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Home Fire Risk Check and Fire Prevention Grant Reporting: 2006-2008

Issued by:

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Addressed to:

The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer

Summary

This circular provides guidance on the new reporting procedure in respect of DCLG's Home Fire Risk Check and Fire Prevention Grant initiatives. The guidance includes a template which will need to be completed and returned by FRS's at stated dates throughout the year.

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1.0 Home Fire Risk Check Initiative: 2004-2008

- 1.1** In October 2004, the Government announced a £25 million fire prevention package to support an expansion of the Home Fire Risk Check (HFRC) work being carried out by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). The HFRC involves offering households, often in deprived areas, free smoke alarms and fire safety advice. The initiative intended that priority would be given to vulnerable people, mainly the elderly, young families and black and minority ethnic groups.
- 1.2** Funding for the HFRC initiative is provided in the form of capital grants which can be used for the purchase of 10-year battery smoke alarms or automated fire suppression systems and, where appropriate, for installation costs. The funding cannot be used to meet revenue costs such as training or for the maintenance of smoke alarms.
- 1.3** Funding is made to FRAs in the form of annual payments and DCLG currently requires quarterly monitoring reports which include details of those activities carried out under the initiative. This Circular advises of some amendments to the reporting format for the HFRC initiative.

2.0 Fire Prevention Grant: 2006-2008

- 2.1** On 26th January 2006, the Government announced an additional £11.4m grant funding for FRAs in England over the period April 2006 to March 2008 to support fire prevention work, including community fire safety, arson reduction and work with children and young people. This single grant to all FRAs in England replaces the grants previously paid to some authorities under the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund and the Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund in 2003-06. The grant can also provide revenue funding to complement the capital grants paid to all FRAs under the HFRC initiative in 2004-08.
- 2.2** The allocation of the grant was designed to support the achievement of the national Public Service Agreement targets on accidental fire deaths in the home and on arson reduction, with a particular focus on reducing inequality in the impact of fire and meeting the floor target (no FRA to have an accidental fire death rate more than 1.25 times the average by 2010).
- 2.3** The grants are made under s31 of the Local Government Act 2003, and are not ringfenced. However, FRAs are expected to focus available resources on projects delivering effective risk reduction through working with vulnerable groups, in particular:
- older people
 - children and young people
 - black and minority ethnic groups
 - people with learning or physical disabilities
 - people with mental illness, or alcohol or drug use problems
 - people in temporary accommodation or other poor housing

- 2.4 The first payment of the Fire Prevention Grant was made in April 2006 and the second will be paid in April 2007. We expect the funded projects to form a targeted programme of work designed to deliver reductions in fires, deaths and injuries among vulnerable groups. Subject to the local priorities identified in IRMPs, this should include the areas covered by the Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service for Working with Children and Young People to be published shortly which includes fire safety education, youth diversion and work with young firesetters.
- 2.5 We will be requesting quarterly and annual progress reports in respect of this grant, to identify good practice and to provide the basis of an independent evaluation which we will commission in due course. Quarterly reports should provide a brief update on progress and outcomes to date and planned future work and milestones. Annual reports (due in April 2007 and April 2008) should cover progress over the whole year and future plans.
- 3.0 New Combined Template for Home Fire Risk Check and Fire Prevention Grant Reporting: 2006-2008**
- 3.1 We attach a template which should be used to report progress under both the HFRC initiative and the Fire Prevention Grant. This template therefore replaces the one currently used by FRAs to report information about the HFRC, and also allows FRAs to show how they have allocated resources under the Fire Prevention Grant initiative.
- 3.2 The report asks FRAs to provide the same statistical information about their HFRC activity as previously but also has space to include any additional information they may think relevant. The report also asks FRS's to include details of any arson reduction or community fire safety activity which is funded or part-funded by the Fire Prevention Grant.
- 3.3 The monitoring form should be sent to DCLG at the following times over the next two years. This will be at quarterly intervals apart from the first return which takes account of the fact that projects funded through the Fire Prevention Grant may take some time to initiate. For this first return, however, figures for the HFRC should cover the quarterly period July-September only as FRS's have already provided figures for April-June.

Reporting period

April-Sept 2006: **16th October 2006**

Oct-Dec 2006: **15th January 2007**

Jan-Mar 2007: **16th April 2007**

April-June 2007: **16th July 2007**

July-Sept 2007: **15th October 2007**

Oct-Dec 2007: **14th January 2008**

Jan-Mar 2008: **14th April 2008**

In addition, annual reports should be submitted in April 2007 and April 2008.

- 3.4** The attached template is intended only to record activity funded through the HFRC initiative and Fire Prevention Grant. Quarterly and annual reports should be sent to the following email address: fireprevention@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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