



# From Buildings to People: A New Regulatory Regime for Fire and Rescue Services


Impact case study

**Unit(s) of assessment:** Business and Management Studies


**Research theme:** [Safety and Security of Citizens and Society](#)

**School:** Nottingham Business School

# Impact

Research by Peter Murphy and his team has demonstrated the benefits of a new people-centred approach to risk assessment, supported by evidence-led performance management data for the Fire and Rescue Services. The new [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) , published in July 2012, was based around these twin principles developed at NTU.

New frameworks for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland followed England's lead, demonstrating the far-reaching impact of the research.


Impact is also evident at a local level, where all local services adopted the new approach and [Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service](#)  commissioned Murphy and Greenhalgh to assist the re-configuration of its emergency cover on the new approach.

In June 2010, the UK government announced a strategic review of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. Nottingham Business School commissioned Murphy, Joyce Liddle and Kirsten Greenhalgh to analyse and evaluate the national framework, particularly arrangements for scrutiny in terms of performance data.

Their research focused on comparing national performance management regimes and performance data on databases retained by government. The findings highlighted weaknesses in the performance data and made recommendations to improve local and national databases and the systems that collated performance data for the Fire and Rescue Services.

The approach to risk management recommended by the researchers was:

- People-centred – assessing risk to life rather than focusing on the risk to property or assets, as previous models of risk management had done.
- Evidence-led – building on robust, transparent, quality-assured performance data that was systematically investigated and appropriate to the situation.

NTU's research with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service won the [2013 Fire Magazine / GORE Research Excellence Award](#)  in November 2013.

## Research background

In 2005-06, Greenhalgh, carrying out research with Harrison of Loughborough University, found that the introduction of **national performance indicators** had helped to deliver improvements in the Fire and Rescue Service but the available performance data was inadequate to facilitate future improvement.

In 2009, Murphy joined [Nottingham Business School](#) from the Department of Communities and Local Government, where had worked extensively on performance management and emergency planning. From 2009-11, Murphy, Greenhalgh and Dan Wheatley contributed to a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to evaluate the **effectiveness of community safety activities** in reducing risk. The findings identified weaknesses in local and national performance data that prevented the development of robust and detailed risk profiles for local communities.





The background to this project lies in the 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act which introduced the new Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) process. This radical legislation fundamentally changed the approach to fire risk assessment in England and Wales, from a system based around an assessment of risk to property, to a system based around an assessment of risk to people.

The NBS research has facilitated the **efficient and effective introduction** of this new people-centered, evidence-led approach to risk assessment and the consequential service reconfiguration. It has reviewed the strategic positioning of the IRMP in the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services and its implementation at the local service level in Nottinghamshire and elsewhere.

The research looks at the **impact of the national framework** on the management of fire and rescue services and compares it to other public sector performance regimes. It not only critically appraises existing systems but demonstrates how they can be improved and how they can learn from each other.

## Evidence

### Evidence of NTU's research on people-centred risk assessment

- [The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#) 
- [The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2013](#) 
- [Keeping Communities Safe – A framework for Fire Safety in Ireland 2013](#) 
- [Fire Cover Review: Report of the Chief Fire Officer](#)  Paragraph 2.26: "the Service has had the methodology and process independently verified by Nottingham Trent University. This has resulted in the Service being informed that the outcomes which they have come to are based on robust research and that the Fire Authority can have the confidence that any actions which result from the review are sound."

### The 2013 Fire and Gore Research Excellence Award

- "This award is not only for this years' excellent paper and the research that went into it but it also recognizes the continual excellence in the initiatives that have been presented by NTU and Nottinghamshire FRS over the last three years. It is an excellent example of the industry and academia collaborating to mutual advantage." (Andrew Lynch, Editor of Fire Magazine and Chair of Judges for the research excellence award)

### Testimonial letters

- Councillor Daryl Pulk, Chairman Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority
- Frank Swann Chief Fire Officer - Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Craig Parkin Area Manager and Head of Learning and Development, Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

## Publications

### Key publications

- Murphy P., Greenhalgh, K. and Jones, M., 2011. Comprehensive performance assessment and public services improvement in England: A case study of the benefits administration service in local government. *Local Government Studies* 37 (6) 579-99.
- Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, 2011. Independent appraisal of the data collection, systems and modelling for the fire cover review options report. NFRS/NBS June 2011.
- Murphy, P., Greenhalgh, K. and Parkin, C., 2012. Fire and rescue service reconfiguration: a case study in Nottinghamshire. *International Journal of Emergency Services*, 1 (1) 86-94.
- Murphy, P., Greenhalgh, K. and Jones, M., 2013. Housing and council tax benefits administration in England: A long term perspective on the performance of the local government delivery system. *Local Government Studies*, 26 September 2013.
- Murphy, P. and Greenhalgh, K. (2013) Performance management in fire and rescue services. *Public Money & Management*, 33 (3), 225-32.
- Murphy, P., Greenhalgh, K. and Parkin, C., 2013. Collaboration and interconnectivity: Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services and higher education institutions in Nottingham. *Teaching Public Administration*, 31 (2), 165-173.

## Related projects

- [The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) 
- The Implementation of the Integrated Risk Management Planning process in Nottinghamshire
- Fire and rescue Services: International Comparisons
- Intervention, Strategic Turnaround and Recovery in Public Services

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