



**IFE John Jay
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*Call Handling and
Mobilising Arrangements
in the United Kingdom*

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Call Handling and Mobilising Arrangements in the United Kingdom

Out of Control...

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Organisation and Structure

- ◆ **Central Responsibility for Fire Service – Secretary of State**
- ◆ **Provision of Fire Cover – day to day activities of Fire Brigades responsibility of Local Fire Authorities**
- ◆ **Funding for Fire Service – part from Central Government, part from Local Taxes.**

The Fire Services Act 1947 Section 1(1)(c)

- ◆ **‘Tosecure the provision of efficient arrangements for dealing with calls for the assistance of the Fire Brigade in the case of fire and for summoning members of the Brigade’**

Call Handling and Mobilising Arrangements in the United Kingdom

UK Fire Brigades

Brigades **50**

Control 'Centres' **49**

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116
119
117
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119

◆ **BUSIEST**
London
614 sq miles
300,000 calls

Northern
Ireland

Wales

Scotland

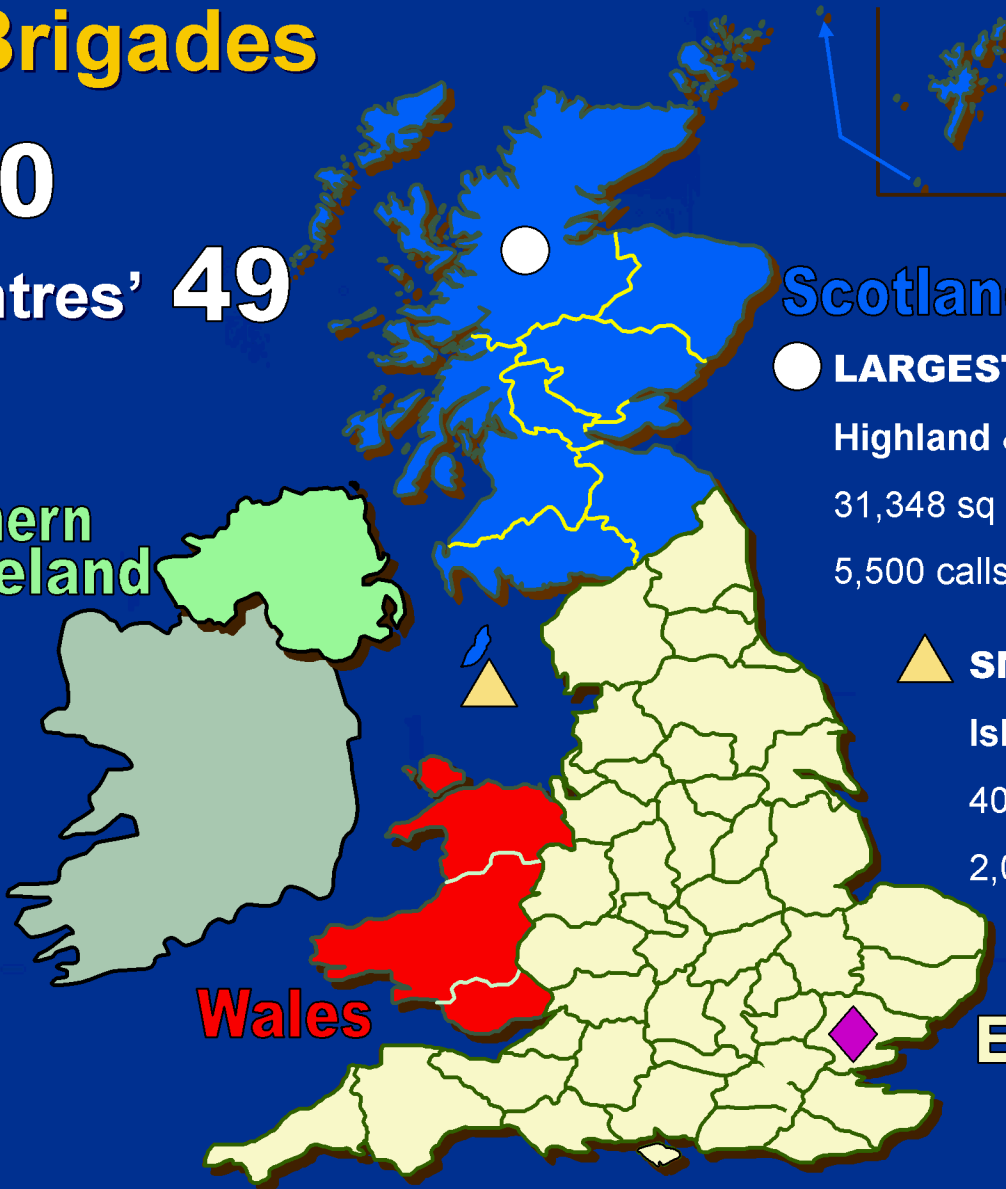
● **LARGEST**

Highland & islands
31,348 sq miles
5,500 calls

▲ **SMALLEST**

Isle of Man
407 sq miles
2,000 calls

England



Call Handling

- ◆ Emergency calls first routed to public telephone operator centre
- ◆ Takes B.T. 13 seconds to complete transfer of call to Control
- ◆ Additional Services/facilities
 - ‘Typetalk’ - for deaf/hard of hearing, speech difficulties
 - ‘Languageline’ - Interpreter Service
 - EISEC – Callers address details

