

Understanding Emergency Fire Control Rooms

It is important to understand, and Mott MacDonald clearly do not, the role of Emergency

of the professionalism and skills needed in Emergency Fire Control rooms.

As a result the flawed Mott MacDonald report cannot be viewed as a substantive or accurate reflection on the Emergency Fire control needs of a modernised Fire and Rescue Service.

In moving to a modernised Fire and Rescue Service full support to all operational incidents is a critical factor. This needs full knowledge of the role of firefighters and at times the skills of individual officers to be fully understood by Firefighter (Control).

For example this includes the required level of emergency response to a specific type of incident, that response attending the correct address, and full support to all emergency responders be they Fire and Rescue or other services and agencies.

The emergency call itself requires great skill to extract the maximum information in the minimum amount of time, any delay in the obtaining accurate and relevant information impacts greatly on the safety of both Firefighters and the community. Keeping calm and giving appropriate Fire Survival guidance and maintaining personal contact with people who are often in danger, scared and confused, is an essential and specialist skill of Firefighters (Control). Lives have been saved and continue to be saved by using these skills.



“ No one wants regional controls apart from a handful of people in Whitehall

Val Salmon

Executive Council Member
Firefighter Control

Fire Control rooms and the new Firefighter (Control) roles.

Mott MacDonald wrongly believe the role of Firefighter (Control) is essentially call taking and dispatch, which is one of the fundamental flaws of the report.

A point that even the ODPM recognises as being untrue.

In fact the ODPM's own internal briefing has five densely typed pages listing in detail the work carried out in an Emergency Fire Control room.

The flawed Mott MacDonald report has chosen to ignore this much more accurate identification





An emergency Firefighter (Control) Sara Armstrong was today praised for helping save a man's life as fire ripped through his house. She kept him on the line until firefighters emerged through the smoke to rescue him and gave him vital advice which probably saved his life.

Fire Service Assistant Divisional Officer Carl Frances said: "Her role can't be overstated. There was a period between when the call was made at 3.51am and fire crews arriving at 4.03am when she kept him on the line. For her that time seemed like ages. That period of time would have been enough time for someone to asphyxiate. He was kept alive following advice to shut the door, wedge wet towels around the frame and get his head out of the velux window to breath clean air."

Source: Ipswich Evening Star 02.04.04

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