ system. Although the PQAs would provide an important element towards national consistency, this option may not achieve any of the benefits set out at paragraph 19. Under this option, each individual FRA would be responsible for ensuring that their processes complied with relevant employment and equalities legislation and the provisions of the Grey Book. With the PQAs as a national element there would still need to be some national responsibility to review and, if necessary, amend them periodically.

We would welcome your views on:

Option One: National processes for the recruitment and progression of staff. In future the National Framework would state that FRAs should use these processes.

Option Two: National quality standards for recruitment and progression processes with FRAs given flexibility in how to achieve the quality standards provided they assess people against the national PQAs. In future the National Framework would state that FRAs should ensure that their processes for recruitment and progression meet national quality standards.

Option Three: ODPM guidance on quality standards for recruitment and progression. In future the National Framework would (i) continue to state that FRAs should use national PQAs to assess people’s potential for new operational or control roles and (ii) newly state that FRAs should use national firefighter PQAs as the basis for the recruitment of firefighters.

We also welcome any other suggestions you may have on how to apply the NFS and ADC exercises and processes
25. All three options would require some degree of national coordination: as a minimum, there will be a need to review the PQAs periodically. National co-ordination might be achieved by developing a national unit: under the auspices of a Centre of Excellence\textsuperscript{13}; within the Fire Service College; through a lead Regional Management Board (RMB) or FRA or by some other arrangement. Looking ahead, ODPM would not expect to lead or pay for this national work. The size and scope of the national work would depend on the outcomes of this consultation but it might include some or all of the following:

A. **PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE PQAs**

The PQAs are the behavioural indicators that underpin the NFS and ADC processes. They were produced following extensive research that examined ‘successful’ performance in all aspects of FRS activities. The initial research was carried out in 2002-3 and the results were confirmed by the work of independent occupational psychologists in 2005. However, as the Service is currently going through a period of substantial change, it is suggested that the PQAs be subject to periodic professional review, with the first full review in 2007.

B. **QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE NFS AND ADC PROCESSES**

Providing stakeholders with assurance that the agreed national elements of the new processes are being implemented in the same way across English FRAs. Collecting and comparing data and carrying out validation studies to help promote good practice.

C. **PROVISION OF SUPPORT TO FRAs**

Providing a professional resource from which the Service could seek advice and guidance in implementing processes which will be significantly different from current practices in many FRAs.

D. **CO-ORDINATION OF THE RUNNING OF NFS TESTS AND ADCs**

The national co-ordination of NFS tests and/or ADCs should provide cost and resource management benefits, especially at middle and strategic management levels. National co-ordination should also help to preserve the integrity of the exercises by, for example, controlling multiple applications. It might also be possible to maintain and disseminate national information on participant scores that could be used by FRAs to benchmark performance.

\textsuperscript{13} The Centre of Excellence is a concept discussed in the consultation document on the National FRS Learning and Development Strategy for England. This document can be found on the Fire Service College web site: www.fireservicecollege.ac.uk.
E. RUNNING ADCs

There may also be benefits from a national approach to the running of ADCs, particularly at the most senior level.

F. SETTING MINIMUM SCORES

A national function could liaise with stakeholders to identify the level of ADC score below which participants should be considered not yet ready for progression into a development programme. (See also paragraph 65). A national function could also review national standards for NFS tests.

G. ENSURE ASSESSMENT TOOLS ARE UP-DATED

The nationally developed assessment exercises will need systematic renewal to ensure that the tests remain relevant to the changing work of the Service and to ensure their integrity.

What are your views on which tasks should be carried out nationally?

What are your views on how any national work should be carried out?

We would also welcome any other suggestions you may have about either the national co-ordination work or about maintenance and renewal of the processes.
SECTION FIVE

Costs

26. FRAs currently incur considerable costs related to the recruitment and progression of staff. Costs of the systems which FRAs currently use vary greatly depending on the processes they use and factors such as travel costs. Paragraphs 29-35 together with appendix 5 show some of the costs of current systems. Paragraphs 37-41 and appendix 8 describe the national and local costs of providing and quality assuring the proposed new systems and paragraphs 42-52 and appendices 5-9 give an illustration of the costs which FRAs would incur in running the proposed new systems.

27. Although we have provided some information about it, we have not been able to obtain a comprehensive picture of the costs which FRAs incurred under the examination based system or the costs they would expect to incur in future within the role-based system. Whilst for some individual FRAs, the proposed new processes may increase costs, ODPM believes that more national collaboration, as proposed in this consultation document, would offer a more cost effective way forward for the Service as a whole. We think it probable that any FRAs whose current systems cost significantly less than the most cost effective national option may not be using modern systems which suit the needs of today’s Service and fully reflect employment and equalities legislation.

28. The three options set out in the consultation document vary in their costs. Option one appears to be least expensive whilst offering the broadest potential benefits (e.g. consistency, transferability, quality assurance) The other two options offer improvements over existing arrangements but are likely to be more expensive. Given the expected difference in cost, if consultees consider that either of the more expensive options is the best way forward, they are invited to set out their reasoning for this very clearly.

We welcome views on the issue of costs.

