



Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

Please ask for: Service Information Team Leader

Tel: 01604 797000

Our Ref:

Your Ref: N/A

Date: 13 February 2019

If you have any difficulty in obtaining the above telephone number please ring (01604) 797000 or email enquiries@northantsfire.gov.uk.

Dear

Re: Request for information (our ref: FR140-147)

I am writing in response to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, received 09 January 2019. Our response is provided below:

Q1 What is the area you cover and what areas are specifically at risk to:

- *Wildfire*
- *Flooding*
- *Drought*

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) provide cover for the county of Northamptonshire. NFRS also assist with requests to support neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) over the county border when required. NFRS do not record areas that are specifically at risk in the areas requested. Information held on areas at risk of flooding would be held by the Environment Agency; there is an [online map](#) which may assist. Information held on drought may be held by the water authority or farming advice board. Northamptonshire's geographical footprint for wildfires is not large enough to identify any areas at risk within the county.

Q2 How many wildfires occurred between 2012-19?

'Wildfire' is not a category that NFRS uses. Using a generic definition, we have included all the outdoor fires NFRS have attended for the period requested with property type detail. These include both accidental and deliberate types of fires within the property types listed in the Excel spreadsheet attached titled FR140-147Data.

Q3 How much area was affected by flooding between 2012-19 and how often did it occur?

NFRS do not hold this information. Flood and water management guidance for the county is available from the [Northamptonshire County Council \(NCC\) website](#) but this particular question may be better redirected to the Environment Agency.

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Q4 How has climate change affected the services latest Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)?

In simple terms, the IRMP process is about considering foreseeable risks within the county, and then planning for our how we will use our resources to mitigate this risk. Risks are not considered in isolation and so it is not always possible to specify what action is in response to a particular risk. Within our draft IRMP for 2019-2022, climate change is not cited as a specific risk. However, the impact of climate change is considered through the environmental risks of flooding and weather related issues – see page 30 of our background risk document: <https://www.northantspcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/IRMP-2019-2021-Background-Document.pdf>.

Furthermore, climate change and how this might manifest as specific risks is a consideration within the National Risk Register. Locally, NFRS consider this as part of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which produces a Community Risk Register and works to identify potential risks and produce plans to either respond, prevent or mitigate the impact of the incident on the local community. The Community Risk Register includes a number of specific risks which may be rooted in climate change either directly or more indirectly. For example, flooding and also risks such as major reservoir dam failure/collapse.

Q5 What resources have been used to improve operational response to wildfire i.e. gaining access, providing water?

No additional resources have been purchased because the resources we have in place are sufficient and proportionate to the risk. Further detail on resources is provided in Q7 and 8.

Q6 What resources are used to improve operational response in flooding i.e. to re-direct water to mitigate the impact of flooding?

NFRS will use High Volume Pumping (HVP) appliances to re-direct flow to protect critical National infrastructure. Support is also gained from a co-ordinated approach through the LRF, to provide a multi-agency response, which could be anything from sand bags or gate blockers, to flood barrier systems. NFRS work very closely with the Environment Agency in this type of incident.

Q7 What resources were needed to gain access to wildfires?

Our standard PDA is two pumping appliances however we do have a number of off road vehicles which could be used to access remote areas.

Q8 What resources were needed to provide water to wildfires?

Usually standard pumping appliances and water bowsers; however we can also use High Volume Pumps (HVPs) to convey water over large distances. Anything extra could be called on through mutual aid or the National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF).

Q9 What other methods were used to extinguish wildfires?

NFRS would only use water, Cobra and beaters as our areas are not as large enough to warrant much else.

Q10 How effective were these resources and methods in gaining access to and extinguishing wildfires?

Northamptonshire's geographical footprint for wildfires is not large enough in comparison to the Scottish FRS and others with moorlands, and as such we take advice from National Guidance and National learning.

Q11 What resources and equipment were used to deal with any flooding incidents?

If this question is simply related to flooding where there is no life risk, then some incidents (such as domestic property) could be dealt with by pumps and redirecting or blocking water flow. Wider Fluvial or Pluvial flooding forms part of multi-agency flood planning and involves numerous agencies. If there is life risk involved, NFRS can mobilise Swift Water Rescue Teams and boats as well as off road vehicles. There is also the ability to call on support through mutual aid or NCAF as mentioned above.

Q12 What methods were used to deal with any flooding incidents?

Please refer to answer for Q11.

Q13 How effective were the resources and methods in dealing with these flooding incidents?

This depends on the level of flooding. Local small flooding incidents involving domestic supply can and have been dealt with quite effectively. Wider area flooding is dependent on life risk or property damage. Life risk has been dealt with effectively by the use of boats and off road vehicles. Critical National Infrastructure within county has been protected from damage by strategic use of HVP appliances. Other damage to property has been out of the scope of NFRS acting as a single agency only, and some damage is unavoidable.

Q14 What shift patterns do your firefighters work?

Shift patterns are only applicable to Wholetime Duty System (WDS) (full time) and Variable Crewing System (VCS) firefighters which are as follows:

- WDS – 2 day shifts, 2 night shifts and 4 rota days off
- VCS – 4 day shifts, 3 rota days off

Retained Duty System (RDS) firefighters do not follow a shift pattern as they are on-call.

Q15 Did you experience any difficulties with your current staffing systems if the length of the incident lasted over a long-period of time? E.g. Fatigue?

A 'long period of time' is a subjective term but NFRS has always managed to facilitate operational incidents of all durations using our current staffing models and cross border arrangements.

Q16 How essential were Retained staffing systems in dealing with these incidents over a long-period?

NFRS do not experience wildfire or drought incidents over long periods. In terms of flooding within county we experienced the Easter floods of 1998 but long period floods since then have thankfully been outside of our county. Our specialist flood responders are WDS staff.

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Q17 Have you had to adapt or introduce any specific operational training in order to improve the operational response to wildfires?

As wildfires are not a major risk within the geographical footprint of Northamptonshire; we give awareness of the risks to firefighters from wildfires through a training package and Tactical Operational Guidance.

Q18 Have you had to adapt or introduce any specific operational training in order to improve the operational response to flooding?

Northamptonshire have a declared type B team for rescues from water including flooding, and also a HVP. This itself dictates the way we need to go regarding training. All firefighters are trained to minimum of awareness level, with a higher level of training according to whether they are on a HVP station or water rescue station.

Q19 Have you had to adapt or introduce any specific operational training in order to improve the operational response to droughts?

We have no specific training in place for droughts.

Q20 What is the FRS policy statement with regards to Climate change?

There is no direct or stated link within NFRS policies relating to climate change and the business continuity arrangements currently in place.

The Service prepares itself to respond to incidents of all types that can occur at any time, and in all weather conditions. This includes flooding, severe weather cold weather, hot weather, localised flooding etc.) Within those arrangements the focus is to bring our capability to bear to address the risk in all circumstances by the provision of training, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and equipment (boats, specialised vehicles and access to 4x4 capability). Additionally the Service work in close co-operation with other key agencies through our LRF to produce a range of plans for those incidents that may affect a wider area. Also we are able to call upon national assets from other FRS' if required.

Q21 Has climate change affected the way you manage business continuity management strategies?

Please refer to answer for Q20.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me quoting reference FR140-147.

Yours sincerely
Service Information Team Leader

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If you are unhappy with the response, you can ask the Service to review it. To do this, please email enquiries@northantsfire.gov.uk or alternatively write to the address below:

Service Information Manager
Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
Moulton Logistics Centre
Moulton Way
Northampton
NN3 6XJ

If our internal review does not resolve the issue to your complete satisfaction, you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision at the following address:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF