



DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE

Responding to Wildfires across the UK, a possible way forward

The Fire and Rescue Service Conference 2021:
Driving Service Improvements and Responding
to New Challenges

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Speaking today as a DWFRS employee but many of the thoughts expressed are personal opinion and not DWFRS or NFCC policy

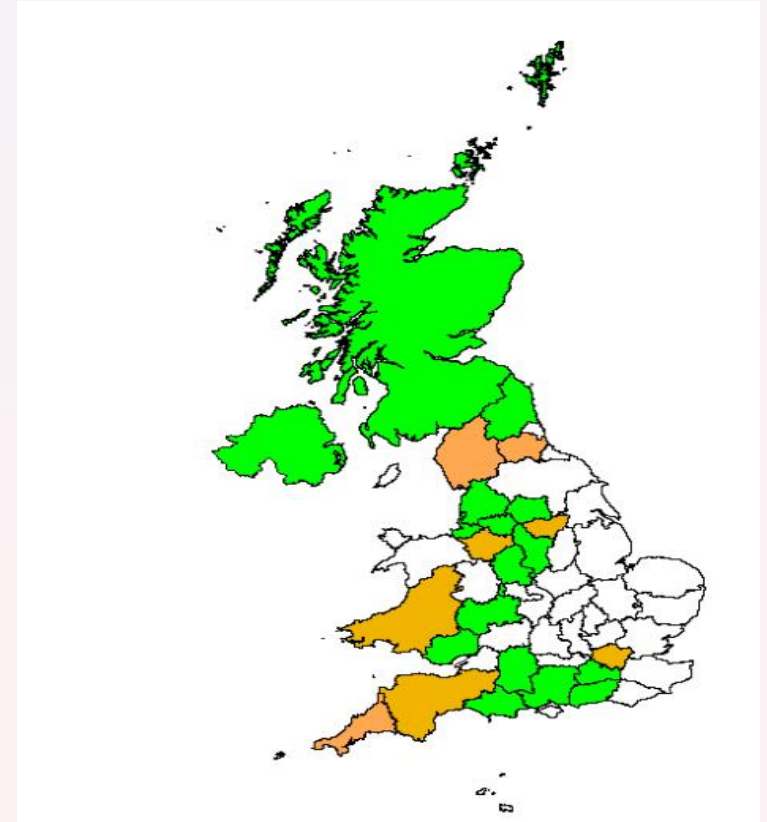
A Wildfire Tactical Advisor's Perspective

For UK purposes a Wildfire is defined as;

- *“Any uncontrolled vegetation fire which requires a decision, or action, regarding suppression”*
- **FRS need to define what a wildfire is.....rather than which outdoor fires have the potential to become one!**
- *Involves a geographical area of > 1 hectare*
- *Has a sustained flame length of > 1.5 metres*
- *Requires a committed resource of ≥ 4 FRS appliances*
- *Requires resources to be committed for ≥ 6 hours*
- *Presents a **serious** threat to life, environment, property and infrastructure*

Current Wildfire TacAd Capability

- Developed 2016/17 – first deployed July 2018
- **“Best Endeavours”**
- Currently 45 WTAs – soon to be 50
- NFCC Wildfire Lead is CFO Paul Hedley, Northumberland FRS and Lead WTA is SM Dave Swallow HWFRS
- NFRS leads national WTA training
- Regular CPD events
- 2020 – 13 major wildfire incidents / 19 WTAs mobilised - Inc. Hatfield Moor / Wareham Forest / Chobham



As a Wildfire practitioner

In my personal opinion:

As we move forward into a new, more fire prone, climate we need to consider the following:

- The Wildfire TacAd capability needs to be fully incorporated into the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) to provide resilience
- A robust system to support International training, coordination and deployment needs to be developed

A Wildfire Researcher's Perspective

- I am currently employed on a NERC funded four year project to develop a Fire Danger Rating System for the UK (UKFDRS.COM)
- This is a research collaboration between 6 UK Universities and Forest Research
- A group of National and International experts form a Steering Group for the project
- There are six work packages:

UKFDRS work packages

1. Fuel mapping – landscape scale to local scale
2. Fuel Moisture regime characterisation
3. Flammability of the key UK landcover fuels
4. Assessing fire behaviour
5. Assessing against actual fire occurrence
6. Scoping landscape-scale and National wildfire risk assessment

Climate Change Impacts

- 2021 saw the publication of the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3)
- The University of Exeter led on the technical report – UK Wildfires and their climate challenges
- There is no doubt that the changing climate will result in more frequent UK Wildfires, in larger UK Wildfires, in more Intense UK Wildfires and more Severe UK Wildfires.

A Wildfire Trainer's Perspective

- 2021 saw the introduction of new regulations to control prescribed fires over deep seated peat
- DEFRA commissioned a suite of Lantra accredited training packages in vegetation fire for the Land Management sector:
 1. Foundation
 2. Vegetation Fire Operator
 3. Prescribed Fire Manager
 4. Wildfire Management Plan

More Training is Required

The four training packages outlined below are all being prepared at the moment, along with their National Occupational Standards (NOS)

1. Vegetation Fire Supervisor
2. Vegetation Fire Leader
3. Vegetation Fire Observer
4. Vegetation Fire Analyst

Conclusion – a personal perspective

Bringing all of this together from three different perspectives I can see common ground:

- Training is key to both FRS and Land Managers
- International knowledge exchange is critical to our learning. Many of our international colleagues have learnt very difficult, very expensive lessons and we need to take heed as FRS, Researchers and other practitioners
- Time is running short so our research needs to be focussed on meeting the needs of practitioners