



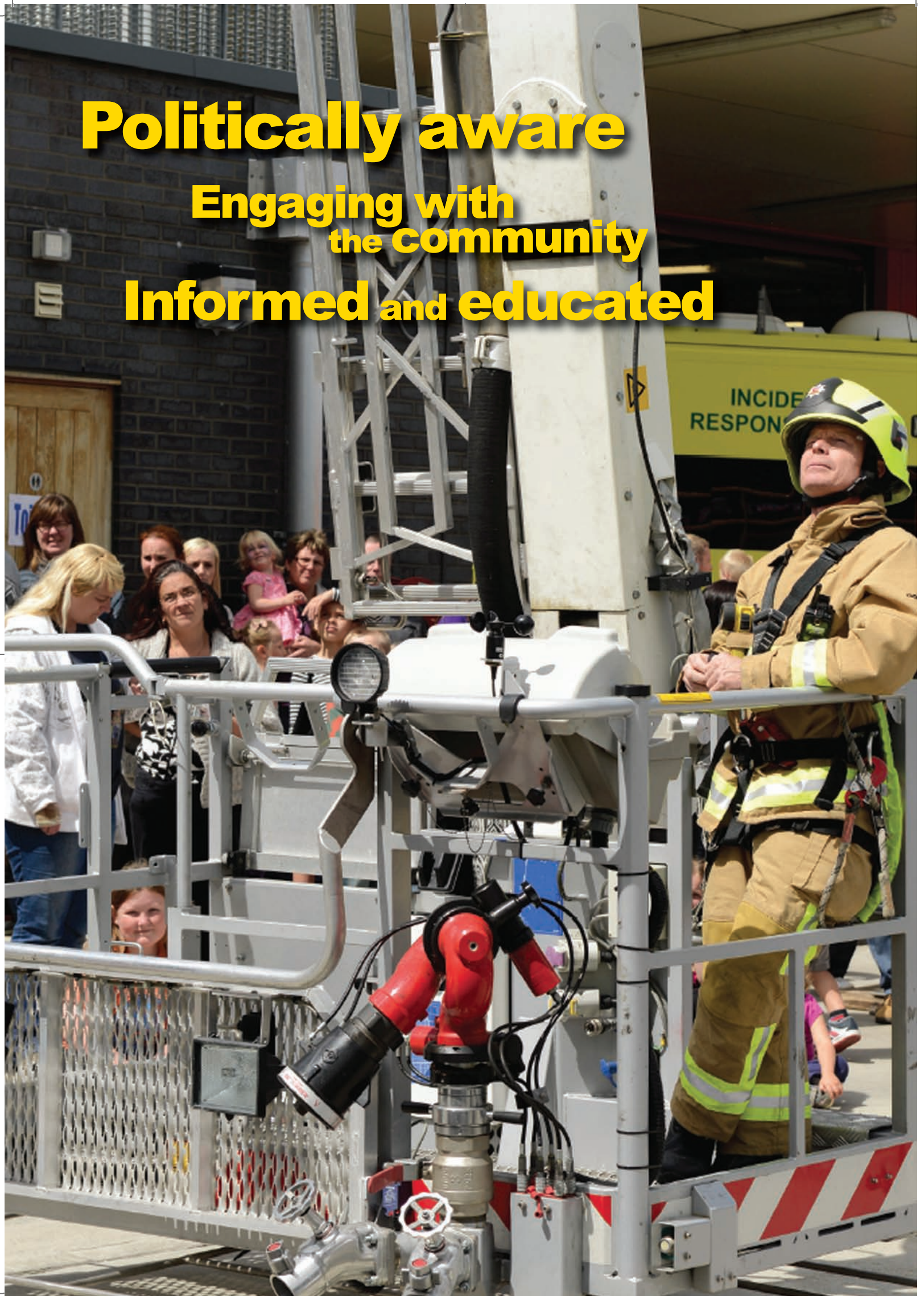
Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme

In partnership for the good of communities
throughout the United Kingdom

Politically aware

**Engaging with
the Community**

Informed and educated



Sir Neil Thorne OBE TD DL

Chairman of the Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme

I am delighted to be able to welcome the publication of this, the first edition of the Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme brochure.

