

NEW WSFRS HORSHAM TRAINING CENTRE AND FIRE STATION



FORMAL STAFF CONSULTATION ON IMPACTS OF WORK BASE RELOCATIONS IN JUNE 2023

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1.	Background and Context	3
2.	Proposals	3
3.	Impacts of Change	4
3.1.	Development & Operational Training	4
3.1.1.	Impact of location changes	4
3.2	Horsham Retained (RDS) Unit	4
3.2.1	Proposed location changes	5
3.2.2	Turn-In Time Impacts	5
3.2.3	Considerations in relation to turn in times	6
3.2.4	Assessment of implications	6
3.2.5	Feedback and suggestions	7
3.3	Horsham Wholetime	8
3.3.1	Impacts of Location Changes	8
3.4	Fleet Team	8
3.4.1	Impact of location change	8
4	Consultation Approach	8
4.1	Proposed Consultation Process and Timescales	8
4.2	Support During the Change	10
4.3	Proposed Implementation Timetable	10

1. Background and Context

The new WSFRS Training Centre and Horsham Fire Station site will open in Spring/Summer 2023. This will see the existing Horsham fire station moved and our training function centralised into the new site at Highwood Mill. This will result in a change for whole teams (Development & Training, Horsham Wholetime & Retained), while in other cases the changes affect only some individuals within the team.

For most staff groups, this will be a straight-forward change of location which may provide some reduction in travel times to Highwood Mills. However, for other groups of staff, there are some impacts which may include increased travel times and longer journeys which could disrupt personal or working arrangements. For some of our retained firefighters at Horsham, the impacts on turn in times are significant and have the potential to impact the ability of the service to meet our obligations under the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

The Service's strategic priorities as set out in our CRMP that apply to these changes are:

- Responding to fires and emergencies quickly and effectively
- Making the best use of resources; and
- Having a safe and valued workforce.

The Horsham Project Delivery Board has spent many months reviewing the impacts, exploring the options available, reviewing existing policy and practice, and considering ways to mitigate or reduce the impacts identified. For staff impacted by additional travel mileage, there are policy provisions that will enable additional costs incurred to be reimbursed where the scheme criteria is met.

This paper sets out proposals for the management of the impact of the relocation of staff impacted by the change. The aim of the document therefore is to provide staff and unions with information on our proposals for managing the impact of the location change.

During the consultation period we will be seeking to gather and consider feedback and to listen to, and take into account, representations and suggestions on the approach from impacted staff, and trade unions.

A formal consultation period will commence on **7 November 2022** and (subject to feedback during the consultation period), will close on **7 December 2022**.

2. Proposals

This paper sets out the proposals along with the proposed approach to consultation, specifically:

- Proposed changes to work locations and the impacts on travel to work journeys, and how additional travel expenses may be claimed for those eligible.
- The potential future risk of redundancy for retained colleagues impacted by increased turn-in times together with proposals for how this risk will be mitigated and managed.
- The potential to consider future alternative employment opportunities for retained colleagues with increased turn-in times.
- The proposed approach to continuing recruitment activity in the developing residential areas around Highwood Mills, to bolster resilience.

- The proposed approach to reviewing impacts of the location change for individuals after 12 months to allow the service to revisit Horsham's performance for any impact on staff.

The proposals are intended to minimise the impact on retained staff while the Service works to understand the impact on emergency response times and availability in the new location while also ensuring recruitment activity continues to ensure the station is fully resourced in the short-term.

3. Impacts of Change

As a result of the proposals and impacts set out in this document, the following teams are identified as in scope of the consultation:

Staff group	Current work location	New work location
Development & Operational Training	Worthing fire station	New Horsham Training Centre and Fire Station Highwood Mills, Horsham
Horsham Station Retained staff	Hurst Road fire station	
Horsham Station Wholetime staff	Hurst Road fire station	
Fleet staff	Hurst Road fire station	

3.1. Development & Operational Training

All Development & Operational Training (DOT) staff which is currently made up of 25 staff comprising of 7 green book staff and 18 Grey book staff, will be relocated.