Costs of the Examination-Based System

STAFF PROGRESSION – COST OF PROVIDING THE EXAMINATION SYSTEM

29. The Fire Services Examinations Board (FSEB) is an independent body that has been responsible for providing the statutory promotion examinations which, until last year, were a key national element of FRS progression systems. The FSEB is funded through top-slicing Local Government’s revenue support grant. The FSEB will cease activities following the final examinations in early 2006. The FSEB spent on average around £425K\textsuperscript{14} per year running examinations in England.

\textsuperscript{14} Average over five-year period from 1999 to 2004. Data supplied by FSEB
30. The average cost to FRAs of running the FSEB practical tests is over £685 per candidate.\(^{15}\) There are no published figures for the cost of running the FSEB written exams although the cost per candidate for each exam would be lower than for the practical tests. The time commitments required by the examination system are considerable. The Leading Firefighter written and practical examinations last for one day each, as does the Sub Officer examination. The Station Officer written examination lasts for two days and there is no practical element. This means that participants moving from firefighter to Station Manager would have spent at least six days attending the FSEB examinations (more if they had not passed the examinations in their first attempt). Appendix Five sets out the time commitments of the old processes and the proposed new processes and shows that someone moving from firefighter to brigade manager level would have spent at least 11\(\frac{1}{2}\) days being assessed under the exam-based systems, compared with 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) days under the proposed new systems.

31. FRAs incur a number of other costs in their existing arrangements for assessing staff for promotion. These vary from one FRA to another but processes range from interviews to full assessment development centres that are similar to the new proposals. For example, FRAs in the South West region have approached the interim ADC solution in a variety of ways. Some collaborated on running an assessment process consisting of structured interviews and role-play exercises, others have worked together on an assessment centre consisting solely of a structured interview. One FRA currently has an assessment process very similar to the proposed national model.

**FIREFIGHTER SELECTION – COST OF PROVISION**

32. At present there are no national costs associated with providing firefighter selection tests.

**FIREFIGHTER SELECTION – LOCAL RUNNING COSTS**

33. Firefighter selection practices currently vary widely across the country. Some FRAs use an application form as part of their selection process, others do not. For those that do, the format varies from a simple record of personal details to a more sophisticated proforma. Those who use the latter, use the information as a key element of their sifting process whilst others adopt only crude sifting methods. Some make extensive use of psychometric tests, others less so. All FRAs use physical tests of some sort and many base them on the guidance issued by the Implementation Working Group (IWG) in 2000. Many FRAs use a progressive shuttle-run (bleep test) as their main de-selector but the ‘pass mark’ applied varies widely from one FRA to another.

34. Some FRAs have collaborated in the running of selection tests and some use processes very similar to the proposed national model. FRAs have always been responsible for financing the firefighter selection tests but there is little available data on costs, and what there is varies widely. As an example one region has estimated that the cost of running their recruitment process (including outreach work, advertising etc) is approximately £550 per successful applicant whilst another has estimated their costs to be closer to £2,500.

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\(^{15}\) Taken from FSEB Paper FB12/2002
35. At Appendix Nine indicative costs are given for the NFS test suite which forms the core cost of the recruitment process. Whilst these costs cannot be directly compared to the total costs recorded by the above regions it should be possible for those FRAs who record more detailed information of the costs of the various stages of their processes to estimate the likely resource implications of the proposals at Option 1 of this paper.

Costs of Proposed New Systems

ADC & NFS – COST OF PROVISION

36. The nationally developed processes which ODPM has funded are robust and reflect HR good practice and legal and statutory requirements. The processes have been designed to be relevant to the role, open, fair and equitable and reflect the FRS core values. However the costs differ for each of the options discussed in section three.

Option One: National processes for the recruitment and progression of staff

37. This would require providing resources to deliver the agreed national elements of the work. The cost of providing such resources will be informed by this consultation. If all the activities described in section four were to be provided, we estimate that this could be achieved by employing 1½ qualified occupational psychologists and a team of 2 administrative staff. The salary costs would be unlikely to exceed £150K per year. The NFS Project recommends that the physical standards are reviewed every five years. This would require the use of consultant occupational physiologists costing around £150K, equivalent to £30K pa. There would need to be some sampling of quality and the PQAs would need to be reviewed periodically but the in-house team is likely to be able to do this. Given costs of accommodation and day-to-day running costs, we would estimate that the costs of running this unit would be no more than £220k pa.

Option Two: National quality standards for recruitment and progression processes

38. This would require FRAs, individually or working together, e.g. within regions, to provide their own assessment exercises and develop their own processes. They could commission bespoke exercises, buy generic exercises off the shelf, or employ their own occupational psychologists. For ADCs, the costs of this to each FRA (or collaborative group) might range from the salary costs of an occupational psychologist to £250k per year for bespoke exercises. The costs of buying ADC exercises off-the-shelf would vary depending on the number of people going through the ADC. See Appendix Six for details.

39. This option would, in addition, require resources at a national level but they would not need to cover all of the activities described in section 4. There would however need to be more comprehensive quality checks to ensure that the many different exercises and processes met the quality outcomes. This type of quality assurance service is not currently offered ‘off-the-shelf’ but discussions with subject matter experts suggest that a qualified occupational psychologist, with experience of assessment development centres, could carry out an audit against the BPS guidelines in 5 working days. The workload would depend on the extent of FRA collaboration but a reasonable estimate is that one occupational psychologist could cover this at an annual cost of around £75K. Similarly, the physical tests would need to be checked by an occupational physiologist at a similar cost. It should be possible for this two-
person team to also carry out the periodic review of the PQAs. Given costs of accommodation, administrative support and day-to-day running costs, we would estimate total costs of no more than £220k pa.

Option Three: ODPM guidance on quality standards for recruitment and progression.

40. As at present, FRAs would be required to use the national PQA framework to assess people for recruitment and progression in the Service. The quality standards would be issued as guidance only. As with Option Two, this would require FRAs to provide their own assessment processes as outlined in appendix 6 (preferably on a collaborative basis) but the need for any national resources would be confined to making arrangements for a periodic review of the PQAs at a cost of around £50k per review. National quality assurance for this option is likely to be confined to sampling that the PQAs are being used, with each FRA responsible for ensuring that their processes complied with relevant employment and equalities legislation and the provisions of the Grey Book. FRAs would be responsible for defending their processes against any claims of unfairness or discrimination.

41. ODPM would expect FRAs to meet any ongoing national costs (estimated to be around £50k pa for Option Three and in the order of £220k pa for Options One or Two). This would probably be achieved by charging FRAs directly for the service.

ADCs – LOCAL RUNNING COSTS

42. The costs of running an ADC will vary depending on: local factors; the policies FRAs decide to adopt; and the administrative arrangements FRAs introduce. For example, the catchment area of an ADC may affect travel and accommodation costs for applicants and assessors and, where the number of applicants is so high that costs would be excessive, the FRA may decide to set a limit on the numbers of people moving from the ITOP to the full ADC.

43. However, recent work by ADC practitioners in two CFOA regions estimated the cost of operating the proposed national supervisory ADC\(^{16}\) at around £440 per participant. As already stated in paragraph 18, when moving from one role to another within a level (e.g. from Station Manager to Group Manager), the assessment of potential will be via a PQA-based structured interview. The cost of this interview is about £110 per participant. Appendix Seven shows a breakdown of these and other figures.

44. The ITOP stage of the ADC process will result in a list of applicants and their scores. Local decisions, based on establishment levels and succession planning, will need to be made as to how many of those applicants progress through to the full ADC. Likewise, the ADC will result in a list of participants and their scores and similar local decisions will need to be made as to how many of those participants progress through to development programmes. It is therefore not possible to estimate exact costs per successful ADC participant. For the purpose of comparison, there are no available figures showing the ratio of those taking FSEB examinations to those subsequently achieving promotion. The FSEB figures in paragraph 30 and the ADC figures in paragraph 43 therefore reflect the costs in relation to the total number of people who go through the processes. They do not reflect the cost per successful participant.

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\(^{16}\) Note that indicative costs for Middle and Strategic Management level ADCs have not been included but would almost certainly be higher (per participant) than the supervisory level because whilst the Supervisory ADC lasts for 1 day, the Middle and Strategic ADCs last for 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) days.
45. A table in Appendix Eight compares estimated costs for providing the three options for ADCs. For the purpose of illustration only, it shows national costs apportioned equally between all FRAs in England.

- Option One costs each FRA £5k per year.
- Option Two costs each FRA between £80k and £255k per year.
- Option Three costs each FRA between £76k and £251k per year.

This is in addition to the cost per candidate which will vary according to a range of local factors and decisions. Our illustrative example for the supervisory level gives a cost of around £440.

**NFS – LOCAL RUNNING COSTS**

46. The new NFS is currently undergoing its final validation process prior to roll out so whilst it is not yet possible to be precise about costs (an estimation has been provided at Appendix 9), it is clear that they will vary depending on local arrangements. For example, it is likely that it would cost more to run the psychological tests in a small examination hall over a number of days rather than on one day in a larger facility. Clearly, a flexible approach to collaboration could reduce costs by not only providing economies of scale but also the ability to share resources, such as skilled administrators and HR personnel.

47. Local running costs for the NFS will fall into two categories;

- Staff required to run the process.
- Equipment/test materials.

**NFS – STAFF RESOURCES**

48. FRAs will need to ensure they have the necessary resources in terms of appropriately trained personnel to undertake both PQA – based sifting and interviewing processes. A number of FRAs already have access to staff with the required skills sets but for those who do not, there will be additional staff development costs to meet before they will be able to effectively run the NFS process.

49. During the development of the physical tests, it was found that two test administrators were able to process twelve participants a day. Using additional equipment and/or test administrators can increase throughput (for example, using five trained assessors and five support staff enabled a throughput of sixty applicants in a day). ODPM has started a validation programme which will help to identify the best way to maximise participant throughput and FRAs will be provided with further information on this issue as it becomes available.

