

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee

18 November 2010

Evaluation of Efficient and Flexible Crewing Stage 1 – Personnel Reserve 24/7

Report of the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 Following its inclusion as an objective within the HFRS Service plan 2009-12, Personnel Reserve (PR) was expanded from its original concept (one shift a day, five days a week) to encompass all shifts worked during the year.
- 1.2 Personnel Reserve was re-branded PR 24/7 and was launched on 1 June 2009.
- 1.3 This report demonstrates the available excess within our wholetime station based personnel and shows how they have been used to support the HFRS drive for greater efficiency following the CLG document 'Rising to the Challenge'.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee endorse the outcomes of this report as evidence of the successful completion of HFRS Service Plan 2009-12 Objective – EFC Stage 1.
- 2.2 That the Committee also recognises that the excess capacity utilised by PR to date can now be used within EFC Stage 2 to allow HFRS to turn down the 'Crewing Dial'.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 PR was originally introduced in April 2007 and utilised spare capacity wholetime firefighters to support non-operational activities such as youth engagement, community safety and training.
- 3.2 Due to the success of PR, it was decided to expand the process to encompass all shifts during the year. This would be known as PR 24/7.

- 3.3 In addition to increasing the number of shifts, it was also agreed that all spare personnel, through a phased allocation process, would be assigned to PR 24/7 down to the agreed crewing level known as 'Planning' instead of the previous 'Planning + 1'.
- 3.4 It was also agreed that PR 24/7 would prioritise support for operational availability across the county before non-operational demands.
- 3.5 Through work with the company Process Evolution and their computer system designed to model different crewing levels (Simul8), key success criteria (KSC) were set prior to launch. It was anticipated via the computer software that numbers assigned to PR 24/7 would increase by 100% and with that would come associated efficiency gains.
- 3.6 The PR Team's ability to co-ordinate all spare firefighters from a central point ensures that full wholtime operational cover across the Service is maintained. The need for the central integration of PR and detached duties to maximise the efficient use of staff becomes even more essential as watch establishments are reduced.
- 3.7 Due to the increased hours of PR activity and having reduced all watches to planning level, a dedicated 'Out of Hours' (OOH) urgent crewing phone line would be required and made available to all wholtime personnel everyday between 07:00 – 22:00 hours. This would be staffed by the PR Team.
- 3.8 The purpose of the OOH line would be to enable the PR Team to support stations that had experienced late notice crewing issues due to sickness, urgent leave requests etc. This would be answered by members of the PR Management Team working on a rota who would then be able to access all the PR databases to identify the most appropriate course of action to address the situation in the most efficient way.
- 3.9 The provision of this central contact number for all crewing issues has removed the administrative burden from watch management teams who had previously spent significant amounts of time phoning various stations trying to identify and negotiate the release of a firefighter to cover a crewing shortfall. This now only requires a single call to the PR Team who know exactly where all suitably skilled spare staff are located. The PR Team then organise the most appropriate and efficient staff movement.

4 Evaluation

- 4.1 As required by the EFC project initiation document, a full evaluation of PR 24/7 was carried out 12 months post implementation.
- 4.2 The formal evaluation paper has been submitted to and approved by both the EFC Project Board and SMT.

- 4.3 The following information summarises the findings of those reports.
- 4.3.1 During the 12 month period of June 09 – May 10 a total of 3679 staff were allocated to PR 24/7. This equates to an actual increase of 122% when compared with the equivalent period for 2008-09.
- 4.3.2 These personnel were utilised in the following areas of the Service:
- wholetime operational cover following unplanned absences (e.g. sickness, promotion, training, vacancies) at either an alternative station or their own station but different watch;
 - retained operational cover in areas that struggle to provide daytime crews;
 - youth engagement;
 - training;
 - community fire safety;
 - road safety.
- 4.3.3 The increase in available personnel has allowed for an increase in efficiency across other areas of the Service.
- 4.3.4 These efficiencies have exceeded the expected 40% increase stated in the key success criteria (See 3.5) and are in excess of £300,000 (cashable equivalent).
- 4.3.5 The evaluation results for the same periods in 2008-09 and 2009-10 show a significant increase in both numbers of available personnel and therefore, the associated cashable and non-cashable efficiency gains. Since its introduction in April 2007, PR has allowed HFRS to increase efficiency by an equivalent of approximately £670,000.

5 Resource Implications

The change to PR 24/7 resulted in additional resource requirements

5.1 Human Resources

- Additional post of PR Supervisor (CM) created
- PR Manager re-graded from WM B to SM A
- Admin support increased from 1 FTE to 2 FTE

5.2 Physical Resources

Relocation to larger offices at Southampton Group offices. This was achieved at no additional cost as the Computer Aided Design team were vacating a suitable office and relocating to SHQ. All additional furniture was acquired from the Service's recycled furniture store.

5.3 Information and Communications Technology Resources

- 2 x double screen PC work stations (for the Administrators)
- 1 x BlackBerry (PR Supervisor)
- 1 x Hantsnet Passport (PR Supervisor)

5.4 Financial Implications

5.4.1 The additional salary costs associated with the expansion equates to approx £11,000.

5.4.2 Additional ICT costs = £900

6 **People Impact Assessment**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out at the start of the initial project and is updated on a regular basis as each project stage develops. The PIA Scrutiny Committee have reviewed the document.

6.2 The proposals within this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

7 **Conclusion**

7.1 In conclusion it can clearly be seen following the evaluation process, that the decision to expand the Personnel Reserve System to 24/7 was fully justified with results exceeding initial predictions.

7.2 Stage 1 of the EFC Project (PR 24/7) has been signed off by the EFC Project Board and is now classed as 'business as usual'.

7.3 Personnel Reserve has been very successful at utilising existing spare firefighters within our wholetime station based staff and been used to not only maintain operational availability, but also strengthen it on occasions i.e. supporting retained stations.

7.4 This spare capacity can now be used within EFC Stage 2 to enable the 'Crewing Dial' to be turned down to help with the current financial constraints being imposed upon the Service.

Background Information (Section 100D of Local Government Act 1972)

The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

Efficient and Flexible Crewing Project – Project Initiation Document
Personnel Reserve Monthly Efficiency Gains Reports (2009-2010)
Personnel Reserve 24/7 PIN Evaluation Plan (attached below)
PR Expansion Plan
PR Data
Station Monthly PR Returns

All documents can be accessed at the following locations -
I:\Groups\Operations\Community Response\Personnel Reserve
I:\Groups\Time Management\Watch Availability – Crewing Returns\Rota Management
Team

Note: The list excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.

Personnel Reserve 24-7/PRSC Report/23/09/10