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### **To all Chief Fire Officers & Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities**

As you will be aware there has been a longstanding requirement to update the current Incident Recording System (IRS), which is at the end of its economic life, to better meet future needs. The need for accurate and timely data is more important than ever with the forthcoming HMICFRS inspections, the development of the new national fire website over the next few months, and the increased awareness and interest in fire related topics over the last year.

Since the responsibility for fire policy moved from DCLG [now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government] to the Home Office, we have been considering how best to update the national IRS. We now have the go-ahead from the Minister for Policing and Fire to develop a business case of the potential options which will include an assessment of the commercial approach and financial implications.

One of the options we want to look at more closely is the work currently being developed by West Midlands Fire Service which uses an innovative and flexible approach to collecting data. However, we are keen to know of any other work that is taking place across the sector which could be explored as part of this next stage.

We recognise that not all fire and rescue services use the current national IRS and that we will need to ensure that any new system is compatible with the local systems that currently feed into the national IRS.

It is also absolutely essential that we work closely with the NFCC to ensure sector buy-in and that the new system is as useful and usable as possible, so over the coming months we will be asking for engagement into the development of the new IRS. In the first instance Home Office officials will be working with Shantha Dickinson who is the data lead for the NFCC and will be looking to re-establish the NFCC IRS working group.

In the meantime we are working hard to keep the current system up and running and look forward to working with you.

Regards,

David Blunt

Home Office Chief Statistician & Head of Fire, Licensing and Public Order Analysis Unit