It is proposed that all training staff with a current contractual work base at Worthing Fire Station will be relocated to the new Training Facility at Highwood Mills, Horsham.

3.1.1. Impact of location changes

There are 5 'Green Book' staff and 13 'Grey Book' staff directly impacted as a result of the relocation and are anticipated to experience longer journeys and therefore incur additional mileage expenses.

Travel for DOT Grey Book Trainers may be reduced by where it is possible to work at other WSFRS stations nearer to home. Additionally, when individuals are required to deliver training away from the normal office base, they can make use of the existing service vehicles which are specifically allocated to the training team for work purposes.

Appendix one of this document outlines a summary of the policy provisions relating to additional expenses incurred due to the requirement to relocate.

3.2 Horsham Retained (RDS) Unit

The RDS unit is currently made up of 18 retained firefighters. The team is comprised of:

- One watch manager
- Five crew managers
- Twelve firefighters

The Unit has been performing at a high availability rate averaging 81%.

The standard resourcing level for Horsham is 11fte. The Service has 13 staff on 50-hour contracts and 4 staff on 80-hour contracts (these are all allocated as 0.75fte). The Unit also has 1 retained individual on a 120-hour (1fte) contract which brings the total number of personnel in the Horsham RDS section to 18. This equates to 13.75fte. The Horsham RDS establishment has been deliberately running over establishment for two years. However, the retained service as a whole, is under-establishment and consequently, this higher level of capacity within Horsham is managed within the total Response budget.

The relocation from Hurst Road to Highwood Mills will have an impact on some retained colleagues. The following section outlines the impacts identified.

3.2.1 Proposed location changes

It is proposed that all retained firefighters are relocated from Hurst Road to Highwood Mills. In this instance staff will not be eligible to claim for additional travel expenses because the additional distance is less than 20 miles. Mileage expenses can only be claimed where additional mileage exceeds 20 miles.

There is also an identified impact on turn in times which is outlined in the following section.

3.2.2 Turn-In Time Impacts

The contractual turn-in time for retained staff is 4mins, however the Retained SOP allows for these times to be varied at the discretion of the Station Manager provided certain criteria are met as detailed below in point 3.2.3.

The table below illustrates the current turn in times and how these will be affected by the location change. The calculations are based on a comparison of journey times from postholders home post code to the current (Hurst Road) and new (Highwood Mills) locations. The analysis has been undertaken using google maps based on a journey taking place at 10am and 5pm, recognising that travel times will vary according to the time of day.

	HURST ROAD	HIGHWOOD MILLS 10am	HIGHWOOD MILLS 5pm
Turn in times	Number of post holders within turn in time	Number of post holders within turn in time	Number of post holders within turn in time
3-4mins	8	6	4
5mins	4	2	3
6mins	4	3	1
7mins	1	2	3
8mins	1	2	2
9mins	Nil	3	1
10mins	Nil	Nil	1
11mins	Nil	Nil	3

The analysis indicates that six current post holders will continue to be able to respond within the existing requirement of a turn in time of 4 minutes.

The analysis indicates that 12 individuals would no longer meet the four-minute turn-in time with 7 of those having turn in times increased to seven minutes or more. Currently only two have turn in times of over seven minutes.

3.2.3 Considerations in relation to turn in times

Although the four-minute turn-in time is outlined in the contract of employment, the Retained Duty System Monitoring SOP provides for turn-in times to be extended at the discretion of the Station or Group Manager. It is common practice across the Service for retained staff to have an extended turn-in time agreed under the following circumstances:

- Where there are national challenges around recruiting and retaining RDS staff;
- Where the local risk requires a higher number of retained staff than the four-minute boundary can attract; and
- Where a local turn-in time of 4-6 minutes (or in some limited circumstances more than seven minutes) enables the appliance to still meet the emergency response standard and respond faster than an immediate deployment from a neighbouring station.

