

National Operational Guidance Programme



CFOA
Chief Fire Officers
Association

in partnership with



Neil O'Connor
Director, Fire, Resilience and Emergencies
Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
LONDON
SW1E 5DU

Date 29 May 2014

Dear Neil,

The future of the National Operational Guidance Programme

We have been discussing sustainable funding arrangements to ensure that the fire and rescue service and the department are able to benefit from high-quality and current national operational guidance. Colleagues across the service have welcomed the support that you have shown the programme in your letter of 2 December 2013, in the conversations that you have held with members of the board, and in your support for the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme's legacy proposals. There is a strong consensus between us that the fire and rescue service must not become the only emergency service without a means of developing national operational doctrine, whether that is to provide best practice to local services or to respond to changing civil contingencies requirements.

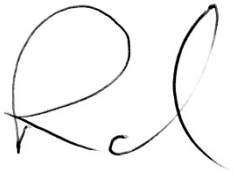
You have asked for more information to help the department support the programme financially. You have also acknowledged in our discussions that the core business case for the continued and shared funding of the programme is not necessarily about local efficiency, but it is about operational effectiveness, resilience and interoperability—though we acknowledge the ancillary benefits of efficiency and the reduction of the department's liability for extant and high-risk guidance.

The appended document provides additional information, whilst addressing those three compelling and core drivers. We do not want an administrative task to be a barrier to a successful funding arrangement, and will provide a transformation fund application form if you feel that is necessary after all. However, we trust that this submission is sufficient for you to apply to the source of funding you deem most appropriate.

In recognition of a shared interest in the programme, and in-line with your request for a commitment from the service, we have spent the past few months engaging with fire and rescue services, fire and rescue authorities and the devolved administrations, each of whom have committed to support the programme financially, if that funding is matched by the department. Building on the £6 million fund provided by the London Fire Brigade, we believe that the service is demonstrably meeting its responsibilities.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet you, and discuss this submission and any further details you require, to ensure that this opportunity is grasped and Steven Adams will contact your office to make those arrangements.

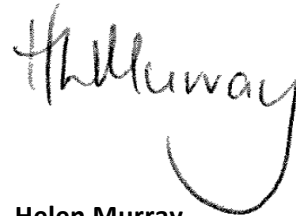
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'R' followed by a cursive 'D'.

Ron Dobson
Commissioner
London Fire Brigade

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing as a stylized 'W' or 'M'.

Roy Wilsher
Director of Operations
Chief Fire Officers' Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, clearly legible as 'Helen Murray'.

Helen Murray
Director of Programmes
Local Government Association

The future of national operational guidance for the fire and rescue service

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Vision

1. Fire and rescue activities on the incident ground will be driven by high quality national operational doctrine that is the foundation for safe systems of work for firefighters, interoperability with our partners, and intraoperability between fire and rescue services.
- 1.1. National operational guidance will be evidence-based industry good practice that is developed collaboratively, and which is assure-able and auditable with an excellent rate of adoption by local fire and rescue services.
- 1.2. A new catalogue of operational doctrine will completely replace existing and out-of-date materials issued by government since the 1940s with an up-to-date, online, searchable database that is openly accessible to the fire and rescue service and its partners.
- 1.3. A national hub hosted by the London Fire Brigade, and jointly funded by government and fire and rescue authorities, manages the development of all of the different types of operational doctrine needed by the service.

The programme

2. The National Operational Guidance Programme is a partnership between the Chief Fire Officers' Association, the Local Government Association and the London Fire Brigade to develop operational doctrine that supports local fire and rescue services to development safe systems of work that are intraoperable between services and interoperable with our partners.
- 2.1. Between 2012 and 2015, the programme is resourced by a £6 million fund provided by the London Fire Brigade. The brigade hosts the team which reports to the programme board that approves and commissions guidance and sets strategic direction. Those resources have been targeted at the programme's infrastructure development and guidance development.
- 2.2. The programme's infrastructure work includes a review of all extant material in circulation, new policy and programme frameworks, governance structures, incident learning and feedback mechanisms, and an online platform for document management, communication and collaboration between the programme and project teams, and online publishing.
- 2.3. The programme's current guidance development is focused on core activities, such as '*Water rescue and flooding*', '*Incident command*', '*Fires and firefighting*', and '*Performing rescues*'. The next work programme will focus on the contexts that firefighters work within, specialist activities, national resilience activities, and the development of incident ground procedures.

