Kevin Aiston, a British-born firefighter who moved to Poland 16 years ago, fronts the new Fire Kills campaign aimed at the growing Polish community living in the UK. He features on the Fire Kills posters, pop-up banners and leaflet dispensers that will be distributed through key Polish networks and organisations.

Kevin Aiston, now a Polish TV celebrity, helped to launch the new campaign at Hammersmith Community Fire Station in London on 18 June, with Polish media in attendance. Smoke alarm installation and maintenance are the key campaign messages.

**Partnerships**

Bilingual Polish and English ‘Fire Safety in the Home’ leaflets are being placed in Polish food stores, community centres attached to Catholic churches, and other places where the Polish community congregate. Partnerships have also been established with Polish websites, and Fire Kills advertisements are already appearing in many Polish newspapers.

Kevin said: “I think that what is being done to ensure the safety of Poles living in the UK is great, and as someone who has a foot in both countries I’m delighted to be part of the campaign.”

**Campaign in Surrey**

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is targeting the county’s fast growing Polish population, using a local Polish food shop as an information point to remind them that fire kills — pozar zabija — in any language.

More information on the Fire Kills campaign is at [www.direct.gov.uk/firekills](http://www.direct.gov.uk/firekills) or from james.webb@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Paula Hartwell, Community Fire Safety Manager at Surrey FRS, and Maria Jablonska, owner of a Polish food store in Surrey, with fire safety information.

photo: Surrey FRS
Hampshire hosts international Urban Search and Rescue exercise

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service hosted a successful international Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) exercise at Fort Widley, outside Portsmouth, between 25 – 29 June.

The USAR teams from 12 UK Fire and Rescue Services - Cheshire, Essex, Grampian, Greater Manchester, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Mid and West Wales, South Wales, West Midlands and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services – took part in the exercise and were joined by specialist teams from several non-government rescue organisations.

These teams support UKFSSART, the UK Fire Services Search and Rescue Team, and form part of an international response which can be mobilised on behalf of the British Government to disasters overseas.

Scenario
This year’s exercise scenario at Fort Widley was an earthquake overseas, to which UK teams were mobilised, to back up local search and rescue personnel. The earthquake had caused severe structural damage and collapse over a number of sites, with a number of casualties unaccounted for.

The USAR capability forms part of the £1 billion Fire and Resilience Programme funded by Communities and Local Government.

Timetable
The exercise started on Wednesday with a training day for the overseas teams to familiarise themselves with the range of UK equipment in use, and to recognise the structures, communications and command processes which would be used by the responding UK teams. The overseas teams then began the exercise on Thursday morning and set about rescuing ‘casualties’ – many of whom were young people from the Hampshire FRS Prince’s Trust team.

The UK team’s response got underway on Thursday evening when they simulated a departure airport. Here they exercised the medical, administrative and logistical processes necessary to ensure that the teams departed with the correct equipment and personnel to be both effective and self-sufficient on arrival in the affected country.

Welcome to FRS 28

In this issue, FRS looks at two new ‘Fire Kills’ fire safety campaigns, reports on the international Urban Search and Rescue exercise held in Hampshire, and highlights the winners of the FRS Equality and Diversity Awards for 2008.

If you have any initiatives, or good news to share with the whole of the fire and rescue service, please email us at frs@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

The online version of FRS at www.frsonline.fire.gov.uk provides access to previous issues of FRS News, circulars and more news.
national USAR exercise

All aspects of the UK teams’ mobilisation were tested, including:

• aircraft loading procedure
• arrival protocols in the affected country
• setting up of a base of operations
• liaising with local teams
• reconnaissance of potential rescue sites
• the practical work of locating and rescuing casualties

This part of the exercise lasted through the night with the UK teams arriving to assist the ‘home’ team early on Friday morning. On arrival the teams set up their base of operations, while their commanders met with the teams who were already working to co-ordinate the joint operation.

The exercise then ran continuously through until Saturday afternoon when it was declared that search and rescue operations were to cease.

Outcomes

Exercise organiser, Group Manager Pete Crook, who heads the Hampshire UKFSSART team, told FRS: “Overall the exercise was a great success and also a great shop window for the New Dimension USAR project. The idea of exercises like these is to identify processes that we do well, but more importantly those that we don’t, so we can improve our readiness for a real event. We learned a lot from this year’s exercise, particularly by working directly with colleagues from several visiting countries.”

“All those who attended were tested and pushed very hard over several days but it seems the harder they worked the more they enjoyed it and learned. Many of the foreign teams have already asked if they can come back next year with more team members.”

