

Case study

25 May 2016

A Fire and Rescue Service Wide Resourcing Model

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service (BMKFRS) operates a service wide resourcing model. This is coupled with provision to support its Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) in regard to specific operational incidents, maintaining an effective operational response throughout the county. This facility is known as the Resource Management Team (RMT) and it steps up to its internal Operational Support Room (OSR) when required.

The Service determines if and when the OSR is activated for any situations, incidents or occurrences that may have a significant effect on the operational deployment or resilience within BMKFRS, eg:

- if spate conditions are expected
- industrial action
- threat of snow, flooding, etc
- civil disturbances
- chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) incidents
- major incidents
- pandemic or other event that may affect BMKFRS' ability to function at its normal crewing levels.

The RMT was set up with the following responsibilities to:

- ensure that the Service Public Safety Plan minimum requirement of frontline appliances are available 24/7
- maintain crewing levels through the established global figure
- collate crewing levels and supervisory officers/skill sets from stations
- monitor all leave and confirm that short term leave requests adhere to policy
- develop a pool of wholetime/on-call personnel for Bank shifts
- develop an Operational Resource Pool to assist in the resourcing of the on-call appliances at strategic times
- allocate all Bank and Operational Resource Pool personnel
- monitor and support the Service Flexi Duty Officer's rota
- ensure a direct line of communication with the Service Duty Officer and the TVFCS.

Through this role the RMT supports the TVFCS and BMKFRS' Duty Officer.

Local internal processes that have been designed and created to assist in the allocation of operational resources are the Bank system and the Operational Resource Pool.

Managing the Bank System

This is an opportunity for operational personnel to cover unplanned gaps in service delivery on their rota days at an agreed overtime rate. This pool of voluntary employees has worked extremely well to ensure that operational cover is above the expectations as outlined within the Service Public Safety Plan. This process allows the Service to employ fewer full time operational employees and brings with it lowers costs and financial savings.

The Bank system books operational personnel six days in advance and is used throughout the county through a global figure. These personnel are also used at the last minute to cover any late sickness bookings.

This Bank of staff is made up from both wholetime and on-call operational personnel. This allows the Service to:

- have a greater overview of operational resource management
- have an influence on the interoperability of personnel
- support greater resilience for the Service
- support greater experience for its on-call personnel
- support a decision making rationale with a robust audit
- manage a service wide leave policy
- give equal opportunities for personnel to further their earning capacity.

Managing the Operational Resourcing Pool

The Operational Resourcing Pool was initially introduced to take available on-call operational personnel from one on-call station where the appliance was off the run due to crewing gaps during the working day and move them to another on-call station. This would give the receiving station a full crew with the right skills to make their appliance available.

Through the development of the trial, BMKFRS further allowed for both wholetime and on-call operational personnel to be utilised at the on-call stations further improving its appliance availability numbers.

This is used to cover daytime gaps of a whole shift (nine hours) or part shift (minimum of four hours) to put an on-call appliance on the run where required.

This has increased BMKFRS' daytime on-call availability in rural areas and had a positive increase to the number of appliances available throughout the Service by using its wholetime and part time personnel in this new way.

Summary

The RMT continues to maintain appliance availability on both day and night shifts. This requires working with line managers through a robust approach to all leave, training courses and resource management.

Through this process BMKFRS has achieved an increased daily number of available appliances, developed and enhanced the skills and experience of the On Call personnel and established a more flexible workforce while achieving required financial targets.

Contact

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