



West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Communication and Engagement Strategy 2017 - 2020

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1 Introduction

In February 2015, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (WYFRA) agreed an integrated Service Plan which detailed the challenges and opportunities facing the organisation in the current economic climate.

The Service Plan gave a specific commitment to the continued provision of an excellent fire and rescue service whilst achieving those necessary efficiencies; some of which will take time to realise and will also require major changes to the traditional structure of services.

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate how the fire authority intends to communicate, consult and engage on principal elements of the integrated risk management planning (IRMP) process which will drive the improvement of operational outcomes.

The approach used by the authority to develop its strategy can be summarised as follows:

- detailed consideration of the effect each proposed action could have on the community and its aspirations;
- identification of those individuals and organisations likely to be significantly affected;
- tailored communication and engagement activity to ensure key stakeholders are informed, involved and consulted when appropriate.

2 How we assess what the impact is?

Each proposal undergoes an assessment which looks at its potential impact on service delivery, on the community and the employees of WYFRA.

This examination takes into account equality and diversity, health and safety and any impact on how we would deliver fire and rescue services to the community.

The Community Risk Management Strategy can be viewed via our website: www.westyorksfire.gov.uk.

3 How do we engage?

Having identified the internal and external individuals/groups most affected, the appropriate communications and engagement activity is selected for each proposal.

A proposal may require:

- timely external and/or internal communication
- more pro-active engagement
- formal consultation.

Our communication approach takes note of national guidance on external consultation, internal information and consultation regulations; and of WYFRA's commitment to inform and engage with staff, representative bodies, partners and the wider communities that it serves.

The key measure for determining if community consultation is appropriate will be if the changes have an impact on service delivery standards, ie. where service delivery is not affected, extensive and costly community consultation would not be appropriate, but information dissemination, engagement and/or internal consultation/negotiation may be fit for purpose.

The following table describes the types of communication that we will consider, dependent on the nature of each proposal within the IRMP programme.

1 Information Dissemination	Information issued and/or published for stakeholder awareness only.	
2 Engagement	Information issued, published or shared with stakeholders; with opportunity for recipient feedback.	
3 Internal consultation	Negotiation Where the employer and recognised trade unions seek to reach agreement on issues of contract, such as pay and terms of condition of employment, that are the subject of collective bargaining.	Formal consultation Joint examination and discussion of issues of mutual concern. Views are sought and considered before decisions are taken and responses recorded and reported through a formal mechanism.
4 Full consultation	Information issued and/or published that seeks internal and external stakeholder consideration and response during a fixed period of time. Where responses are recorded and reported through a formal mechanism.	

Information and engagement channels will include:

- intranet (WYFireSpace) publishing and Question & Answer (Q&A) forums
- internal publications, briefings and presentations
- local/regional media
- website information publishing
- web-based questionnaires and Q&A forums/events
- written and personal briefings for scrutiny panels and community representatives
- printed publications eg: leaflets/posters/letter drops
- public meetings.

Internal consultation will include:

- Employee briefings, correspondence and electronic communications
- Official meetings with recognised trade unions for negotiation and formal consultation purposes.

Full consultation would typically involve:

- the general public
- community organisations
- public representatives e.g. MPs and local councillors
- businesses
- local authorities and public agencies

- other emergency services
- employees and their representatives
- any other interested parties.

The currency of communication has accelerated since IRMP was introduced in 2003. Online communications via desktop and mobile devices now extend opportunities to increase staff/public awareness and engagement. Traditional methods of information-giving and engagement will sit alongside web communication to increase awareness of our proposals and facilitate understanding and interaction with communities.

4 When we will engage?

Accurate and timely communication is an on-going activity. Similarly, there is regular and productive informal dialogue internally and externally to involve our workforce and the wider community in the development of specific projects.

The complex nature of the IRMP requires communication at very early stages of planning and proposal presentation, to enable major projects to 'go-live' in future years. Normally, formal consultation would take place from September until December each year. However, this timeline will be complemented with additional communication and engagement activity at key stages of proposals to ensure that internal and external stakeholders are informed and involved as appropriate.

An approval process will be established for the release of information regarding each proposal, by agreement between the IRMP and the Public Information Team.

5 Contact

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