



**ASSOCIATION OF  
AMBULANCE  
CHIEF EXECUTIVES**



**ASSOCIATION OF  
CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS**



**CFOA**  
Chief Fire Officers  
Association

## **Joint position statement on Blue Light Collaboration**

### **Background:**

AACE, ACPO and CFOA met recently to discuss areas of mutual interest and concern. Careful consideration was given to a number of recent reports such as Sir Ken Knight Review 'Facing the Future' and Tobias Ellwood's 'Improving Efficiency, Interoperability and Resilience of our Blue Light Services'.

Whilst all three organisations have made their own individual responses it was felt that some consensus on areas of discussion and some joint response points would be helpful. These are detailed below.

### **Joint positions:**

- All three organisations are keen to support innovative approaches to service delivery. We welcome the government's commitment to 'improved integration of local emergency services' and the debate this opens regarding a more coordinated approach to the delivery of blue light services.
- We are also supportive of the government's long standing commitment to a local approach in public service provision, and believe that Ambulance, Police and Fire services should have the freedom to integrate and collaborate in a way that meets local needs. It is important to consider that any attempt to integrate services without a sound evidence base may meet with fierce local opposition.
- All three associations will support our members in undertaking any integration or collaboration that they believe will provide benefit for service users. We will work to remove barriers to change and will look to share notable practice and learning so that Police, Fire and Ambulance Services are well informed of the costs and benefits of various models.
- We are committed to continuing to encourage our members to explore the sharing of estate wherever this is practical and there are already many excellent examples of the co-location of Fire, Police and Ambulance Stations.
- We are jointly committed to exploring ways in which FRS and Police might contribute further in terms of co-responding with the Ambulance Service and will work with our members to encourage this where it is cost effective and adds value to patients.
- We remain committed to build on the existing levels of joint emergency service training and exercising which takes place on a local, regional and national level.
- However, both ACPO and CFOA believe there may be fewer Fire and Police Services in future, and recognise that mergers and greater integration would make sense in some

instances. There are already a number of mergers that have taken place or been proposed and we will to seek learn lessons from these for the future. The Ambulance sector has already successfully led on a reduction in the numbers of services from circa 35 down to 10 regional ambulance trusts and AACE will share the lessons from this work with Fire and Police colleagues.

- We recognise the synergies between the generic skills of Police, Fire and Ambulance personnel in providing emergency responses but also recognise that their detailed skill sets are unique to their individual organisations. In particular we recognise the paramount need for the Ambulance service to remain an integral part of the NHS where it will play an increasing role in the provision of Urgent and Emergency care.
- There are great examples of where the blue light services are already working together, such as the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP), which is looking at how services can work closer together at serious and major incidents, and this will continue.
- In terms of command and control, joint emergency control facilities would be straightforward if we were starting from a blank page, however, we are not. The Fire and Police Service are similar in their deployment models whereas the Ambulance service has developed fundamentally different requirements. The structure and function of control rooms, the staffing infrastructure which supports them and the IT systems differ considerably as do the respective incoming workloads. As a result, existing examples of multi agency control centres have, in most cases, been little more than shared buildings. To move beyond this and achieve performance or efficiency benefits, any true mergers of control rooms must require fully developed business cases, project appraisal and project plans before operational and political decisions are made to move forward.