50. Experience of piloting the physical tests with FRAs has shown that staff with previous experience of conducting physical tests need minimal coaching to administer the new tests effectively.
NFS – EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

51. The cost of equipment for NFS will depend on several factors; the extent to which a regional/collaborative approach is taken to the test process, whether it is decided to purchase or hire equipment, how much of the appropriate equipment FRAs already possess and the number of participants it is usual for an FRA to screen. FRAs may choose to hold tests at a larger venue over a shorter number of days with more sets of equipment and administrators, or over more days with less equipment and fewer administrators. This will be particularly relevant where FRAs need to be flexible about test locations to facilitate the recruitment of staff for the Retained Duty System. The equipment designed for the new physical tests is portable and can be transported to appropriate locations for test days. A list of the proposed equipment and estimates of costs is given at Appendix Ten.

52. As with psychological tests currently used by FRAs the cost of question and answer booklets will need to be factored into the cost analysis. Question booklets must be retained by the Fire and Rescue Service for security reasons and can therefore be reused.

From the information provided please comment on the cost implications for your FRA if Option 1 were to be introduced. If you believe there will be an increase in cost please provide details of your current processes and their cost.

If your preference is for option 2 or 3, please explain the impact those approaches would have on your existing costs.
SECTION SIX
Additional Considerations

53. When considering the extent to which recruitment and progression should adhere to national processes or principles, stakeholders might find it useful to explore some of the more detailed issues.

ACCESS TO AN ADC – INTERNAL APPLICANTS

54. The Grey Book states that “It is necessary for an employee who acts up or is temporarily promoted to have:

(1) demonstrated competence in his or her current role;

(2) demonstrated the potential to develop beyond his or her current role; and

(3) successfully completed the relevant assessment process for the higher role.”

55. There is some room for debate around the way in which these words should be interpreted in practice (e.g. whether it should be interpreted to require people to move through the roles sequentially rather than have the ability to role-skip). This consultation proposes that people are free to apply for any ADC provided they are competent in their current substantive role.

56. One argument sometimes used against this proposition for open access is that it could pose an organisational risk by allowing inexperienced ‘junior’ staff to role-skip into middle or strategic management positions. However, the full ADC is a comprehensive assessment of the participant’s potential to operate at that level and it is backed up with a development programme and a full assessment of the individual’s actual workplace performance in the new role. Taken together, these processes should reduce any risk.

57. It is also said that such open access to ADCs may result in large numbers of participants, adding to the costs of running ADCs. However, the ADC process does contain an ITOP in the form of a written exercise, which enables FRAs to sift participants prior to the full ADC. FRAs may also wish to consider limiting applications in line with workforce planning requirements. (As now, FRAs would be free to determine which vacancies to advertise externally.)

58. As already stated in paragraph 18, when moving from one role to another within a level (e.g. from Station Manager to Group Manager), the assessment of potential may be less comprehensive than the full ADC. Therefore, so that all participants are tested by the full range of assessment exercises for that level, it is recommended that participants for

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17 This is qualified in appendix B of the Grey Book which recognises that in the early stages of implementing IPDS it may on occasions be difficult to apply these principles and that FRAs, employees and trade unions should adopt a co-operative and common sense approach to any problems that might arise.
any role should have reached an acceptable standard at the full ADC for that level plus, if appropriate, the relevant role interview. For example, a participant for a Brigade Manager position would need to have been successful at the Strategic Manager ADC plus the Brigade Manager interview. As now, Fire Authority elected members may be involved in some appointments. In the early stages of implementing ADCs it may present practical difficulties to apply these principles as large numbers of people may not have been through an ADC to achieve their current role. This consultation therefore seeks views on whether there would be benefits in deferring this requirement.

59. If Option One were chosen, all ADCs would be expected to involve the same assessment processes (i.e. the same tests and exercises). This would mean that a participant’s ADC result should be valid in any other FRA. It would also mean that a participant who has already taken part in the national ADC process (e.g. in another part of the country) will have an advantage over someone taking part for the first time. There would need to be a system to prevent participants accessing the same level ADC in different parts of the country. Under Option One, this would be a national responsibility. If the outcome of this consultation is either Option 2 or 3 but FRAs nevertheless decide to use the ADC processes which have been developed nationally, the same problem of multiple applicants having an advantage is likely to need to be addressed locally.

60. This consultation document proposes that, where ADCs are used to place people into a new role whilst they go through a development programme, those who are successful should be promoted on a temporary basis. People on development programmes will be assessed in the workplace and their promotion would be made permanent provided that they achieve competence in a reasonable period (which the Grey Book identifies as 18 months for roles other than firefighter). Where, despite being given appropriate support and development, people do not make sufficient progress to achieve competence within a reasonable period and their work performance is not satisfactory, the Grey Book sets out the procedures which should be followed.

Do you agree that there should be open access to the full ADC for each level?

Do you agree that participants applying for any role must attend the full ADC for that level plus, if appropriate, the relevant role interview? If so, should this requirement be introduced immediately or should it be deferred for a period of, say, two years?

Do you agree that ADC results should be valid in any FRA?

Do you agree that, under Option One, there should be a national system to control multiple applications?