The rationale for government investment

The state of the extant operational guidance catalogue

3. In April 2012, the catalogue of national operational guidance was in poor condition. In 2006, the Department for Communities and Local Government commissioned a risk and liability review of operational guidance from law firm Field Fisher Waterhouse, which established that much of the existing catalogue is high-risk to the government.
- 3.1. Their recommendations, and the 2008 National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service in England, led to the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's 2009 programme to address the most risk-critical documents and gaps in a catalogue of more than 8000 documents.
- 3.2. That programme funded project teams across the service to develop new guidance. It produced a number of documents, however it did not benefit from economies of scale between projects, nor programme co-ordination to remove conflict and duplication between guidance publications. It also experienced difficulties moving guidance to publication. For example, the review of Technical Bulletin 1/97 (first published in 1997) about the use of breathing apparatus was published in 2014 after six years in development. The Fire Brigades Union subsequently opened discussions about this guidance's fit within the fire and rescue service's health and safety framework and wider guidance arrangements—discussions that the Chief Fire Officers' Association hope to conclude and confirm with chief officers shortly.

The findings of public inquiries, significant judgments and reviews

4. The findings of the government's Field Fisher Waterhouse review have been supported in a number of public inquiries and major incident reviews that have criticised fire and rescue service doctrine. Notably, in his comments regarding the Atherstone-on-Stour fire in Warwickshire, The Honourable Mr Justice MacDuff said—

"...It seems to me that one of the real difficulties here has been the proliferation of paper which has been generated in recent years both before and after the passing of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. It has taken a lot of explanation from Mr Matthews QC ... to educate me upon the statutory and regulatory framework which lies behind the huge volume of directives, advisory notices, operational procedures, and the many thousands of pages of other documents which we have had to consider in the course of this case ... [we] have found internal contradictions and entirely different flow charts purporting to show the same thing. In the course of the trial earlier this year, we spent much time debating what a particular directive or advisory note was intended to mean. There is no time for debate at the fire ground."
- 4.1. In his recent review of efficiency in the fire and rescue service, Sir Ken Knight noted the weaknesses with the operational guidance development process before April 2012, saying—

"The production of easily understandable and updateable guidance is key: previous guidance has been too long, too onerous to produce, and the consultation and validation procedures too complex and drawn out ..."
- 4.2. In light of these findings and assessments, a key area of work for the programme has been to understand the current position by reviewing the catalogue of extant national operational guidance. After building a robust picture of the current state of the catalogue, the strategic aim for the programme is to review or replace all of the extant guidance, including that which the department has declared high-risk and which is presenting a liability to the service and to government. That liability is being diminished by the work of the programme.

Responsibility for the production of national operational guidance—a new local duty

5. In the past, the Fire Services Inspectorate produced operational guidance. After the closure of the inspectorate, guidance was commissioned by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser as prescribed by the 2008 National Framework. However, the 2012 National Framework is silent on the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's role, saying—

“Fire and rescue authorities must collaborate ... to deliver intraoperability [which includes] compatible operational procedures, and guidance with common terminology ...”.

- 5.1. Consequently, the latest framework establishes new duties for fire and rescue services—which are now responsible for collaborating to produce procedures and guidance—new duties that are discharged by an inclusive and collaborative national guidance programme.
- 5.2. There is a wide consensus that the service should lead the development of guidance. There is also recognition that this new burden should attract new funding. The London-funded phase has established the capacity, governance and guidance foundations of a service-led programme—a second phase that was match-funded by the service and government would represent a positive and shared approach to this new burden.

Strong support from the service and the sector

6. The programme's effective and inclusive governance and stakeholder engagement arrangements involve the Fire Brigades Union, the Institute of Fire Engineers, the National Resilience Assurance Team, Welsh and Scottish government, the Fire Officers Association, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Fire Protection Association and the Health and Safety Executive.
- 6.1. The Fire Brigades Union supports the programme, citing it as an official source of national doctrine for local officials to judge local policies and procedures against. The importance of that status is amplified during the development of new national resilience capabilities, which require new safe systems of work for trades unions to support the involvement of members.
- 6.2. The Operational Guidance Strategy Board is the programme board, the membership of which is the London Fire Commissioner, the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, the Local Government Association's Director of Programmes (Safer and Stronger Communities), and the Chief Fire Officers' Association's Director of Operations, who chairs the board. This governance structure would continue in a new phase of the programme after March 2015.
- 6.3. As a full member of the board, the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser is in a position to monitor progress and promote government priorities, as was demonstrated by the recent flexible and fast commissioning of guidance for Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks. This puts the chief adviser in a strong position to assure the Director of Fire, Resilience and Emergencies and the Minister about the condition of operational doctrine and the liability that is retained by government from extant guidance—until it is replaced and declared obsolete.

Sharing the burden—and the benefits

7. The programme provides a function required by government *and* by the service: it provides the foundation of safe systems of work needed by fire and rescue services—and the national

doctrine development capacity needed to implement new or changing national resilience capabilities, new legislation or regulation as required by government.

- 7.1. The programme has wide-ranging support from fire and rescue services and the devolved administrations. The funding commitments and agreements made by each, to support the programme's continuance beyond the period funded by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, have been made on a match-funded basis. Those agreements are dependent on each beneficiary—services and government—contributing to its development.

Our record of achievement—national outcomes with local benefits

Achievements

8. The programme has an excellent record of delivery. Some of the programme's achievements are detailed below along with an indication of the project delivery dates up to March 2015.
 - The establishment of representative and authoritative programme boards with senior representatives from across the fire and rescue service and wider sector.
 - An online communications and collaboration platform that enables real-time remote document collaboration, web conferencing, and other functionalities that reduce the need for project teams to meet in person—reducing costs and delay in development.
 - An online publishing tool that allows for fast online search and referencing of guidance on desktop, tablet or mobile devices.
 - A definitive online library of extant national operational guidance emerging from the review of thousands of documents produced by governments over decades—the first library of its kind. This is a free resource to local fire and rescue services.
 - A framework for operational doctrine that provides scope and purpose to operational documentation—addressing concerns expressed by a number of public inquiries, including those made by Justice MacDuff.
 - The closure of the Generic Risk Assessment programme and the development of a new concept for hazard management by the fire and rescue service, that the Health and Safety Executive has held up as best practice for the emergency services.
 - The development of an expert policy, programme and project management team, which uses Cabinet Office '*Best Management Practice*' ('MSP' and 'PRINCE2'). This is important for the programme's involvement in inter-agency projects arising from proposals by the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme ('JESIP').
 - An assurance process to ensure the development of guidance is robust and transparent. This provides government, and principal officers giving testimony to public inquiries (and other important forums), confidence in the programme and its products.
- 8.1. The guidance development work programme for 2013 – 2015:
 - '*Water rescue and flooding*' – this guidance has been published.
 - '*Environmental protection*' – this guidance has been published.
 - '*Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks*' – this guidance has been published.
 - '*Incident command*' – consultation will be in July 2014; publication in December 2014.
 - '*Operations*' – consultation will be in January 2015; publication in March 2015.
 - '*Fires and firefighting*' – consultation will be in October 2014; publication in March 2015.
 - '*Fires in the built environment*' – consultation will be in October 2014; publication in December 2014.
 - '*Performing rescues*' – consultation will be in December 2014; publication in March 2015.

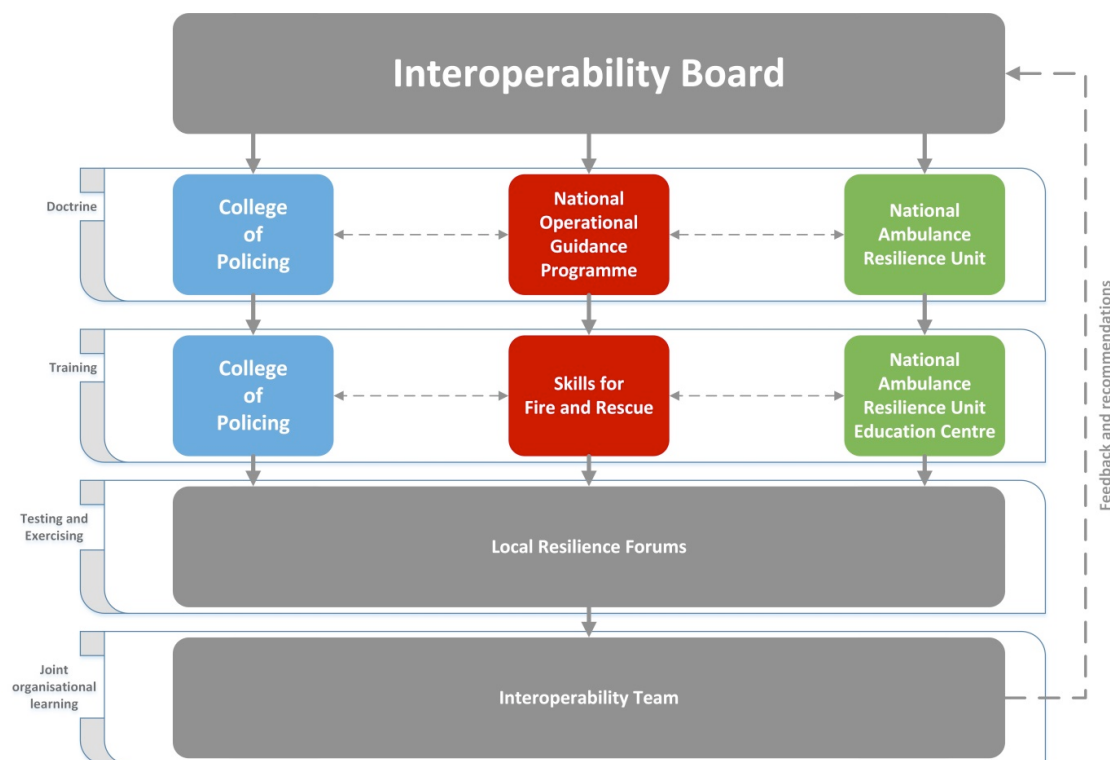
Outcomes and benefits

9. The outcomes and benefits provided by the programme are characterised by an increase in efficiency and improved public and firefighter safety. Those benefits include—
- Fewer deaths and injuries to members of the public as a result of incidents;
 - Fewer firefighter deaths and serious injuries at incidents;
 - A reduction in guidance issued by central government, and a reduction in the overall amount of guidance in use by the fire and rescue service;
 - Reduced guidance production timescales and costs;
 - A decrease in individual fire and rescue service expenditure on the development of operational policy and procedures;
 - A means of developing and implementing multi-agency doctrine relating to new capabilities, the improvement of interoperability or civil contingencies projects;
 - delivery through one online platform, providing an opportunity to link to training platforms and other digital initiatives—ensuring that operational materials are available in one place;
 - Fewer Rule 43 letters (now ‘Prevention of Future Death Reports’) with recommendations related to intraoperability, interoperability and operational doctrine;
 - Improved access to existing guidance in a central online location with an intelligent search facility, with an accessible feedback mechanism to drive guidance reviews;
 - Increased confidence in guidance from chief fire officers, representative bodies and partners, resulting in a higher adoption rate and greater consistency in operations;
 - A permanent team producing service-led guidance and reviewing existing guidance;
 - Fast and flexible reviews of guidance due to its modular construction;
 - Alignment in levels of detail, content design and language between national documents; and
 - One governance structure and one national hub, providing a greater opportunity to deliver the desired outcome.

Interoperability

10. The National Operational Guidance Programme works closely with partners such as the College of Policing ('CoP') and the National Ambulance Resilience Unit ('NARU') to improve incident ground working practices. This is evident in the service's first Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks guidance, and new survivability thresholds for water rescue and recovery.
- 10.1. The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme was established to address the recommendations from Operation Bridge after the 2010 Cumbria shootings; the Hillsborough Independent Report; Lady Justice Hallett's report following the July 2005 London bombings; and the Pitt report into the 2007 floods. JESIP says:

"The success of the programme will be measured by the resulting change at the operational ground level but [there] must be a clear vision of the future [and] a longer term vision [to] progress interoperability..."
- 10.2. The JESIP Strategic Board has approved a new arrangement to govern that long term vision and relationship between emergency services after March 2015. That arrangement assumes a responsible body for the development of national doctrine for each emergency service.
- 10.3. The interoperability arrangement (illustrated below) recognises the National Operational Guidance Programme as the responsible body for national doctrine for the fire and rescue service. If the programme closes after March 2015, the fire and rescue service would be the only emergency service without this important national function—and the only emergency service unable to collaborate with other emergency services or civil contingencies partners to develop national doctrine or new capabilities.



