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Development of a National Wildfire Tactical Advisor (WTA) Capability

Briefing and Update

Robert Stacey

National Wildfire Tactical Adviser | Northumberland Fire and
Rescue Service

History of the WTA capability

- NFCC (CFOA) Wildfire Group est. August 2011
 - *We can't stop them happening*
 - *They're becoming more frequent*
 - *They're increasing in severity*
 - *They're becoming more disruptive*
 - *It's probably going to get worse before it gets better.*
- Longer term, in-house sector led support to other FRS
- UK High Level Advisor capability – 2012 Olympics
- High Level Paper taken to National Resilience Board (NRB) in late 2015
- NFCC Wildfire Group issue *too important to ignore*
- Work began in early 2016 to develop the capability



Development of the WTA role

- High level ongoing support from CFOs and Principal Officers
- Alignment to existing National Resilience arrangements
- Development of the “**WTA Concept of Operations**”
- WTA Workshops delivered in Northumberland (May & Nov 2017)
- 23 personnel established as the initial WTA Cadre
- Informal & Best Endeavours
- Some obvious challenges but**convinced we just needed the chance to prove ourselves!!!!**



2018 Wildfire Season – Proof of Concept!

- At the time of the first deployment of the capability to Saddleworth on 27th June 2018, the capability had a cadre strength of **23 personnel** (12 from English FRS (Lancashire, Northumberland, Merseyside, Dorset and Wiltshire, Hampshire, Surrey, DFRMO, Hereford and Worcester), 4 from Northern Ireland FRS, 5 from South Wales FRS and 2 from Scottish FRS).
- Formal 'Go Live' was announced via an NFCC communication to CFOs on 28th June which was accompanied by a copy of the WTA Concept of Operations document for awareness and circulation within FRS.



2018 Wildfire Season – Proof of Concept!

What did the WTAs do?

- Safety and tactical advice to incident commanders
- 360 Recce
- Wildfire Prediction System (WPS) and creation of a fire footprint
- Advised on fuel/vegetation and how it would burn
- Observed and predicted fire behaviour, fire intensity and fire spread
- LACES Safety Protocol
- Specialist advice and partner agencies
- Advise on Suppression Tactics – providing a range of options
- Monitor and review



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2018 Wildfire Season – Proof of Concept!

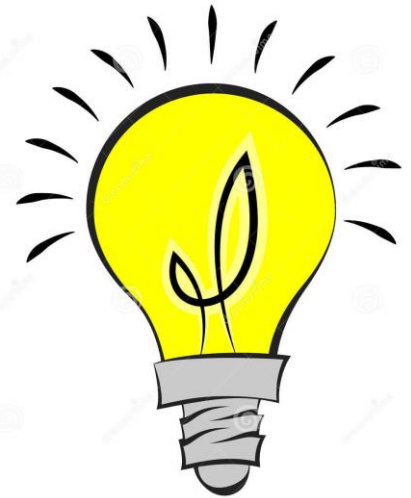
- Responded to every request..... but very challenging for those involved!!
- Extremely positive feedback from Host FRS / NFCC / NR / HO
- Full debrief and evaluation



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Lessons Learned from 2018

- **Enhancing WTA Resilience**
 - WTAs / Burn Suppression Teams / Distribution
- **Raising WTA Awareness**
 - Briefing Note / Revised Concept of Operations / Home Office / Briefings to FRS
- **Improving mobilisation and response**
 - Updated Mobilisation Procedures / Supported Capability / Rota / Coordination
- **Training**
 - CPD events / Wildfire courses in FRS / International Opportunity
- **Miscellaneous**
 - Lead WTA / ID / Stick to Con of Op / Promote Fire Groups / Review NOG / International Deployments / Continue to emphasise Partnerships Working is Key



The role WTAs can play to support local FRS?

- IRMP / CRR – identification of RUI risk
- Gap analysis - NOS / NOG
- Review wildfire training at all levels - is it appropriate and embedded?
- Assisting in mapping and mitigating fuel risk?
- Partners - Multi Agency Exercising and Tactical Wildfire Plan development
- Do you have a role within local or regional fire group
- Populate the National Reporting Tool / Wildfire Asset Register
- Burn Suppression Teams
- Night-time operations
- Become a member of the NFCC Wildfire Group



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What Have We Done Since 2018?

- Increased the WTAs – we now have **35 WTAs** with plans for more
- Strategic view of current gaps



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What Have We Done Since 2018?

- Further WTA Initial Courses to increase capacity and enhance resilience - March 10th – 14th 2019
- Revised and circulated WTA Concept of Operations to all UK FRS
- Embedded the new Support and Mobilisation arrangements with National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC)
- Created National Wildfire Asset Register
- National Reporting Tool
 - Building the evidence base for NOG criteria wildfires
 - Significantly improved take up by FRS in last 12 months – need to be 100% confident we capture all relevant wildfires!!
- Implemented Wildfire Tac Ad CPD events (6 monthly)
- Developed a WTA led Peer Review process



Where we're hoping to take WTA in 2020.....

- We want to be able to contribute more to the growing Wildfire community in the UK
- All UK FRS fully consider wildfire when developing their IRMP / CRR – Guidance to be developed by NFCC Wildfire Group
- Business cases to be developed for:
 - A funded WTA capability – even if it's only for maintenance of skills, including international training.
 - Funding of Suppression Burn Teams – can we provide an 8-10 “team” capability to enhance the WTA provision?
 - Business case for a dedicated Wildfire post within National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF)



Where we're hoping to take WTA in 2020.....



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Where we're hoping to take WTA in 2020.....

- Introduce a WTA Operational Handbook by the end of March 2020
- Review wildfire training and standards for UK FRS
- All UK FRS to become a partner in a local or regional fire group
- Continue engagement with national and local partners on fuel/vegetation management to help mitigate the risk of wildfires
- Better engagement with research community to assist FRS to understand, plan and prepare for wildfire more effectively



Thank you for your attention

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attention!**

robert.stacey@northumberland.gov.uk



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