Participating fire and rescue services described the event as a ‘realistically demanding yet fair’ test of UKFSSART’s ability to respond to a disaster in a foreign country.
New Equality and Diversity Strategy for the FRS

A new Equality and Diversity Strategy, to enable the Service to improve the diversity of its workforce, and better meet the needs of all the local communities it serves, was launched in May at the ‘Making the Difference’ Conference in London by Fire Minister Parmjit Dhanda. He said:

“The overriding message from the many people in the Fire and Rescue Service who have worked with us to develop the Strategy is that effective action is long overdue. Clearly there is a desire for radical change and significant progress.”

“The Strategy sets out the vision of what needs to be achieved over the next ten years to deliver a transformed Service, with equality, diversity and fairness at its heart.”

Chief Fire Officers have been asked to ensure that the Strategy is circulated widely among staff. It is also available at: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/equalitydiversitystrategy

Equality and Diversity Awards for 2008

The achievements of men and women who lead the way on promoting and progressing equality and diversity issues in the FRS were recognised at an awards ceremony at the ‘Making The Difference’ Conference in London. They received their awards and commendations from Fire Minister Parmjit Dhanda, Steve McGuirk (for the Chief Fire Officers Association) and Les Byrom (for the Local Government Association).
The winners and runners-up in each category were:

Leadership (Individual Award) Category

**Winner**
Michael Feather, East Sussex FRS
Michael developed a disability equality training programme for all staff in East Sussex FRS, to raise awareness of changes in the law. He also involved students at a local college, who designed a series of posters (see above) to help challenge perceptions about disabilities.

**Runner-up**
Martin Green, Hillingdon Fire Station, London Fire Brigade
This project helped to break down barriers between the traveller community and Hillingdon Fire Station, improving understanding of fire safety issues. A fire safety leaflet was designed specifically for travellers.

Leadership (Team Award) Category

**Winner**
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Support Group, Fire Brigades Union
The Group has been instrumental in promoting understanding of LGBT issues and highlighting the needs of the LGBT community. Dealing with issues of sexuality represents one of the biggest cultural challenges for the Service and the Group's work has paved the way for a more open debate.

**Joint Runner-up**
Asian Fire Service Association
The Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) was set up to provide professional advice and support on matters affecting Asian members of the Service and communities. AFSA is recognised as a key stakeholder and is represented on national bodies.

**Joint Runner-up**
Lorraine Abrahams, Avon FRS
This nomination was for work on the national ‘Women as Leaders in the FRS’ Conference, which was attended by over 170 delegates. Key issues faced by women in the workplace, such as direct entry, multi-tier entry and incident command were discussed.

Service Delivery (Individual Award) Category

**Winner**
Chris Caswell, Strood Fire Station, Kent FRS
This project promoted awareness about dyslexia in the workplace. The judges agreed this was an important contribution to improving understanding of hidden disability and encouraged people to be open about dyslexia.

**Joint Runner-up**
Michael Skee, Tyne & Wear FRS
Following illness and lower limb amputation, Michael, with the support and help of people both within and outside the FRS, was central to his own rehabilitation in overcoming significant disability and returning to work.

**Joint Runner-up**
Cliff Butterworth, Hertfordshire FRS
This project included fitting of specialist smoke alarms to help protect the deaf and hard of hearing, and training in British Sign Language for some FRS staff. Cliff’s work has been recognised by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People.

Service Delivery (Team Award) Category

**Joint Winner**
Pamaljit Kaur Sidhu, Simone White and Lynne Grayston, Derbyshire FRS
The Phoenix fire safety education project (above) targeted diverse community groups, and included home fire safety checks, community group talks and school visits. It led to reduced call outs over a 2 year period.

**Joint Winner**
Neil Ashworth, Burnley Fire Station, Lancashire FRS (pictured on page 4)
Following an incident where fire crews had been physically and verbally abused by young people from the minority ethnic community, the watch manager and crew from Burnley Fire Station worked closely with local communities to build good relations and gain the trust of community leaders.

**Runner-up**
Rebecca Howard, London Fire Brigade
This innovative project promoted engagement with the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) community through the club circuit, signalling a positive attitude towards LGB issues.

Partnership Working Category

**Winner**
Rex Webb, Salisbury Fire Station, Wiltshire FRS
Rex organised a conference to improve understanding of migrant worker issues in Wiltshire and identify future priorities. He also set up Migrant Worker Forums and worked with other agencies (including health and education) to build bridges with migrant communities.

**Joint Runner-up**
Paul Fuller, Bedfordshire & Luton FRS and Tanja Kuveljic, b-live
Bedfordshire and Luton FRS ran a marketing campaign in partnership with b-live, using a business and social networking website to engage with young people from diverse groups.

**Joint Runner-up**
Danny Roberts, Bedfordshire & Luton FRS
This scheme encouraged young people with disabilities to play football, getting the fire safety message to a wider audience and enabling a programme of home fire safety checks to be completed.
Disabled firefighters’ group goes national

The idea of a national network – the National Disabled Fire Association (NDFA) – was born as a result of Duncan White’s own experience of hearing loss, and the support of Devon and Somerset FRA, which enabled him to continue working operationally as a fire-fighter.

The NDFA was set up last year to:

- Be a source of knowledge and experience, education and training
- Share good practice across the Fire and Rescue Service
- Communities and Local Government has provided a £10,000 grant to help the NDFA set up a national membership subscription scheme.

Duncan White said: “Whilst every new case needs to be treated on an individual basis, there will be issues and experiences that can be shared between disabled employees and their employers. We are currently seeing a number of firsts, such as the first amputee firefighter and the first retained firefighter with a heart valve replacement. Above all, we must identify the potential of a vast number of capable, valuable and skilful individuals who have so much to offer the modern Fire and Rescue Service.”

For further information, please email Duncan White or Barbara North:
djwhite@dsfire.gov.uk
bnorth@dsfire.gov.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mayor puts LIFE first

One of Boris Johnson’s first visits as new Mayor of London was to London Fire Brigade’s LIFE (Local Intervention Fire Education) scheme in Dagenham.

The LIFE programme teaches young people between the ages of 13 and 17 fire-fighting skills alongside real fire-fighters. The Mayor saw first-hand the positive effect the LIFE programme has had. It gives young people a real sense of achievement by fostering teamwork, self-discipline and participation in their local communities.

The Brigade has now run more than 260 LIFE courses since 2002, and some 3,000 young people from across 30 boroughs have completed the course.

Speaking at the event, Boris Johnson, said: “LIFE courses are one of the London Fire Brigade’s most successful youth engagement programmes and it is extremely encouraging to see for myself the enthusiasm among those involved.”

Mayor puts LIFE first

London Mayor Boris Johnson visited London Fire Brigade’s LIFE Scheme in Dagenham during his first days in office.

photo: LFB
The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for 2008-11 sets out the Government’s priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England. The Framework came into effect on 30 June, following a 12 week public consultation. It covers:

- Prevention, protection and response
- Resilience
- Diversity and workforce
- Governance and improvement

Reducing the Framework from nine to four chapters brings a more logical grouping to areas of FRS work.

The Framework has a lifespan of three years, to tie in with the local government budgetary cycle. It can be viewed at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/nationalframework200811

FiReControl – the regional picture

The Regional Business Case for FiReControl, published on 8 July, sets out the benefits of the project for control room staff, firefighters and the public. It is available at:

www.communities.gov.uk/fire/resilienceresponse/irecontrol/businesscase

FiReControl will replace the 46 stand alone control rooms in England with nine networked regional control centres, to increase resilience, enhance capability and improve efficiency.

Under the new system, overflow 999 calls will automatically be transferred to the least busy control centre.

All control rooms will have access to the same information about appliances, resources and locations, and be able to deploy the nearest available appliance.

A caller’s location, whether landline or mobile, will be identifiable.

Firefighters will have satellite navigation technology in their cabs, and access to vital information on:

- known risks and hazards
- safe handling of chemicals
- locations of hydrants and water supplies
- floor plans

The second part of the FiReControl Business Case will be published later this year.

A new explanatory leaflet on the FiReControl project is at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firecontrolleafletjune08

Firelink update

A leaflet about the Firelink radio system is now available for download:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firelinkleaflet

A new Health and Safety DVD about the Airwave network is available. It will be distributed by Airwave to all Chief Fire Officers. More copies can be ordered by emailing:

Mohammed.Rafiq@airwavesolutions.co.uk

Updated information about the Firelink radio network, including a FAQ section, is now online at:

www.communities.gov.uk/fireandresilience

New National Framework

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Hitting the bullseye

The Fire Kills campaign has found an innovative way to get fire safety messages across to a different audience. By sponsoring the British Darts Organisation’s (BDO) International Grand Prix of Darts, people at the tournaments and watching on television will be reminded of the importance of fire safety in the home.

The five events that make up the BDO International Darts Grand Prix, are being shown live on Setanta Sports.

Martin Adams, 2007 BDO World Professional Darts Champion and the longest serving England Darts Captain, said:

“All BDO darts players are aware that our sport can benefit the Fire Kills campaign by drawing attention to basic safety rules and measures in the home environment. Darts is a family orientated sport and we are delighted to be giving our support to an initiative as important as the Fire Kills campaign.”

The first four events, in Prestatyn, Brean Sands, Frimley Green and Kettering have proved to be great outreach opportunities. A competition was launched at the BDO International Open at Brean Sands - the winner will receive tickets to the final of the 2009 BDO World Professional Darts Championships and ‘money-can’t-buy’ tickets to the Champions Dinner. All entrants must sign up for a Home Fire Risk Check. The final event is scheduled to take place at Bridlington in September.

For more information on the BDO International Grand Prix of Darts, please visit www.bdodarts.com.