



Circular number	16/2004	Date issued	16 July 2004
This circular is	For consultation	Respond by	10 September 2004
This circular is	Not relevant to the National Framework		
Status	Invitation to participate in a consultation exercise on new draft medical guidelines for recruitment and retention.		

Occupational Medical Guidance for Recruitment and Retention: Consultation Exercise

Issued by:

Gill McManus
Fire Service Effectiveness Division
Fire and Rescue Service Directorate

Addressed to:

**The Chief Executive to the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Fire and Civil Defence Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue
Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and
Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer**

Please forward to:

**Your medical adviser/occupational health unit.
Human Resources personnel.**

Summary

From 1 October 2004 the employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) will be extended to include firefighting. Decisions about recruitment and retention will need to be based on assessment of the individual against medical guidelines rather than on prescriptive pass/fail criteria. Draft guidelines are attached for consultation.

For further information, contact:

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1. This circular invites the Fire and Rescue Service to participate in a consultation exercise on new draft medical guidelines for recruitment and retention, developed to meet the legislative changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) coming into effect on 1 October 2004. A copy of the draft guidelines is attached. **The consultation period will run until 10 September 2004.**
2. From 1 October 2004 the employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) will be extended to include firefighting and decisions about recruitment and retention will need to be based on assessment of the individual against medical guidelines, rather than based on prescriptive pass/fail criteria.
3. In preparation for the legislative change, ODPM commissioned Optimal Performance Ltd to conduct research into the medical criteria for recruitment and retention and to examine the basis on which medical assessments are made.
4. The primary objective of the research has been the delivery of appropriate, job related guidelines for a range of medical conditions which the research confirmed featured most frequently as the medical reasons for applicant rejection or the grounds on which serving operational personnel were medically discharged. The new guidelines will assist medical advisers and occupational health practitioners to guide service managers in reaching informed, evidence-based decisions about the ability of the individual to perform the functions of the role for which they are being assessed.
5. **You are specifically invited to:**
 - **identify any specific aspects of the new guidance about which there may be concerns;**
 - **submit any supporting evidence which you consider useful, and**
 - **suggest amendments that might improve the document as an assessment tool for its primary users (medical advisers and senior managers).**
6. **Managers are urged to copy the consultation document to their medical adviser/occupational health unit and Human Resources personnel as soon as possible.**
7. The response to this consultation exercise will inform the final version of the medical guidelines that will be circulated to the Fire and Rescue Service. A list of organisations outside of the fire and rescue service that are also being consulted as part of this exercise about the new guidelines is attached (Annex A).
8. The consultation document on the draft medical guidelines can be accessed from the ODPM website at www.odpm.gov.uk/fire/consult. Comments can be sent by e-mail to ddaconsultation@odpm.qsi.gov.uk

9. For enquiries about this consultation exercise please contact either Bernadette Ogunrinde on 0207 944 6832 or John Johnstone on 0207 944 3773.

GILL McMANUS

Head of HR Modernisation Branch

Fire Service Effectiveness Division

ANNEX A

LIST OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS WHO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO COMMENT ON THE DRAFT MEDICAL GUIDELINES FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Anglian Polytechnic University
Association of Local Authority Medical Advisers (ALAMA)
Avon & Somerset Constabulary
BMI Health Services
British Deaf Association
British Dyslexia Association
Bristol City Council
Business in the Community
Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA)
Chief Executive, County Councils
Clerk to the Fire and Civil Defence Authorities
Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities
City of London Police
City University, London
Clinical Science Centre for Research & Education,
Commission for Racial Equality
Diabetes UK
Disabled Living Foundation
Disability Information Scotland
Disability Matters Ltd
Disability Rights Commission
Employers' Forum on Disability
Epilepsy Action
Equal Opportunities Commission
Essex County Council
Fire Brigades' Union
Fire Officers' Association (FOA)
Fire Service College
Fire Services National Benevolent Fund
Hearing Concern
International Register of Firefighters with Diabetes (UK)
Isle of Wight NHS Trust
Local Government Association
London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
MENCAP
MIND (Mental Health Charity)
Ministry of Defence
National Hospital for Neurology & Neurosurgery
RADAR (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation)
Retained Firefighters Union

Royal College of Nursing
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Royal National Institute for the Deaf
Scottish Executive Justice Department
Scottish Fire Service Inspectorate
Shaw Trust
Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery
Working Fit Ltd

Dr M Baggaley
Mr David Campbell
Dr Tim Carter
Prof David Chadwick
Dr C Chisholm
Dr Stephen Coles
Dr P Cullinan
Mr J K O'Dowd
Mr DS Gartry

Dr Ian Gemmell
Dr G Gill
Air Commodore R T G Merry QHS, FRCP
Dr Susan A Robson (2)
Captain Rintoul RN FRCS
Dr Tony Steele-Perkins
Prof Simon Shorvon