

Schools Minister Announcement
26.02.07 National Fire Sprinkler Network

- Long standing personal concern and involvement with issue
- Particularly relevant to schools. Impact can't be underestimated – coursework & resources up in smoke, disruption to education
- Despite decline in school fires, still costs more than £50 million per year. Arson big problem, especially in summer holidays – estimate 60 % fires lit deliberately – sprinklers can be a weapon against arson
- Building Bulletin 100, being published in early summer, will include extensive guidance on value of sprinklers for protecting property
- Of course, need to balance risk assessment against value for money. But investment in sprinklers pays off in terms of lower insurance premiums - especially in PFI projects
- Expectation that all but the few low fire risk new schools will install sprinklers but need schools and local authorities themselves to make the decision about whether a sprinkler system meets their needs – might not always be the right solution or cost effective
- That's why have produced new materials for schools to help them feel confident in the choices they make – both available for the first time here today
 - Risk assessment tool to assess whether sprinklers would be a sensible option
 - Interactive cost-benefit analysis to show whether they are good value – even low risk schools should be using this to check the value of installing sprinklers
- Also producing a suite of guidance setting out specifications and good practice in school buildings
- Especially important as BSF rolls out – need to help schools make the most of this once in a generation opportunity and of course, far cheaper to fit sprinklers during building than later on
- Specifications on sprinklers an essential part of that guidance. Will be consulting industry in the spring – essential to have your involvement and endorsement – ready for schools to start using this in the summer