

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge
Group
15 March 2018
Item No. 12

REPORT AUTHOR(S): HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE EFFECTING ENTRY FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES PILOT

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Background Papers: Effecting Entry for Medical Emergencies Pilot Results: 6 March 2017

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL		FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New	CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE

To provide Members of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group with an overview of the findings from a review of the pilot for providing assistance to gain entry to premises in case of medical emergency.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group consider the report provided.

1. Background

- 1.1 Historically, where East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) have required assistance to gain entry to premises in case of suspected medical emergency, they have contacted Bedfordshire Police (BP) for assistance, with BP staff using their statutory powers and skills to force access, allowing EEAST to enter and tend to the patient.

- 1.2 Collaboration work between EEAST, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and BP identified that the use of BFRS resources to assist EEAST could provide a threefold improvement to service delivery by:
 1. Reduction in attendance time in support of EEAST;
 2. Removing demand on BP resources: and
 3. More effective service with reduced level of property damage.
- 1.3 BFRS has statutory powers under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to gain entry, by force if necessary, without the consent of the owner or occupier. These powers can apply to medical emergencies ('...reasonably believes an emergency of another kind to have occurred').
- 1.4 A Memorandum of Understanding between EEAST, BP and BFRS was signed under which BFRS agreed to provide EEAST with assistance to gain entry to premises for the purposes of providing emergency medical treatment for a six-month trial period from 1 July 2016.
- 1.5 An eight-month progress report, 'Effecting Entry for Medical Emergencies Pilot Results', was presented to members of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group on the 6 March 2017, with the undertaking that a full review would be carried out within a twelve month period of the pilot. In the event, this period was in fact 15 months and the findings from the review are contained within this report.

2. Summary of key findings

- 2.1 The trial period has found BFRS being called for Effecting Entry assistance 527 times resulting in 375 attendances and the Service were first on scene at 82 of those incidents.
- 2.2 Within the 375 attendances, there were 160 Risk to Life and 83 Minor Health and Safety situations reported, with BFRS crews providing or assisting the provision of medical care in 79 cases.
- 2.3 Incidents where older people who had collapsed or fallen were the most frequent calls (40 cases).
- 2.4 Both EEAST and BP have provided feedback supporting BFRS continuing with support to BP in effecting entry and assert that it is very likely that BFRS has saved lives through a faster response than BP can provide, reducing demand on BP resources and reduced levels of damage to property.
- 2.5 There were communication difficulties with EEAST that provided learning points which have mostly now been addressed and further dialogue is planned to examine the remaining issues. However, EEAST hold the view that due to their new Ambulance prioritisation policy, that BFRS expectations of them are greater than their ability to meet attendance targets consistently. This causes delays on scene for BFRS.

- 2.6 BP were first on scene at 12 incidents of 375 which is a reduction on the previous year where they were first on scene at 16 of a sample of 68 incidents they have records of attending. When considering these figures it demonstrates how the aim for saving on BP resources has been met through this trial. However, whereas BFRS has replaced the BP as incident attenders in the majority of calls, BFRS has not assumed the same full range of responsibilities of BP. This means BFRS has the potential to leave an incident before a full range of issues are noted or any further action, outside of the fire and rescue remit, are carried out.
- 2.7 It is pleasing to recognise the low frequency of damage to property levels, i.e. boarding up was required on only 38 occasions within 15 months. However, there are some residual concerns with regard to BFRS resources being detained at premises which are waiting to be made secure. These occasions are relatively small in number, of 11 incidents where there was an impact upon the Pre-determined Attendance (PDA), only three of these required a contractor to attend. It was only one of these three incidents which has been recorded as a significant impact on PDA, where the crew were delayed by 1hr 25 mins awaiting the boarding up contractor to arrive.

3. Review Recommendations

- 3.1 The review has concluded with a number of recommendations for the BFRS to consider in support of strengthening and improving these working arrangements. It has been recognised that the relative cost to BFRS in providing this support is greatly outweighed by the contribution made to the safety of the general public and the benefits to our partner organisations.
- 3.2 A meeting between BFRS and EEAST Control Managers will be arranged to ensure there is a clear understanding of mutual needs and the MoU protocols and to ensure that Control staff are fully briefed and provided with a copy of the MoU.
- 3.3 The creation of Effecting Entry data will support routine reporting purposes and enable ongoing monitoring of the issues highlighted throughout the review process. BFRS will addresses requirements for data quality management, including the production of a glossary of terms and ensure that a regular system audit is undertaken.
- 3.4 BFRS, EEAST and BP will review their Safeguarding and incident closure processes, where there is joint attendance, to ensure there is clarity and risk management in place.
- 3.5 BFRS will hold refresher training for all operational staff focused on incident closure processes and management of issues. This will be further supported through the creation of a “checklist” on the Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) which will aid Incident Commanders when closing incidents.
- 3.6 BFRS will address the contractual arrangements for boarding up procedures.

- 3.7 BFRS will consider additional training provision for firefighters to address the issue of first at scene situations and facing potential confrontational, violent or emotionally disturbed residents. e.g. Police negotiator training foundation.
- 3.8 Further consideration will also be given to the possibility of the scheme being expanded to enable front line Police staff to call for assistance in effecting entry where appropriate and possible to do so, taking into account any legal, risk, cultural, operational and financial considerations.
4. Recommendation

That Members of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group consider the report provided.

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