

4th August 2011

Dear Colleague,

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

You may recall that at the 17th June Fire Commission meeting, we discussed business continuity arrangements of Fire and Rescue Authorities. The amended recommendation recorded in the minutes asked Members to report on what action they have taken, or are intending to take, to test and review business continuity plans and to ensure that their own Authorities have made necessary arrangements to fulfil their statutory duties in relation to business continuity.

No doubt, you will all have seen the press release and circular issued by the Fire Brigades Union on 28th July about industrial action over pensions and suggesting support for industrial action in the autumn.

Informal soundings suggest that there is still a significant proportion of Authorities which have not examined business continuity plans in detail. There may be a number of reasons for this: some Chiefs believe that any industrial action will not affect their area; or that the impact on different unions will be phased; or indeed that these are target duties rather than absolute duties. However, Lead Member colleagues on the Fire Services Management Committee and I do not share that view and I am therefore urging you to urgently review and test your business continuity plans to satisfy yourself that these are plans in place. In the event of widespread industrial action, it is unlikely that the Government, or the media, would regard it as acceptable for politicians of any FRA not to have recently tested processes and procedures.

We have a number of business continuity technical experts in our sector who can provide first class support and guidance and I have asked colleagues at the LGA to broker this expertise to assist Authorities.



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