Telephone Network Resilience

- ◆ **Primary** – Normal route to connect call
- ◆ **Secondary** – Used if no response from primary after 30 seconds
- ◆ **Tertiary** – Alternative Number – usually connected to neighbouring Fire Brigade Control
- ◆ Typical call handling target - 95% calls answered within 10 seconds

Control Room Equipment

- ◆ **Communications Switch – ICCS**
telephone, radio, other functions
- ◆ **Command & Control (Mobilising) System**
gazetteer, PDA's, risk register, special procedures, chemical information databases, logging and alarms
- ◆ **Mapping System/GIS**
Resource Displays, incident location information, overlays

C & C Mobilising Database

- ◆ **Gazetteer** - Finds match at Street or premise level
- ◆ **PDA Database** - makes recommended attendance and offers nearest available appliances – based on Station area. (Will not offer appliances that are not available)
System makes recommendation and Operator can override this.

Mobilising Philosophy

- ◆ To mobilise a pre determined attendance (PDA) to all calls - As promptly as possible.

Nationally recommended standards that set out the a recommended minimum weight and speed of response – based on property risk.

Standards of Fire Cover

Risk Category	Description	No. of Pumps	Attendance Time in Minutes		
A	Largest cities & towns, including shopping complexes, high risk industrial property etc.	3	5	5	8
B	Larger cities & towns	2	5	8	-
C	Suburbs of large towns etc	1	8-10	-	-
D	All other categories excluding remote rural	1	20	-	-
Remote Rural	Areas isolated from centres of population with few buildings	No national recommendation set			
Special Risk	Hospitals, prisons, airports, tower blocks, major petro-chemical plants, etc.	No national recommendation set			

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Working Practices & Procedures

- ◆ Fire Service Control operates a 1 stage process
- ◆ Operators multi task - taking on role of call taker, dispatcher, radio operator
- ◆ Supervisors additional responsibilities - e.g. maintain adequate fire cover across Brigade

Competence Based Training

- ◆ National Vocational Qualifications in Emergency Control Operations
- ◆ Generic Role Maps:-
 - Operator
 - Supervisor
 - Watch Manager
 - Control Manager

Turn-Out Instructions

- ◆ Actuates station alarm, printer, pagers/alerters, doors and traffic lights
- ◆ 'Call Completion' target - 75% of all calls completed within 60 seconds
- ◆ Station end equipment - GD92 - standard communications protocol

Radio

- ◆ Analogue
- ◆ Using AM or FM techniques
- ◆ Little radio interoperability
- ◆ Over the Border communications -
Sections 2 & 12 of Fire Services Act

Mobile Data Systems

- ◆ Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) telephones
- ◆ Others using: Commercial packet radio data networks, but most using existing analogue radio scheme
- ◆ Use at present mainly restricted to resource availability/location, coded 'standard messages'

Continuous Improvement !

- ◆ **‘the Fire Service ‘is a professional body, deserving credit for its performance. It has a well deserved place in the nation’s esteem and localised responses to emergencies are working well...’**

Professor Sir George Bain

So – if it ain't broke, why fix it ?

- ◆ Need a means of achieving the level of interoperability between emergency services' communications systems - necessary to deal with events of the scale of September 11th
- ◆ Increasing responsibilities of Fire Service
- ◆ 'Control Centres - current arrangements - cost effective, most efficient?

Continued...

So – if it ain't broke, why fix it ?

Continued...

- ◆ Radio - systems obsolete, unreliable, maintenance and sourcing of parts difficult
- ◆ Police moving to Tetra 'Airwave' by 2005
- ◆ Need to make more efficient use of radio spectrum
- ◆ Bain Review - Need for modernisation, flexibility, removal of restrictive practices, more 'local' arrangements and agreements
- ◆ Health & Safety of crews and public

How are we to achieve this?

- ◆ Radio replacement project - 'FIRELINK'
- ◆ Changes in the law: Section 19 - location and number of resources, 1985 'Standards of Fire Cover'
- ◆ Flexibility in shift pattern/local agreements allowing Dynamic Mobilising - supported by
AVLS, Data to Cabs - systems that support GPS/GPRS

Modernisation Agenda - Human Interface

- ◆ Government & Employers are committed to the Modernisation Agenda
- ◆ Technical and technological issues can be dealt with
- ◆ The Human issues - the so called 'Soft' issues - is not the soft option - this is perhaps the most critical element in need of resolving if we are to progress - as we surely need to!

Going boldly on...

- ◆ As with any major change it is inevitable that people feel threatened and are resistant – I hope that common sense will prevail and we can move forward as we surely need to.

A major advantage lies in the calibre of the people who work in in the Fire Service and their sense of duty and Service’.

“What we see depends mainly on what we look for”

Sir John Lubbock



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