ACCESS TO NFS AND ADCs: EXTERNAL APPLICANTS

61. One objective of these new arrangements is to facilitate the recruitment of people with different backgrounds and experience who will add to the existing skills base. For that reason, the exercises within the ADC processes have been designed so that no prior knowledge of the FRS is required. In the same way, although the NFS psychological and physical tests have been designed within a FRS context they require no former knowledge or experience of FRS procedures or equipment in order to complete them successfully.
For example, managing an emergency incident is a key function within many FRS roles. The ADC assesses potential in this area through exercises that measure the underlying competencies required for incident management. These exercises are not set in a FRS context but all of the research trials and pilots\textsuperscript{18} demonstrate that they \textit{will} enable assessors to identify those who have the potential to manage operational incidents.

It should also be remembered that the ADC is only the first part of a selection process. This consultation makes the assumption that successful external participants would be placed on a development programme at the development rate of pay and would be supported and assessed in the workplace to ensure that they are likely to demonstrate competence \textit{before} they are confirmed in role (i.e. before the end of any probation period the FRA used). FRAs will need to ensure that the same processes are applied to internal and external participants.

Operational incident management is a safety-critical function and it may be necessary to restrict or control even more closely the activities of those on development programmes until they have received the appropriate development and demonstrated competence.

\textbf{Do you consider that any further steps should be taken to support the safe and effective deployment of people without a FRS operational background in roles that have an operational commitment?}

\textbf{MINIMUM SCORE – ADC}

Some stakeholders have suggested that if the Service uses national procedures, there is a need to identify nationally, the level of ADC score below which participants should be considered unsuitable for progression through a development programme. These minimum levels could relate both to overall ADC scores and to the scores in the following PQAs:

- Working with Others
- Confidence and Resilience
- Commitment to Diversity and Integrity
- Openness to Change
- Effective Communication

The level of any cut-off score would be initially based upon the research carried out in the development of the ADC process including the pilot ADCs. However the level could be adjusted annually in light of actual ADC results. Above this minimum level, FRAs will be free to decide how many participants are offered a place on a development programme.

\textsuperscript{18} The research, trials and pilots were carried out as part of ODPM's ADC Project.
MINIMUM SCORE – NFS TESTS

67. The NFS process comprises four parts; PQA-based application form, physical tests, psychological tests and a PQA-based interview. The answers to PQA based questions in the application form are marked with an appropriate cut-off score for the initial sift. The physical and psychological tests are pass or fail. The appropriate level for the cut-off scores is currently being debated at the Practitioners’ Forum.

68. The PQA-based interview will be scored in a similar way to the ADCs although the recommendation here is that there is no nationally set overall minimum score. However, it is recommended that anyone scoring poorly in the PQA relating to Commitment to Diversity and Integrity would not be offered a position.

Do you agree that minimum scores for ADC and NFS tests should be set nationally and reviewed annually as part of the ongoing stewardship of IPDS?
The results of the ADC will be used to provide an overall score for each participant. It will also produce a list of scores that will identify those participants who have demonstrated the greatest potential to perform at that level.

After all applicable functions have been assessed as having been achieved, the employee will have demonstrated “competence” in his or her role.

Successful participants will then work under supervision in the role, receive the appropriate development and be assessed against the different functions that make up that role.
## APPENDIX TWO

### The ADC Process for Supervisory Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Test of Potential (ITOP)</td>
<td>This is a sifting stage where individuals are tested on a critical subset of the PQAs which are designed to assess their potential to operate at the Supervisory Level. The ITOP consists of two written exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Exercises</td>
<td>These are timed discussions in which a group of participants work together to make decisions about work-related situations or scenarios. The discussions typically last about 45-60 minutes and participants are observed throughout that time. Generally speaking there are no right or wrong answers. The Assessors are more interested in the way people interact in a team environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Interactive exercises | **Oral Briefings & Consultations.** These may be formal or informal. In either case participants will have to analyse and interpret given information and have to present a case. Normally they will be questioned during and/or afterwards.  
**Roleplays.** These simulations replicate typical, internal or external interpersonal interactions, relevant to the job role. Internal examples of these for a manager could entail disciplining, coaching or counselling a member of staff. External examples might include negotiating with the community or a member of the public. The individuals that the participant has to interact with will have been trained to play the role(s) in question. |
| Written Exercises | **In-Basket Exercise.** This involves working through the contents of a Manager’s in-tray that contains memos, letters and other items. Participants are asked to respond to the items and make decisions against a defined time deadline. |
| Structured Interview (Crew Manager to Watch Manager) | A 90 minute interview where participants are asked to provide evidence of their performance against the following PQAs:  
- Working with others  
- Confidence and Resilience  
- Commitment to Diversity and Integrity  
- Openness to Change  
- Effective Communication  
Using the format “Tell me about a time when you...”  
Successful participants go on to a second similar interview covering the remaining PQAs:  
- Commitment to Development  
- Planning and Implementing  
- Commitment to Excellence  
- Problem Solving |
National Firefighter Selection
Process Overview

