
FIRE AND RESCUE SECTOR VOCATIONAL STANDARDS GROUP (FRSVSG)

(Working under the auspices of the Local Government Employers / IDeA)

Review of National Occupational Standards and NVQs/SVQs for Operations in the Community Level 3

Project Information Bulletin No. 1: December 2007

Background

National occupational standards (NOS) for Operations in the Community were first approved in August 2001. The standards describe the responsibilities of front line fire fighters and the standard of performance they should achieve whilst carrying out their roles. The NOS are supported by all major stakeholders in the Fire and Rescue sector, are approved by relevant government departments and regulatory bodies and apply across the UK. The NOS form the basis of National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications (N/SVQs) at level 3. In the local authority fire and rescue services they also form a vital part of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS).

The Need for a Review

All NOS are subject to ongoing review and updating to ensure they are up-to-date and fit for purpose and this applies to the Operations in the Community NOS. Feedback from the sector has generally been good. However, we are aware that the language used in the NOS and their general layout could be improved to bring them into line with our new NOS for Control Operations. There may also be new functions which these staff need to take on either now or in the near future which need to be reflected in the NOS.

The Project

SkillsPlus, the local government strategic skills partnership (LGA, IDeA, NILGA, LGSCNI and WLGA), has just commissioned work to review the NOS. The project will run until October 31 2008 and involves all the key stakeholders across the UK, including:

- Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)
- Department for Communities and Local Government

- Scottish Government
- Welsh Assembly Government
- Ministry of Defence
- Local authority fire and rescue services
- British Fire Services Association
- JOIFF – the Organisation for Emergency Services Management
- Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)

Expected Outcomes

The main outcome will be an updated 'model of good practice'. This will comprise a set of nationally agreed NOS that specify what staff should be able to do, the standard they should achieve and the knowledge and skills they need. Incorporated within the NOS are indications of the target group to which each unit may be appropriate.

These NOS will be approved by the UK education and training regulatory bodies and will form the basis of the new N/SVQs at level 3 and are expected to be included in revised IPDS Role Maps, subject to NJC agreement. The new NOS and qualifications should be available in early 2009.

How the project will run

The primary focus of the research will be identifying and testing, through workshops, new or revised units to make the NOS 'fit for purpose'.

Working groups will meet at least three times during the spring of 2008. These groups will consist of nominated Fire and Rescue staff, managers and other experts. This will be followed by a period of UK-wide consultation in the summer.

Project Management and staffing

The project is being led by a Steering Group consisting of representatives of all the key stakeholder organisations listed above under the chairmanship of Richard Hannigan (Humberside FRS). Overall responsibility for the project lies with IDeA, working closely with other UK local government and fire bodies through SkillsPlus. The project is being managed on behalf of SkillsPlus by Chase Consulting who will also be researching and redrafting the NOS.

Further information

The SkillsPlus/IDeA officer responsible for the project is Fiona Turton: fiona.turton@lge.gov.uk. More information on SkillsPlus can be found at: www.skillsplus.gov.uk. The website will also in the near future provide information on the project's progress. Please email the project's executive officer, Sharon Frazer: sharonfrazer@blueyonder.co.uk – if you would like

- 1) to be kept informed or receive more information about the project
- 2) take part in focus groups in February 2008
- 3) wish to participate in the **consultation process** scheduled for summer 2008.

Sharon very much looks forward to hearing from you.