2015 – 18 work programme

11. The programme is on track to deliver eight guidance development projects by March 2015. During their delivery, the programme has identified a further 34 pieces of guidance required to fully replace the extant and out-of-date operational guidance issued by government over the years. The tables below identify these projects.
- 11.1. The 2012 – 15 work programme focuses on developing guidance for the activities performed by firefighters, rather than for the environments or contexts that they work in. Projects have identified areas of activity-related guidance that are currently out-of-scope, detailed in the table below. Grey shaded areas indicate where guidance is already in development or complete; unshaded areas represent projects for inclusion in a 2015 – 18 work programme.

All-incident guidance	Activity guidance – tier one	Activity guidance – tier two	Activity guidance – tier three
Operations (including incident command)	Performing rescues	Rescue of animals	
		Rescue from confined spaces	
		Line rescue	
		Water rescue and flooding	
	Fires and firefighting	Fires in the built environment	Firefighting in household waste recycling centres
			Managing photovoltaic cells
			Buildings in the course of construction / demolition
	Hazardous materials and environmental protection		
	National Resilience Co-ordination Framework	High Volume Pumping	Initial Operational Response to a Chemical, Biological, Nuclear or Radiological explosion
		Chemical, Biological, Nuclear or Radiological explosions	
		Mass decontamination	

- 11.2. There are a number of different hazardous environments—or contexts—that firefighters work within and which require guidance to be developed within a 2015 – 18 work programme. The grid below is a comprehensive schedule of context guidance required by the service (shaded areas are covered in the current work programme):

Transport	Sub surface	Structural and access	Utilities	Industrial	Social factors
Road transport systems	Underground structures (including tunnels and mines)		Live electricity	Petrochemical plant, pipelines and distribution	Large-scale events
Underground rail transport systems	Dangerous structures (buildings, structures or trees)	High voltage power lines	Silos	Cross-border working	
Overground rail transport systems		Collapsed structures	Mains gas supplies	Farms	Public order and civil disturbance
Air transport systems		Restricted access/egress	Sewers		Biological (including body fluids)
Maritime and waterways		Confined space		Secure accommodation	
		Security fencing and alarms		Lifts and escalators	
		Trenches, pits and quarries		Animals (including farm, wildlife, vermin and domesticated)	
		Geological (including unstable ground, landslides and sink holes)		Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack	
		Working at height			

The need for flexibility

12. Alongside the need to replace the out-of-date and high-risk legacy materials, it will be important for the next work programme to have flexibility built in, to respond to safety-urgent issues, changes in legislation or regulation, and the development of new capabilities with emergency service partners.
- 12.1. This need for the flexibility has been apparent in the current work programme, in the commissioning of a guidance development project for *'Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks'*. There is also an emerging need for a guidance development project for *'Initial Operational Response to a Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear Explosion'*. In each case, the service's ability to implement a capability is affected by the existence of national doctrine.

Developing an integrated suite of operational doctrine

Business-as-usual guidance and procedures

13. Safe systems of work for firefighters are comprised of different operational documents. National operational guidance sets out high-level policies and best practice about the management of incident-ground hazards, legal duties and powers, roles and responsibilities—and more. These are structured by activity-type or context. Standard operational procedures are step-by-step guides to the management of incidents, which may be used by firefighters to guide actions and decisions on the incident ground. These are structured by incident type, informed by national guidance and are often set out according to the incident's chronology.
- 13.1. Alongside the guidance development projects described in the work programme, an important project for the 2015 – 18 work programme will be to reconcile the work of the Collaborative Partnership with the National Operational Guidance Programme, by aligning products, resources and platforms. This is a critical activity to ensure that national doctrine avoids the type of conflicts observed by Justice MacDuff in the Atherstone-on-Stour inquiry.
- 13.2. The partnership's products include risk assessments, additional hazard information sheets, standard operational procedures, task analysis, training packages, and more. The wide range of products produced by the partnership will require review and maintenance in-line with the guidance development programme. The Collaborative Partnership aim to complete an index of 168 documents by 30 June 2014, with a number of other document types in production.
- 13.3. As the Collaborative Partnership is limited to a number of fire and rescue services and products are not currently subject to a nation-wide validation or consultation process, exposing those products to the level of scrutiny and assurance that applies to national operational guidance before publication will be important.