Self Selection Questionnaire SSQ

Formal Application

Psychological Test Battery

Physical Tests

PQA Interview

Selection

Candidate decides not to proceed with application

Candidate unsuccessful Application rejected

Candidate Unsuccessful Feedback Provided

Candidate Unsuccessful Feedback Provided

Candidate Unsuccessful Feedback Provided

Candidates not selected may be placed on waiting list or referred to other FRS

Final Checks e.g.
• References
• Medical
## APPENDIX FOUR

### National Firefighter Selection Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Psychological Tests | Self Selection Questionnaire (SSQ)  
Application Form  
National Firefighter Questionnaire  
National Firefighter Ability Tests (NFAT) – three parts  
1. Working With Numbers  
2. Understanding Information  
3. Situational Awareness & Problem Solving |
| Physical Tests     | Equipment Carry – (Aerobic Fitness / Upper and Lower Body Strength)  
Casualty Evacuation – (Upper and Lower Body Strength)  
Ladder Climb – (Confidence at Height)  
Ladder Lift – (Upper and Lower Body Strength)  
Enclosed Space – (Claustrophobia and Agility)  
Equipment Assembly – (Manual Dexterity) |
| PQA Interview      | A 60 minute interview where participants are asked to provide evidence of their performance against the following PQAs:  
• Working with others  
• Commitment to Diversity and Integrity  
• Commitment to Development  
• Effective Communication  
• Commitment to Excellence  
Using the format “Tell me about a time when you…” |
APPENDIX FIVE

Exam/ADC Time Commitments

The table below shows the assessment time required for someone moving from firefighter to brigade manager under the examination based selection process compared with the proposed new ADC process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Process</th>
<th>Time(^{19})</th>
<th>New Process</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LFI Written Exam</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Supervisory ADC</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFI Practical Exam</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Crew to Watch Manager Interview</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFI Selection</td>
<td>½ day</td>
<td>Middle ADC</td>
<td>1½ days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub O Written Exam</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Station to Group Manager Interview</td>
<td>½ day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub O Practical Exam</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Strategic ADC</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub O Selection</td>
<td>½ day</td>
<td>Area to Brigade Manager Interview</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strn Officer Written Exam</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strn O Selection</td>
<td>½ day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADO Selection</td>
<td>½ day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO 2/3 Selection</td>
<td>½ day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO 1 Selection</td>
<td>½ day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO Selection</td>
<td>½ day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACO Selection</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Fire Officers Selection</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>13½ days</td>
<td></td>
<td>6½ days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{19}\) Selection under the old arrangements varied from one FRS to another. Half a day is a conservative estimate of the time commitment, especially for ranks above Station Officer where some FRAs have recently introduced assessment processes similar to the proposed model.
APPENDIX SIX

Cost estimate for the purchase of off-the-shelf exercises for a single ADC level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Off-the-shelf Exercises</th>
<th>Cost per Participant</th>
<th>Cost per 100 Participants</th>
<th>Conversion to FRA use (one-off cost)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role-plays x2</td>
<td>£16 + £16 = £32</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-baskets x1</td>
<td>£43</td>
<td>4300</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Exercise x1</td>
<td>£14</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Discussions x1</td>
<td>£16</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>10500</td>
<td>24000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is normal commercial practice for ADC packages to be sold on the basis of the number of participants. In this example, based on 100 participants going through an ADC, the initial cost of exercises for 100 participants would be £34,500. Thereafter, the cost per ADC per 100 participants would be £10,500.

Note:

- The Multiple role-play exercise contained in the work produced by the ADC Project has been designed to test a participant's behaviour in an emergency situation. It is a bespoke exercise designed specifically for the FRS and is not available off-the-shelf.

- One aim of bespoke exercises is to ensure that a participant's experience at the ADC is as realistic as possible. Off-the-shelf exercises can sometimes fail to provide this realism leading to poorer performance by the participant.

- The table does not include Structured Interviews. These are part of the national ADC package but cannot be purchased off-the-shelf and would have to be bespoke.

- Conversion to FRA use reflects the expectation that there would be a need to convert off-the-shelf exercises for use alongside the national FRS PQA Framework.

- These costs are for a single ADC level.
APPENDIX SEVEN

Indicative Cost of ADC Process

ADC Costs Per Six Participants at a Supervisory Management ADC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADC Role</th>
<th>Pay grade</th>
<th>Hourly rate</th>
<th>Staff numbers required</th>
<th>ITOP</th>
<th>ADC</th>
<th>Marking</th>
<th>Self Dev Module</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Total hours</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre manager</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td>14.21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>£227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>SM – B</td>
<td>16.24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>£1559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>SO1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>£160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role player</td>
<td>CM</td>
<td>12.36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>£593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>WM-B</td>
<td>14.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>£57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£2596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per participant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PQA-Based Structured Interview

There are two interviews in the proposed process. Both use two assessors (one to interview and one to record) and both last for 90 minutes with a further 60 minutes for the assessors to confer and write up the results. The formula below uses a nominal figure of 6 participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Duration (Interview and write up)</th>
<th>Hourly rate (2 assessors)</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Interview (sift)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2½ hours</td>
<td>£32.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Interview</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2½ hours</td>
<td>£32.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per participant (Total divided by 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible Additional Costs (which will vary according to local factors and decisions)

- Participants – Travel
- Participants – Accommodation
- Assessor – Travel
- Assessor – Accommodation (including meal)
- Role Player – Travel
- Role Player – Accommodation (including meal)
- Location Hire
- Administration of above
- Continuation training
APPENDIX EIGHT