Although the actual requirements for the new station will take time to understand, stations with similar risk profiles have been considered. There are limited circumstances where turn in times of over six minutes are accommodated. Other stations that are comparable to Horsham Fire Station in terms of risk profile (Littlehampton, Bognor Regis, Chichester) have no more than two individuals with turn in time over seven mins. Based on this, the most significant potential impact of the location change is identified as being for retained staff who will have a turn in time of seven-minutes or more due to the location change. There is no risk of redundancy identified at this stage in the project. However, it is possible that significantly increased turn in times will have impacts on individuals and service delivery in future and there may be a potential risk of redundancy where turn in time is significantly impacted and in the event that such an impact cannot be mitigated following the 12-month review period. A further consultation period will therefore take place following conclusion of the review if there are identified service delivery implications of increased turn in times.

3.2.4 Assessment of implications

There is no immediate proposal for redundancies and redundancies will not arise immediately from the relocation. It is proposed that all retained staff will transfer to the new location so that the impacts can be more fully evaluated and understood. A clear understanding of the needs of the station, and the implications of current resourcing on service performance, will take at least 12 months to evaluate following the relocation.

It is therefore proposed that if in practice following evaluation, the impacts are significant, and the risk of redundancy arises, a further full staff consultation process will be undertaken.

At this stage therefore the proposal is for all retained staff to move to the new location, while a full review and evaluation takes place over a period of twelve months.

The main issues that underpin this proposal are summarised in the following paragraphs along with considerations, options, and actions that are activities proposed to mitigate the issues:

- a) The increase to turn-in times indicates that the response time of the second appliance is likely to increase: Initial modelling indicates that the turn-in times may be 1.23 minutes slower on average. Accurately assessing this is difficult because of the dependency on factors such as where the postholder responds from (from home, employment for example) and the time of day an incident arises. It may be possible to tolerate this increase as it is unlikely that appliances from neighbouring stations will be able to respond more quickly than the retained appliance at Horsham.
- b) Deployment is reliant on all four firefighters (including a Junior Officer and a Driver) arriving at the station to operate the appliance: Currently, five out of the six Junior Officers are meeting turn in times of four mins or less. However, after the location change, there is potential for a reduction in the ability of the six junior officers to meet a four-minute turn in time. To mitigate this, we will explore Firefighters obtaining the level 1 incident command qualification and acting up, which will cover the key responsibility of managing the incident to ensure the appliance can respond.
- c) There is a risk that there will be insufficient capacity in the service to meet response requirements: There is a need to ensure there is sufficient capacity within the retained service to be able to manage response times. Going into the location change with a recognised need to evaluate the impact on service delivery means that response times could be significantly impacted early on in the transition. To mitigate this risk, it is proposed to continue with recruitment as planned to support our existing rota gaps i.e., on weekends, by temporarily increasing the RDS establishment from 13.75fte to 16fte which will remain within the total Retained Service establishment to support in bolstering response times during the evaluation period.

3.2.5 Feedback and suggestions

The purpose of the consultation is to seek feedback on the proposed approach to managing the impact of the location changes. Staff and trade union feedback is sought regarding any options that could be taken in relation to reducing further the risk of redundancy as the service is reviewed over the coming 12 months.

3.3 Horsham Wholetime

The Horsham station's wholetime unit is currently running at 25. The unit comprises of five Watch Managers, Five Crew Managers, and 15 firefighters. Six of the 25 wholetime personnel have dual contracts and have therefore been included in the analysis relating to turn in times above.

3.3.1 Impacts of Location Changes

It is proposed that all Wholetime staff will transfer to the new Horsham Station.

An initial analysis of the data for 27 individuals with **wholetime contracts**, indicates the following impacts:

- **Reduction in travel time:** 11 individuals are expected to experience reduced journey times from their home to the new Station location at Highwood Mills.
- **Increase in travel time:** 15 individuals are expected to experience additional journey times of between two and four miles. The provisions within the Grey Book mean that such individuals will not be eligible to claim for additional mileage expenses as the travel time is below the minimum additional mileage required to claim.
- **Neutral impact:** for the Flexi Duty Officer, with use of a service vehicle for duty, will not be eligible to claim expenses for additional mileage incurred.

