Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

FOI REFERENCE: FOI 23/24 - 167

DATE RECEIVED: 21/11/2023

TITLE / CATEGORY: Equipment and facilities – Drones

REQUEST

1. How many drones do Tyne and Wear Fire currently own?
2. How much do the drones cost?
3. What are the used for?
4. How many staff members are trained to use drones?
5. What legislation and rules do people using drones have to follow? Do Fire services follow the same rules?
6. Has there been many positive outcomes while using drones?

RESPONSE

1. 2 Drones
2. The 2 drones cost between £5,000 - £30,000.
3. They are primarily used for Firefighter safety at fires, pinpointing 'hot-spots' to inform Commanders of fire spread. They are also used to inform Commanders of the size and scale of incidents, for example, they can give an overview of an incident to allow the planning and deployment of resources as well as a wide area search following an RTC. They can also be used to aid our partner agencies in the search for vulnerable missing persons
4. 4 members of staff
5. We are governed by the CAA regulations for UAS that insist we pass the General VLOS exam (GVC) and Blue Light Exam.
6. The drone has been used to numerous times as mentioned above to look for 'hot-spot' at incidents as well as fire spread, allowing Commanders to make informed decisions on where best to locate resources. It has also been used to assist our partner agencies, again on numerous occasions, to confirm that a large area does not have persons in it, allowing the emergency services to move on to other locations where the missing persons are thought to be.