Estimated Costs of Providing ADC Processes Under Each of the Three Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimates Provided nationally</td>
<td>£5k</td>
<td>£250k</td>
<td>£250k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or Provided locally by consultants</td>
<td></td>
<td>Or Provided locally by consultants</td>
<td>£250k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or Provided locally in-house</td>
<td>£75k</td>
<td>Or Provided locally in-house</td>
<td>£75k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or Provided locally off-shelf</td>
<td>£75k plus £100 per person per ADC</td>
<td>Or Provided locally off-shelf</td>
<td>£75k plus £100 per person per ADC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance and Review</td>
<td>Provided nationally</td>
<td>£5k pa</td>
<td>£1k pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included in above</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>Provided nationally @ £220k pa</td>
<td>Provided nationally @ £50k pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£5k</td>
<td>£80k - £255k</td>
<td>£76k - £251k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The table above shows estimated costs of the provision of appropriate ADC processes under each of the three options set out in this consultation document. (It does not show costs of actually running ADCs and NFS which are illustrated at appendix 7, 9 &10.)

- Whilst the table shows costs falling to individual FRAs, this is purely illustrative and, in practice, we would expect that most FRAs would wish to collaborate i.e. regionally.

- Please note that whilst, under options 1 and 2, quality assurance and review would be provided nationally (so is included in these costs), under option 3, FRAs would remain responsible for ensuring that their processes complied with relevant employment and equalities legislation and the provisions of the Grey Book. The table does not include any estimated costs for this work.

- Option 2 demands a high level of quality assurance requiring a full-time audit team.

- The national costs also include the costs associated with the NFS processes.
APPENDIX NINE

Indicative Cost of NFS Process

NFS Costs per applicant

APPLICATION FORM SIFT

This is both an accuracy and a PQA based exercise. Trained sifters should be able to deal with 10 applications an hour = £1.63 per application.

Psychological Tests

The psychological tests take a maximum of 3.5 hours to administer. These can be administered to large numbers in exam hall type arrangements. It is recommended that there is one invigilator to 20 candidates at a cost of £2.44 per candidate for the 3.5 hour session.

The papers can be marked by hand but are marked much more swiftly and more accurately using an optical reader at a cost of £2-5,000. Given the life of the equipment and the speed of the process the cost of marking an individual paper is negligible.

Feedback is required for unsuccessful candidates at this stage but this is via pre-formulated feedback letters triggered by their result patterns and is a very low cost administrative process. Cost per candidate would be below £1.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL COSTS

- Assessor/Invigilator – Travel
- Assessor/Invigilator – Accommodation (including meal)
- Location Hire
- Administration of above

PHYSICAL TESTS

Current indications show five qualified tests administrators and five support staff can test 60 applicants in a six-hour day at an average daily cost of approximately £1,800 for staff. This equates to £30 per person.
POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL COSTS

- Assessor – Travel
- Assessor – Accommodation (including meal)
- Location Hire
- Administration of above

(Equipment costs are covered at Appendix 10)

PQA-BASED STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The interview uses two assessors (one to interview and one to record) and lasts for 60 minutes with a further 30 minutes for the assessors to confer and write up the results.

At a cost of £32.48 per hour for the two assessors the cost of interviewing an applicant is £48.72 (figures derived from ADC process).

Unsuccessful candidates would require a feedback letter which would be an additional 15 minutes of assessor time at £4.06 per applicant.

SUMMARY

Based on an average of 2,500 applicants of whom 1,000 pass through the sift stage, 500 pass the psychological tests and 250 the physical tests the indicative cost per candidate to administer the new test suite is £140.
In addition to the costs set out in Appendix Nine there will be additional costs for NFS relating to the purchase/hire of appropriate equipment. The table below gives the equipment required for administration of the physical tests and associated range of costs. These costs will vary according to the amount of equipment already held by FRAs or Regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Assembly (Manual Dexterity)</td>
<td>Portapower &amp; Pump</td>
<td>£150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plywood Board 1m x 1.5m x 25mm</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stopwatch</td>
<td>£7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>£172</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladder Climb (Confidence at Height)</td>
<td>13.5m Ladder</td>
<td>Existing Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall Arrest Equipment</td>
<td>Existing Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>£0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladder Lift (Upper and Lower Body Strength)</td>
<td>Special Rig</td>
<td>£750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 x 5 kg weights</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plywood Board 1m x 1m x 25mm</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plywood Board 1m x 1m x 25mm</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plywood Board 2m x 2m x 25mm</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>£825</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casualty Evacuation (Upper and Lower Body Strength)</td>
<td>55 kg dummy</td>
<td>£420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 traffic cones</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30m tape measure</td>
<td>£13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stopwatch</td>
<td>£7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>£480</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Carry (Aerobic Fitness/Upper and Lower Body Strength)</td>
<td>Quarter LPP barbell</td>
<td>£60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 x 5 kg weights</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 x 2.5 kg weights</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 x traffic cones</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appliance &amp; Hosereel</td>
<td>Existing Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 x 23m lengths of 70mm hose</td>
<td>Existing Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 length Heliflex 100mm hard suction</td>
<td>Existing Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 strainer basket</td>
<td>Existing Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30m tape measure</td>
<td>£7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stopwatch</td>
<td>£7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>£160</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the equipment listed above FRAs/Regions will also need to hold sufficient decommissioned Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for use by applicants when undertaking the tests. The cost of cleaning this PPE must also be factored into the general cost calculation.