Members of Parliament receive vast amounts of information on every conceivable subject, but when they come to speak in the chamber they are always listened to with much greater respect if they are speaking from personal experience. This is why it is so important for members to go and see for themselves and preferably to get physically involved in obtaining first hand experience of what is being done by the experts.

For this reason, the Scheme is designed to show members what life is like on a shift and how firefighters handle their responsibilities to the public, to their colleagues and to their own safety. It is not only a very skilled but also a very hazardous job which can be exhausting both physically and mentally with so many unknown factors round every corner.

However well prepared staff become by training, a firefighter's life can be full of perilous surprises. This is of course quite often the reason why so many fit and dedicated young men and women find this type of work both attractive and satisfying to their spirit of adventure.

May I ask you to read the comments of your colleagues who have already experienced what the scheme has to offer and then to accept the invitation which is enclosed so that you can also see what is available, either in London, your local fire service, or indeed to spend some time with both.



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Brandon Lewis

Fire Minister



Department of Communities & Local Government

I am very pleased to introduce this brochure and the Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme.

Clearly those who represent and govern us in Parliament are amongst our most important stakeholders and it is important that our Ministers and MPs have the fullest possible experience and understanding of the capabilities and pressures facing their Fire and Rescue Service.

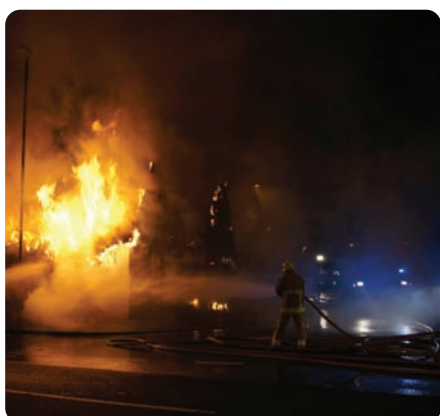
Fire and Rescue Authorities run highly regarded public services, working to prevent fires and protect lives, responding to emergencies and engaging with communities to deliver wider social value; they are of course, part of our critical national resilience infrastructure. But like all public services, Fire and Rescue Authorities face challenges and it is important that Parliamentarians have the opportunity and see their own Fire and Rescue Authorities in action and to engage with their services. The Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme provides a good opportunity to do that, following the success of similar schemes for the Military and Police.

I am grateful to all those groups and individuals who have been working to develop the scheme and encourage colleagues to take part in it with your local Fire and Rescue Authority.

This Scheme will enable members to see first hand the work of all levels of staff who deliver prevention, protection and emergency services, and the valuable work they do, whether as part of an emergency response, or engaging with communities.



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Lyn Brown MP

Shadow Fire Minister

In the current economic climate, where public services are being asked to do more with less, it is vital MPs understand the pressures on our fire service.

Firefighters in this country do a fantastic job protecting our communities and making us all feel safe. It is thanks to our firefighters that deaths and injuries from fires are continuing to decrease, and people are well informed about fire safety issues.

Firefighters do so much for the communities they serve; from responding to flooding, terrorist alerts and road traffic collisions to fire prevention, youth engagement and helping the most vulnerable people in our society get the help they need. Firefighters today provide a truly amazing public service.

That is why I support the Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme. In order to protect our communities and keep services open, MPs must have the opportunity to experience and witness what extraordinary work our fire service does first-hand.



<<It is thanks to our firefighters that deaths and injuries from fires are continuing to decrease, and people are well informed about fire safety issues.>>



Paul Fuller

President Chief Fire Officers' Association 2014



The role of the Fire and Rescue Service in our community is increasingly pronounced and it is becoming more and more important for us to engage with our key stakeholders to generate greater understanding of the enormous breadth and intensity of the work that we do and support.

I am very pleased that the Chief Fire Officers' Association has been able to help support the steering group in bringing the early work forward from concept through to reality.

Clearly there are no more important stakeholders than those who represent and govern us in Parliament and it is important that our Ministers and MP's have the fullest possible experience and understanding of the capabilities and pressures facing their Fire and Rescue Service.

The Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme provides a national approach to a very locally delivered partnership between the Fire and Rescue Services and Parliamentarians and I am completely committed to this very valuable scheme.

I hope you will find this brochure interesting and even more than that to encourage both Fire and Rescue Services and their local MP's to seize the opportunities it offers.

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Stewart Jackson MP

Member of Parliament for the Peterborough Constituency

In 2009, I had the pleasure and privilege of undertaking my attachment to the London Fire Brigade. The Brigade took a significant amount of time and effort planning my involvement and producing and carrying out an extremely interesting and well organised programme.

The scheme gave huge insight into the day to day and strategic challenges that face a fire and rescue service in the UK. It covered a plethora of topics ranging from “point of entry” testing to national discussions around the recent introduction of the new fire safety regulations (the Regulatory Reform Order) and the perceived impact of this new legislation, particularly in the area of fire protection in timber framed buildings. I was keen to see how this interrelated with concerns being raised at the time by the Association of British Insurers where new research identified the cost of repairing fire damage had reached record levels.

The more practically focused element of the scheme saw me taking part in a number of sessions shadowing trainee firefighters undertaking initial basic training. Following an initial input into ladders and pumps and pumping, I was keen to get hands-on experience wearing breathing apparatus (BA). In truth, I found it an experience which I would find unnerving outside of the training environment. I took part in the subsequent debrief with the crews at Edmonton fire station openly admitting that I wouldn't feel confident wearing BA operationally in unknown environments and conveyed to them my enormous admiration and respect of the firefighters that do so on a regular basis.

I had a personal interest in the role of the fire boat; having attended the London Nautical School and was delighted to have the opportunity to observe a practical demonstration of the boat in action as well as being able to see the Capital City from the River!

My constituency is not in London and so it was useful for me to understand how National Resilience is planned and coordinated and how assets can provide support to different parts of the country even Peterborough!

I had quite clear views on the issues surrounding Regional Control Centres (RCCs); very much in the spot light at the time. I was able to see and understand why London needs a fall-back plan to provide resilience in times of high call rates. Politically this was an interesting and important session for me to ensure my full understanding of the practical realities surrounding the ethos of RCCs.

The session covering operational planning for the Olympics was one in which I took particular interest. It was important for me to see things not only from the London viewpoint but also from the country-wide perspective, there being over 30 sites around the UK designated for various sporting events. I was keen to understand the challenges around some of the resilience issues and also see, first-hand, multi-agency resilience working with the Police Service.

It is said that time spent on research is rarely wasted and I would urge all members of both Houses of Parliament and also MEPs to give serious consideration to signing up for this first class, practical scheme, either with their local Fire service or perhaps with London Fire Brigade. I am sure those who do will find the time spent rewarding and their knowledge and understanding of the emergency services significantly enhanced.



Philip Hollobone MP

Member of Parliament for the Kettering Constituency



As someone who has always been enthusiastic about the fire service, during my time as Westminster's original guinea pig for the first ever Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme in 2006/7, I was surprised how little I actually knew about modern firefighting.

For a start the number of fires that fire services have to deal with is almost half what it was ten or more years ago; firemen are now often firewomen as well; and a fireman's life is now both very rare and also against health and safety regulations! Thankfully my time on the scheme has put my misconceptions right and the programme put together by the London Fire Brigade ensured a logical and understandable progression from observing raw recruits in their training to chatting with experienced firefighters on the frontline dealing with real live fires in the middle of the night.

