



LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

NEWS RELEASE

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LFRS FIREFIGHTER DEPLOYED TO BANGLADESH AS PART OF UK EMERGENCY MEDICAL TEAM

On Saturday 30 December, Chris Pritchard, a firefighter at Southern Fire and Rescue Station, was deployed as part of the UK's Emergency Medical Team (EMT) to assist in the medical effort to combat diphtheria outbreak in Bangladesh. Chris is part of the International Search and Rescue Team (UK ISAR), specialising in search and rescue dogs.

Chris is one of a 40-strong team of British doctors, nurses and firefighters from the UK's Emergency Medical Team (EMT) who have been deployed to save thousands of lives at risk from a rapid and deadly outbreak of diphtheria in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

This is the first ever deployment of Britain's EMT since it was certified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2016. It follows a formal request for assistance from the WHO and the Government of Bangladesh after a suspected 1,470 cases and 20 reported deaths of the airborne virus.

Chris said "I'm proud to be deploying with our international Emergency Medical Team in support of the humanitarian crisis."

Chief Fire and Rescue Officer at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Rick Taylor, said "We're proud to be able to support Chris and our other UK ISAR members in their response to humanitarian accidents or disasters anywhere in the world, no matter the time of year. We wish Chris and the rest of the team success in their mission, and look forward to their safe return."

Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Roy Wilsher said: "Firefighters from the UK ISAR have 25 years' experience of deploying overseas to provide assistance to affected countries on behalf of the UK Government in times of crisis.

"The firefighters will be responsible for the transportation, accommodation and safety and security of the medical staff. They will also work with the International Organization for Migration to improve standards within the refugee camps."

Chris will return to the UK on Friday 19 January after almost three weeks in Bangladesh.

ENDS

Notes to editors: Photos can be found below or by request to Corporate Communications using the below contact details.

About the Service

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides emergency response, prevention and protection services from 20 stations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Its headquarters is based in Birstall, Leicester.

The Service's prevention, education, enforcement and inspection programmes have resulted in significant reductions in the number of incidents. In the last ten years, fire related incidents have reduced by 46 percent.

During 2015/16, the Service attended 666 road traffic collisions, of which 174 were extrications freeing 208 people trapped inside their vehicles and completed 5086 home fire safety checks, fitting almost 4481 smoke alarms. Staff organised or supported almost 1431 events aimed at promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, whilst also visiting 332 schools to deliver fire and road safety education to pupils.

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