National resilience

14. CFOA National Resilience ('CFOA NR') are funded by government to provide certain national capabilities, such as a High Volume Pumping capability to manage wide area flooding, as seen during the recent flooding. Within that arrangement, CFOA NR produce technical notes about the use of equipment and training packages for firefighters.
- 14.1. The interface between guidance and procedures for everyday use and guidance for national resilience capabilities is very clear. Major incidents that would utilise national resilience structures are very rarely declared as such from the outset—often they are declared after a period of rapid escalation. During this high-risk and complex incident phase, specialist and non-specialist firefighters will be moving between everyday policies and procedures into the purview of national resilience guidance. It is critical that these two sets of doctrine are compatible, complementary and easily communicated to partner agencies.
- 14.2. There is a consensus view in the service that the National Operational Guidance Programme should manage both of these tranches of work. This would ensure that one structure is responsible for all national doctrine—complementing the aims of the JESIP legacy structure and the needs of the service. Further, it is logical that the rigorous project and assurance processes being applied to everyday guidance and procedures should also be applied to guidance for some of the most complex and high-risk areas of firefighter activity.

Sustainable funding for national operational doctrine

Supported by the fire and rescue service

15. At the September 2013 meeting of the Chief Fire Officers' Association board, the members of the board agreed to continue leading the development of national operational guidance in partnership with the Local Government Association and the London Fire Brigade, and to support a bid to government for match-funding. That agreement accompanies a strong vote of support by the Fire and Rescue Services Council—a forum of all chief fire officers.
- 15.1. Each of the programme partners agree that it would be expensive and wasteful to allow the existing infrastructure and momentum to be lost while a new governance structure and delivery vehicle were established.
- 15.2. The production of robust operational doctrine nationally removes a considerable burden from the development of local operational doctrine—a burden that local services want to avoid within an environment of reducing resources.

Achieving value for money

16. The government provided £1 million grant-funding to the Collaborative Partnership to develop operational procedures and other documents for participating fire and rescue services. £180k of that funding was hypothecated to the development of a partnership with CFA to develop those procedures into national products; a process that has been on going. The partnership has 12.1 Full Time Equivalents ('FTEs'), and an annual spend-rate of £690k.
- 16.1. Before 2012, the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's programme to develop guidance was grant-funding individual projects with £250 – 300k to develop operational guidance manuals, such as *'Hazardous materials: operational guidance for the fire and rescue service'* published in November 2012 and *'Operational guidance: breathing apparatus'*. Those manuals were accompanied by Generic Risk Assessments, which were produced by a government-funded programme led by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.
- 16.2. The National Operational Guidance Programme will seek to reconcile the work of the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, the Generic Risk Assessment programme, the Collaborative Partnership and the ad hoc projects funded to produce national resilience guidance with other emergency services, into one integrated and coherent programme. That will achieve better doctrine, faster implementation of new capabilities, and greater value for money by eradicating duplication between programmes.

The funding model

17. Chief fire officers and fire and rescue authority chairs (or responsible cabinet members) have indicated that their authorities will support the programme, matching funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government from April 2015, with—
 - £25k per fire authority with a population of 1.2 million or more (total of 12) per year;
 - £20k per fire authority with a population of 750k or more (total of 16) per year; and
 - 15k per fire authority with a population of less than 750k (total of 18) per year.
- 17.1. The programme recognises that a small number of very small services will struggle to commit funding. It also recognises that commitments are subject to the annual agreement of each fire

and rescue service's politically-managed authority. However, based on the strong support identified at paragraph 15, a strong success rate of 90 per cent has been assumed, providing circa £815kpa funding to the programme.

- 17.2. The rationale for government funding has been established at section three of this paper—in particular, the shared requirement was highlighted and the existing commitment to the programme made by the fire minister and other political stakeholders through the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme.
- 17.3. The work programme and proposals within this paper establishes a requirement for £1 million per year from government, with a minimum commitment of three years (2015 – 18). Funding commitments made by fire and rescue services, and the discussions with devolved administrations, are on a match-funded basis. A reduced government commitment risks reduced local commitment.

How will funding be spent?