The London Fire Brigade was an excellent host and went out of its way to be helpful to me. Sir Ken Knight, then LFB's Commissioner, established the scheme and I was mentored throughout by Station Manager Roger Kendall, who was a hero of both the 1987 King's Cross London Underground fire as well as the 1989 Marchioness sinking and who had been an LFB advisor to the producers of the popular TV series London's Burning. I also had the opportunity to spend time with my local fire service in Northamptonshire and get to know some of the challenges faced by smaller fire services, which can be very different to the more national and strategic challenges faced by the LFB.

Here's a brief guide to what my year with the scheme entailed for me:

Day One

The start of a 3-day introduction to basic firefighter training at a fire station in south London. Wearing firefighter gear, I mix in with recruits undertaking hose and ladder drills. Before long I am looking down alone from 100 feet up at the top of an extendable turntable ladder. This feels very precarious and a long way up. I can see the Houses of Parliament in the distance. I get a go at using giant breakers to free a victim from a simulated vehicle smash and practice crawling through enclosed spaces.

Day Five

Today we're on the LFB's Thames river boat – a superfast, flat bottomed response boat which rescues people trapped on the foreshore. We shoot past the Houses of Parliament down river to the Pool of London and back again.

Day Ten

Visiting a redundant underground tube station with a working tube train used for firefighter training, I speak with firefighters who attended the London tube bombings. In an emergency it's the firefighters who head towards the incident, whilst everyone else is trying to go the other way.

Day Twelve

Dressed in super-protective full body suit, I watch as firefighters practice their drills for a simulated chemical spill in a disused factory.

Day Fourteen

To London Docklands. New high volume pumps can pump huge volumes of water or foam. I help crews practise setting up and then packing away the pumps and miles of hose.

Day Sixteen

The second of two nights spent at a central London fire station. At 2am, we're called to an explosion in a restaurant in north London. We arrive to see the front of the café blown over to the other side of the road with the place gutted. Fire investigators conclude it's arson and luckily only one person is injured. Local families have been evacuated from some dense housing nearby.

Day Eighteen

Visiting the Arson Control Task Force at Kettering fire station, I learn all about their forensic work in establishing the cause of fires. We visit the scene of a garage fire in Wellingborough where a sniffer dog establishes that it wasn't arson as no propellant was used. The fire was caused by a faulty element at the back of a freezer.

Day Nineteen

Visiting Kettering fire station once more, I meet the crews who show me round their engine and tell me of the serious dangers of self combusting haystacks in hot weather.

Day Twenty Two

The climax to my training – three days at the national Fire Service College in Gloucestershire, where I find that the Head of the College, Gill Newton, is a constituent! Wearing breathing apparatus I enter a live fire scene in a building over several floors and watch as firecrews tackle the blaze. The fire is a real one as stacks of pallets are set alight in the well of the building. The heat is intense and the scene surprisingly dark – fires emit a dull glow, but not much light for the crews to work by.

The Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme is a big commitment in time, but I believe firmly that my constituents would wish me to be involved with such an important public service in this way. I would recommend it to anyone. It's the nature of the job, that MPs tend to know a little about a lot of things; by being on the scheme I now feel confident that I appreciate that much more about our fire services and the brave men and women who head into harm's way whenever the alarm goes off.



Philip Hollobone MP undergoing breathing apparatus training with real fires at the Fire Service College, Gloucestershire.

Jim Fitzpatrick MP



The Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme is an exciting opportunity for Peers, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament to gain a unique insight on the front line of the Fire Service.

This scheme is a bridge between legislators and a vital pillar of our emergency services. Participants will experience firsthand what the Fire Service has to confront on a daily basis. By working alongside firefighters, those on the scheme, will be able to gain a deeper understanding of the job which cannot be acquired elsewhere. Our emergency services provide an invaluable service to the communities they serve and participants will be fully immersed in what is all in a day's work for fire services in local communities across the country.