3.4 Fleet Team

There is one Service Van Engineer on Green Book Terms and Conditions whose contractual work location is at Hurst Road, Horsham Fire Station. It is proposed that the postholder will be transferred to Highwood Mills. There are no changes proposed for the rest of the Fleet team

3.4.1 Impact of location change

It is expected that the postholder will experience a longer journey time as a result of the change. The post holder will be eligible to claim for expenses incurred as a result of the additional mileage in accordance with the Office Relocation Policy.

4 Consultation Approach

4.1 Proposed Consultation Process and Timescales.

The formal consultation process will commence on 7 November 2022.

Subject to representations received, it is proposed that the formal consultation will close on 7 December 2022.

Employees will be invited by their Heads of Service / Station Manager to consultation briefings where they will have an opportunity to ask questions and understand the proposals. Human Resources and Trade Union representatives will also attend. As the relocation affects both 'Green Book' and Grey Book' staff within different service areas,

staff briefings will be tailored to accommodate different working patterns. To accommodate different working arrangements, consideration will be given to consultation sessions taking place via Microsoft Teams or face-to-face. Individuals impacted by the proposals will also have the opportunity to request a 1:1 consultation meeting with a member of the management team.

For employees on maternity/adoption leave, long term sickness absence, sabbaticals and secondments affected by the relocation, appropriate arrangements will be put in place to formally consult with them. This could include online meetings, sending information to home addresses, or visiting employees at home according to individual preferences.

A dedicated mailbox has been set up for employees to send their comments and queries during the consultation period. The address is HRFRS@westsussex.gov.uk.

To enable a timely response, please ensure the email is titled 'HORSHAM CONSULTATION'. Messages sent to this mailbox will be reviewed by HR and the Head of Service. Impacted individuals may also make representations and share views directly with their Heads of Service as follows:

Development and Operational Training: Catherine Walker, Head of Development and Operational Training and GM Steve Buchanan-Lee, Head of Operational Training.

RDS and Wholetime: SM Jon Mays or Area Manager (Response) Gary Ball.

Fleet: Acting Head of Fleet Mike Cannon

The relevant Trade Union officials will be in touch with their members shortly after the launch of this consultation.

Members of UNISON may make formal representations about these proposals through their trade union, and can direct their views, queries and any other comments to Lyndsay Pink. Lyndsay can be contacted via the WSCC UNISON office at office.unison@westsussex.gov.uk or on 01243 777636.

Members of the FBU can contact Antony Walker at antony.walker@fbu.org.uk and Edward Fox at edward.fox@fbu.org.uk

Members of the FRSA can contact James Diston at james.diston@westsussex.gov.uk.

Feedback and representations will be considered by the Heads of Service supported by HR, throughout the consultation period.

Questions and queries will be answered individually as they arise. A more general Frequently Asked Questions document may be issued and updated periodically in the event that there are points of clarity that would be helpful for the whole team to see.

As representations are received, changes to the proposals may be made, in which case these will be communicated via email to all employees, or through sharing an updated version of the consultation document.

The initial aim, subject to the completion of the consultation period as planned on 7 December 2022, will be to communicate the outcomes of the consultation by 15 December 2022.

4.2 Support During the Change

We recognise that any kind of change can be unsettling. Your line manager and trade union representative will be able to provide you with the support and information throughout the process.

In addition, the following support is also available from the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The EAP is available to provide support, guidance, advice, and counselling to all employees. This is a free and confidential service provided by Health Assured, an independent external organization which provides employees and their families free access to a confidential, independent, telephone helpline. The helpline provides an opportunity to talk through a problem and will give information and advice in relation to personal, family, financial, work, and legal or health related issues. Short term face-to-face counselling can be arranged, where appropriate. The service can be accessed as follows:

- By Phone: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year via the free phone number: 0800 028 0199.
- Online: information, self-help guides and webinars on a range of issues via the EAP Website <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/home/> (Username: Wellbeing Password: Support)
- My Healthy Advantage App: Support is also available by searching the Android or Apple app stores. Once downloaded enter the following employer code when prompted: **MHA000088**

4.3 Proposed Implementation Timetable

The following table outlines the proposed timescales for the consultation and implementation. These timescales may change depending on information received through the consultation process.