A stock of gloves for use by applicants will also be required. The most effective gloves to provide grip and dexterity, as well as protection against metal splinters/rope burns have been identified as Showa Green Grip at a cost of £2 per pair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enclosed Space (Claustrophobia and Agility)</td>
<td>Crawlway</td>
<td>Existing Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£0 – up to £26,000 for portable assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knee Pads</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facemask &amp; Blindfold</td>
<td>£4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stopwatch</td>
<td>£7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>£26 to £26,026</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of Optical Reader for psychological tests</td>
<td></td>
<td>£2,000–£5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total indicative cost</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£3,663–£32,663</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

Competence

An individual is competent when they can perform the activities expected in their role to the National Occupational Standards. This involves demonstrating and being assessed against the performance criteria, knowledge and understanding of each element within their role map.

Development Programme

Once an individual has shown that they have the potential to undertake a new role, they can be put on a programme to help them develop into that role. This Development Programme helps them acquire any new skills they need.

Fire Services Examinations Board (FSEB)

The FSEB is an independent body that has been responsible for providing the statutory promotion examinations which were a key national element of FRS progression systems. The FSEB is funded through top-slicing Local Government’s revenue support grant.

Implementation Working Group (IWG)

The IWG was established in 1995 by the then Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council to take forward a number of training and Human Resource issues including a new procedure for selection and recruitment of firefighters.

Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)

The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) represents a complete change of approach to workforce development for Fire and Rescue Authorities. Brought in as part of the June 2003 pay and modernisation agreement for operational staff, IPDS introduces a competence-based approach, and its system of development specifically targets the needs of the individual.

National Occupational Standards

National Occupational Standards (NOS) define good practice in the way people work, based on the functions of their job.

Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQAs)

PQAs define the behaviours required for effective performance.

Positive Action

A variety of measures designed to counteract the effects of past discrimination and to help eliminate stereotyping. It may include initiatives such as the introduction of non-discriminatory selection procedures, training programmes or policies.
Practitioners Forum

The Practitioners Forum is the body through which practitioners and stakeholders in the fire industry work together to provide advice to Government on policy development.

Processes

Includes ADC exercises, psychometric tests, physical tests, etc. and the systems for using these within FRAs. The exercises and tests will need to be replaced and revised periodically. The systems, once embedded, should become fairly standard.

Role Map

A role map is based on National Occupational Standards. It describes, in outcome terms, everything people need to do in their role.

Structured Interview

An interview where participants are asked to provide evidence of their performance against the PQAs. Everyone is asked the same questions and there is a standard system used to score the answers.

Workplace Assessment

Workplace assessment is a process enabling work performance to be fairly and accurately measured against clearly defined standards in order to demonstrate competence in a given role.
List of individuals and organisations that have been invited to comment on this consultation document

Adult Learning Inspectorate
Audit Commission
Association of Principal Fire Officers
Black and Ethnic Minority Members (FBU)
Cabinet Office
Chief Fire Officers
Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA)
Chief Executive, County Councils
Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities
Commission for Racial Equality
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Department of Education and Skills
Department of Health, Social Services, Public Safety, Northern Ireland
Disability Rights Commission
Edexcel
Emergency Planning College
Employers' Organisation for Local Government
Equal Opportunities Commission
Fire Brigades Union
Fire Industry Council
Fire Officers' Association
Fire, Rescue And Safety Vocational Standards Group (FRSVSG)
Fire Service College
Fire Service Examinations Board
General Municipal Boilermakers Union (GMB)
Government Offices (Business Change Managers)
HM Treasury
Heads of Human Resources in Fire and Rescue Authorities
Health & Safety Executive
Home Office
HR Practitioners Forum
Institute of Fire Engineers
New Arrangements for the Recruitment of Firefighters and the Progression of Operational and Control Managers in the Fire and Rescue Service

Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) Project Board (ODPM)
IPDS Co-ordinators
Learning and Skills Council
Local Government Association
London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
National Assembly for Wales
National Association of Fire Officers
National Joint Council for Local Authorities’ Fire Brigades
Networking Women in the Fire Service
Practitioners’ Forum
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Chairs of Regional Management Boards
Retained Firefighters Union
Scottish Executive Justice Department
Scottish Fire Service Inspectorate
Scottish Fire Services College
Scottish Qualifications Authority
Sector Skills Development Agency
UNISON
The consultation criteria

The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations on the basis of a document in electronic or printed form. They will often be relevant to other sorts of consultation.

Though they have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (e.g. under European Community Law), they should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

1. **Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.**

2. **Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.**

3. **Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.**

4. **Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.**

5. **Monitor your department’s effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.**

6. **Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.**

The full consultation code may be viewed at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Introduction.htm

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not, or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process please contact

Adam Bond, ODPM Consultation Co-ordinator, Room 2.19, 26 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2WH;

or by e-mail to:

adam.bond@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

**STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This consultative document makes proposals concerning the arrangements for the recruitment and progression of staff in the Fire and Rescue Service in England. The aim is to consider the best option for future arrangements and to set this out in the next FRS National Framework.