The value of gaining direct experience cannot be underestimated. Those on the scheme will interact with every level of the fire service, experiencing intimately everything from training courses to community engagement. The fire service has undergone significant changes since I joined in the 1970s and that pace of change continues today. This scheme will provide a unique understanding of the service which participants will use in their own work long after their last day.

As the scheme has gone from strength to strength graduates will finish with an enriched perspective and a sense of personal growth. I wholeheartedly endorse the Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme and give my best wishes for its continued success.

<<The fire service has undergone significant changes since I joined in the 1970s and that pace of change continues today.>>



CAPITA (Sponsor)

Capita's capabilities combine the delivery of services, products, technology know-how and Fire industry expertise, built up over 30 years of working with the UK Fire and Rescue Services. Each delivery capability is underpinned by the formal training and extensive experience of Capita's employees.

These capabilities range from the design, development, implementation and operation of complex solutions, including mission critical communications systems and application software that support not only the Fire Services but the rest of the emergency and amber light services, to ICT and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO).

Capita has undertaken a number of highly significant Fire service deals throughout its history, cementing its place as a market leader. These include the delivery of its first end-to-end Firecat and ICCS solution to Hampshire Fire and Rescue in 1993, the first solution to be fully integrated with trunk radio to Northern Ireland Fire in partnership with Arqiva, and the continual support of, the UK largest Fire Service, London Fire Brigade since 1994.

In May 2012, Capita acquired long-term partner and market leading provider of command, control and communications systems to the Fire Services, Fortek Computers Ltd. This enabled improvement in Capita's ability to support shared service models for emergency services, whilst bringing on board the expertise, technology and three decades of experience of the Gosport based company.

Earlier this year Capita acquired Fire Service College in Gloucestershire. The College has built an enviable reputation as the leading training establishment of its kind in the world. To date we have successfully delivered training courses and consultancy to customers from over 120 countries. The College annually provides world class training for 9,000+ UK and international delegates drawn from the Fire Service, Emergency Services, Government Agencies and Private Industry.

Capita's market leading breadth of expertise in the Fire industry truly establishes it as long term partner to the UK Fire and Rescue Services.



CAPITA

ice Corporate IT Recycling (Sponsor)

ICEX has many years of experience in all aspects of secure & sustainable IT and electrical disposal.

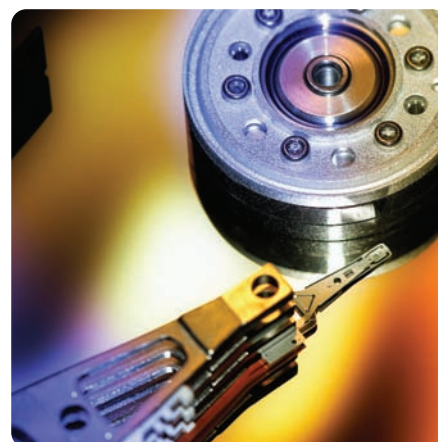
Trusted by our broad client base in banking, law, healthcare, education, emergency services and local government to name just a few, we satisfy all regulatory requirements for the waste electrical (WEEE) directives. Data security is taken to the highest level. Our ADISA (Asset Disposal & Information Security Alliance) accredited processes (ADISA now being recognised by DIPCOG) combined with up to date HMG Security Services CESG standards for secure data removal software, degaussing or granulation with full certification.

As a leading IT recycling and asset management company in the UK, ADISA

accredited ICEX offers a flexible solution to IT asset management, environmental compliance and certified data eradication. Being a conscientious team, ICEX prides itself on the care of our clients and the environment and meets all BS EN ISO 14001:2004.

We are an organisation that will give you peace of mind over the treatment of your surplus IT and waste electrical equipment and often giving you a financial value return on your original investment.

About Us: As security and integrity is paramount, we use CESG certified Blancco software and satisfy ISO requirements with ISO/IEC 27001:2005.



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Acknowledgements

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Fire Service
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