When	What	Responsible
24 October 2022	Joint Consultative Committee Meetings held with FBU, FRSA, UNISON	SEB/Heads of Service/SM/HR
Week commencing 7 November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Briefings by Head of Service with affected staff • Consultation period starts. 	Heads of Service/HR
7 November -7 December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for affected staff to meet on a confidential basis with Line Manager or an HR representative to discuss individual impacts of relocation and ways of working. 	Heads of Service/HR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of questions, concerns, comments. 	
w/c 21 November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mid review with trade unions at SEB. 	Heads of Service/HR/SEB
7 December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation period ends. This may be extended if necessary. 	
15 December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of feedback and consideration of concerns / alternative proposals. • Formal response issued. 	Heads of Service/HR/SEB
Nov 2022 – May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing normal RDS recruitment activity. 	Horsham Station Manager / RLO
Feb – May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of any new RDS Recruits 	DOT
From 1 June 2023	Staff relocation to Highwood Mills	

Appendix 1 – Summary of provisions for claiming for additional travel expenses

1. Summary of Office Relocation Policy Provisions for Green Book Staff

Provisions relating to relocations for staff employed on “Green Book” terms and conditions are contained within the [Office Relocation Scheme](#). Expenses are only payable where the scheme conditions have been met.

Convenience alone will not be counted as a reason for approving mileage and therefore Managers and employees should explore all alternative options including the options set out below:

- If authority-provided transport is available, you will be expected to use this as a first option.
- If authority provided transport is unavailable public transport should be considered.

Where additional mileage is unavailable, eligible employees may claim the difference between the cost of travelling from home to the old place of work and home to the new place of work at the standard County Council car or motorbike mileage rate (depending on the method of transport).

This mileage expenses are payable for a period of two years from the date of move, subject to the scheme conditions. Expenses are only payable where the excess mileage exceeds the minimum weekly cost of £5.51. This amount is pro-rated for part-time staff.

For those individuals already in receipt of excess travel following a previous location change, individual circumstances will be discussed to agree how the remainder of the excess travel period will be managed as a result of this subsequent move. Mileage claims are paid one month in arrears, so individuals should ensure claims are submitted in good time. If you have access to the Point, claims can be submitted through the ‘Submit an Expense Claim’ tile on the Task Centre, the Point.

The [Office Relocation record the discussion form](#) should be used to confirm the rationale for the decisions made in respect of each individual who is considered eligible to make a claim in respect of additional travel; the [office relocation spreadsheet](#) should also completed by each Head of Service and returned to HR.

2. Summary of Office Relocation Policy Provisions for Grey Book Staff

The provisions for staff employed on Grey Book terms and conditions are set out in the [Expenses SOP](#). Home to Duty travel expenses for wholetime uniform personnel are only applicable to employees who are transferred by the Service to a location that is further from their home address. Payment will be made for the difference in mileage between the employee’s home to their new work location and their home to their old work location, subject to the following:

- The calculation of mileage being by the most direct route and from the county boundary for those employees living outside the county.
- The exclusion of the cost of the first twenty return miles of the journey which will be borne by the employee.

This allowance is payable for a period of four years from the date of move, subject to the scheme conditions and will cease the following circumstances within the four-year period:

- The employee moves house,
- The employee is moved to a location nearer to their home,
- The employee requests or accepts a transfer or is promoted, or
- The employee leaves WSFRS.

3 Getting to work at Highwood Mills, Horsham

Car

Staff relocating to Highwood Mills, will have access to free car parking spaces on site. Alternatively, a free car park is available at [Horsham Park & Ride, Southwater. RH13 0AR](#). Staff are reminded that costs incurred for parking at other locations will not be reimbursed. Staff for whom car parking may be problematic, are encouraged to consider alternative solutions including car sharing and pool cars.

Bus Service

There is a direct bus service departing from Horsham, Bishopric (a 3mins walk from the Station) and arriving at Tesco, Broadbridge Heath, RH12 3YU. The journey takes approximately 7mins by bus and then approx. 15-18mins walk to the new Highwood Mills.

However, services depart only every three hours, and operate Monday to Saturday.

Train

Horsham Rail Station is approximately 10mins drive away from the new facility at Highwood Mills.