



Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 – Key Factsheet 4: Working in partnership

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 includes a number of different provisions that will enable fire and rescue authorities to work with each other and with other partners to deliver services flexibly and more efficiently.

It updates existing provisions relating to co-operation between authorities and other organisations that employ firefighters, for example airport fire services, so that these partnerships can extend beyond firefighting. The Act provides, therefore, a legal basis for partnership arrangements to give assistance to an authority in discharging its responsibilities for dealing with road traffic accidents and other serious emergencies. Fire and rescue authorities are already in the process of signing a national mutual aid agreement to cover emergencies such as the increased terrorist threat.

The Act gives fire and rescue authorities more flexibility to work in partnership with others. For example, this could mean working with the local education authority in delivering its fire safety duties. The only restriction is with respect to fire fighting, which can only be delegated to other fire and rescue authorities or other organisations that employ fire fighters.

The Act also formally allows for fire and rescue authorities to equip themselves and work with other local agencies if this is beneficial to the local community. This would include “co-responder” schemes, where the authority is able to administer medical assistance when it is first on the scene at an emergency.