



AGENDA ITEM: 8

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE EXECUTIVE PANEL

10th May 2010

Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) and Personal Development Records (PDRs)

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Purpose of Report

- 1 This report is for information and details the Authority's arrangements for the recording of safe and competent performance in Personal Development Records.

Background

- 2 The Integrated Personal Development System was adopted as the Fire and Rescue Service national development strategy in 2001. It was considered to be the cornerstone of the UK Government's reform of Human Resource Management. Since 2004 IPDS has underpinned the UK Government's and later WAG's expectations of how we manage people's development and performance. Indeed IPDS also features in the 6th edition of the National Conditions of Service for operational personnel.
- 3 The IPDS allows Fire and Rescue Services to focus learning and development on what is needed to achieve safe and competent performance in the workplace. As a quality assurance system IPDS also satisfies good practice guidance on learning and development as contained in the Health and Safety Executive document 'Successful Health and Safety Management' HSG(65).
- 4 There are eight component parts in IPDS:
 - National Occupational Standards
 - Development Programmes
 - Workplace Assessment

- Personal Development Records
 - Awards (National Vocational Qualifications)
 - Continuing Personal Development
 - Assessment Development Centres
 - Quality Assurance
- 5 Personal Development Records (PDRs) were introduced to replace the input based systems that existed to merely record training activity. The old training record focused on how many times training was carried out without much regard for measuring how safe and competent individuals were. Recording learning and development inputs is necessary, however it is also essential to observe, assess and record the outcomes of learning and development activity against the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to be safe and competent in role. PDRs do not focus on the frequency of training and should not be thought of as just a training record. Instead they provide individuals and the organisation with evidence of learning achievements and competent workplace activity. Not all workplace activity is recorded, only those issues relevant to the attainment, demonstration or maintenance of safe competent performance.

Information

- 6 PDRs can be used to inform organisational skills audits, performance measurement, training needs analysis, career development and succession planning. As a methodology PDRs are sufficiently robust to withstand the scrutiny and rigour of audit whilst providing assurance of an individual's ability to work safely and effectively.
- 7 Fire Service Circular 20/2003 'The IPDS Guidance on Personal Development Records' defined detailed component parts for inclusion but did not prescribe their precise format, for example, whether this should be paper based or electronic. In complying with the requirement to implement a PDR system the Service introduced a paper based system involving each individual completing an evidence portfolio.
- 8 Given the purpose of PDRs as the means by which learning and competent performance is recorded, portfolios were examined by inspectors during the 2009 Health and Safety Executive Inspection

of the Service. The Inspection utilised elements of operational learning and development along with Incident Command competence and the provision of risk critical intelligence as indicators of how health and safety was managed within the organisation. The Inspection Report noted significant levels of resistance amongst NWFRS employees to the PDR system and a perceived lack of clarity in relation to completion. Employees reported that the system was overly bureaucratic and time consuming. Commenting upon the provision of an effective management structure and arrangements for policy delivery the Inspection Report noted inconsistency in local management of the PDR system.

- 9 In recognition that the PDR system is the primary mechanism for the local demonstration of safe and competent performance steps have been taken to address these inconsistencies. In 2009-2010 the Service invested in e-learning and an electronic web based Personal Development Recording System known as PDRPro was purchased. PDRPro is currently used by 60% of UK Fire and Rescue Service. The system was designed with the assistance of the Fire and Rescue Service to meet all the requirements of IPDS. The system allows for the recording and management of skills acquisition, application in the workplace and the maintenance of competent performance. The HSE noted that the Service had identified the inconsistencies and that progress had been made in addressing the issues through the internal audit process and the intended further roll out PDRPro.

Recommendation

- 10 That Members note the content of the report, the significance of the PDRs to evidencing safe and competent performance of service delivery and the progress to implementing a less onerous system.