- 17.4. Based on the funding model proposed, the programme will establish 35 guidance development projects, to completely replace the high-risk government catalogue of extant guidance. Alongside those projects, it will establish four national resilience projects. Project budgets will average at £100k (£3.9 million in total). Project costs primarily relate to:
 - fixed-term secondments of subject matter experts,
 - the procurement of expertise from outside of the service,
 - technical authoring, and
 - the logistics of managing a national programme (meeting facilities, travel, workshops and accommodation, for example).
- 17.5. In response to contributions from the Fire Brigades Union and the Health and Safety Executive, who note the need to be able to expedite safety-urgent guidance development projects, £100k will be held as a contingency fund. That fund may also be applied to resource projects arising from Civil Contingencies or JESIP partners.
- 17.6. This low project unit cost is achievable by phasing experts' time efficiently, eradicating duplication between projects, and by commissioning technical authoring, expertise and logistical requirements as a programme. This represents a project cost which is 33pc of the level of project funding provided entirely by government historically, and 58pc of today's London-funded average project budget.
- 17.7. Project budgets will be variable and dependent upon the complexity and scale of the subject matter, the geographic proximity and availability of subject matter experts, and the need to procure expertise from outside of the fire and rescue service. For example, whilst '*Fires in the built environment*' has incurred more than £150k in secondments and research, '*Water rescue and flooding*' has incurred less than half of that. This variation is inevitable.
- 17.8. To ensure the effective management and delivery of this fundamental function for the service, the programme will—
 - provide qualified project managers to each project, for new guidance and infrastructure, and the reviews of guidance;
 - develop and manage projects arising from urgent operational learnings (from public inquiries, Prevention of Future Death Reports or significant judgments, for example);

- service the programme's relationship with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme legacy arrangements and Civil Contingencies partners, to resource new capabilities projects relating to national resilience, or reviews of existing capabilities;
- manage the controlled reconciliation of high-risk and extant government guidance against the emerging catalogue of new operational guidance, ensuring obsolete documents are removed from circulation;
- develop national resilience guidance projects for capabilities provided by CIOA National Resilience;
- integrate the production arrangements, platforms and work programme for national operational procedures and related documents;
- commission and manage an independent assurance process, giving the programme board, chief officers, government, emergency service partners and any potential judicial scrutiny confidence in the operational products produced by the programme;
- support the programme's governance, communication, engagement and consultation arrangements, ensuring critical stakeholders are engaged with, and adopting, the programme's products;
- support and quality assure the technical authoring of guidance, whilst managing the doctrine framework and single lexicon, ensuring the service has one definitive list of operational terminology which is up-to-date, accurate and linked to dependencies such as the Civil Contingencies Secretariat lexicon of terminology;
- manage the programme budget, procurements and resource distribution, ensuring best value across projects;
- collate and process reviews of incident ground learnings nationally, and other performance-related information, to action reviews of guidance accordingly; and
- manage and develop integrated digital publishing, collaboration, communication and content management platforms, including any technical support and licensing.

17.9. Full funding would allow all of this to be delivered over the three programme, partial funding would require the programme of work, delivery timescales, and potentially its scope, to be tailored. The Operational Guidance Strategy Board would be responsible for any decision, however delivering fewer projects before 2018 would result in the extant and high-risk catalogue of guidance remaining in circulation for a number of years beyond then, extending government's recognised liability. The programme's ability to service inter-agency requirements, and emerging Civil Contingencies demands could also be affected.

Summary

18. The need for national operational guidance is well-established—a need that is mirrored across each emergency service. Guidance supports smaller services that may not have the breadth of expertise to develop safe systems of work for every activity; it is a single reference point for other emergency services, providing the foundations for interoperability; and it is a common policy platform for all fire and rescue services, providing the foundations for intraoperability.
- 18.1. Guidance is used as a benchmark of best practice on the incident ground. It is used by trades unions when agreeing safe ways of working for new or existing operational capabilities. It is used by governments when inspecting or auditing local services. It is used in court, to protect or prosecute fire and rescue services.
- 18.2. Government has funded the development of national doctrine since the 1940s under a number of guises, establishing a catalogue of more than 8000 documents by 2012. That catalogue, according to the government's own analysis, is considered high-risk and in need of review and replacement. In 2012, the London Fire Brigade made £6 million available for a programme to perform that review and assume the responsibility for guidance development.
- 18.3. That programme, and this proposal, is supported by chief fire officers, local politicians, trades unions, devolved administrations and other industry leaders. That support is strengthened by the Home Office, Cabinet Office, Department of Health and Department for Communities and Local Government new arrangements to govern the relationship between emergency services, approved by respective ministers, which recognises the National Operational Guidance Programme as responsible for national guidance for the fire and rescue service.
- 18.4. Fire and rescue services, local politicians and the devolved administrations have recognised that they are consumers of guidance, alongside government. Whilst it is noted that the production of guidance is a new duty, they have recognised that funding it should be a shared burden, and that they would be willing to match-fund government's contribution. The proposals in this paper establish that partnership.