

28 June 2019

NFCC: Central Programme Office Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report summarises the current work of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Central Programme Office, and provides an update from Committee Chairs.

Recommendation

Members are to note the contents of this report.

Action

Officers are to take forward any comments for future work.

Contact officer: Roy Wilsher

Position: NFCC Chair

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People Programme Update

1. The programme is currently focussing on two strategies that are in development. The first being the Apprenticeship Strategy which was brought to the programme board and the Strategic Engagement Forum in May. Further external engagement is required on this before a final draft is signed off by the programme board and it is anticipated to be brought to the Steering Group for virtual approval this summer.
2. The second strategy is the Inclusion Strategy and the programme board considered an early draft and what engagement would support its development. The board is clear that the strategy should be high level and light touch, focussing on evaluation of existing measures relating to equality and diversity and how the strategy can be implemented and deliver real business change. A more detailed update is given below on each of these pieces of work.
3. Joint chairs have been appointed to the People Engagement Forum which engages a broader range of external organisations that are specifically interested in the People Programme. Miriam Heppell, Humberside FRS and Judi Beresford, Derbyshire FRS were successful following an open process and the two will bring a greater breadth of experience and expertise and flexibility in their support of the forum. The next steps will be to agree terms of reference and make arrangements for the first meeting.
4. The development of a policy panel and process is underway to progress the 'do it once' objective from the People Strategy. The model maternity policy is being used as a trial case to develop a robust but flexible assurance process to deliver model policies that provide for local determination.

Leadership Project

5. A workshop was held 30 April 2019 to initiate a working group focussing on talent and succession management. The group scoped what national products would bring the greatest benefit and agreed a toolkit that would include key principles, a talent identification model, generic job descriptions at each level of a fire and rescue service and a mentoring scheme. The group also hope to bring clarity to the debate surrounding multi-tiered entry.
6. The consultation results from the Core Learning Pathways are being reviewed. The survey received responses from 26 individuals from a cross section of roles and substantial qualitative feedback. The team will review the document based on this feedback and intend to bring a final draft through the programme board to the Steering Group in October.

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Apprenticeships Project

7. As mentioned above the Apprenticeship Strategy is nearing completion of its development. The Strategic Engagement Forum identified that further engagement with employers and employees is required before the programme board finally approve the document. The strategy is high level and the project have planned further engagement on its delivery but interest in the strategy at this stage is welcomed and should ensure better level of engagement throughout the project.
8. The project is well underway in developing a feasibility study relating to the establishment of an End Point Assessment Organisation which should complete in July. The outcomes of the study will be provided to CFOA Services Limited to consider the development of a business case to provide the central function. The feasibility study will be brought to the October Steering Group for consideration.

On-Call Project

9. With the completion of the on-call branding materials, toolkit and website, the project team are now well placed to transition this into maintenance arrangements. This will include resources to support FRSs and maintain the products and the development of fresh media materials to ensure local media campaigns remain successful and to feed an annual national media campaign. Hampshire FRS are kindly supporting this initially with longer term arrangements to be made for 2020 onwards.
10. The development of materials aimed at primary employers is nearing completion with the release of a case study video featuring Howdens, a 'sting' video and guidance for employers of prospective on-call staff promoting the benefits. The release of these is anticipated over the summer. The project team have also been invited to attend an EE and BT event to promote on-call as part of their social responsibility initiatives and the team hope to generate some interest in the role as well as challenge public perception.
11. CFO Terry McDermott retires later this year and so is in the process of handing over the role of NFCC On-Call Lead to Glenn Askew, DCFO Devon and Somerset. Terry has worked hard to significantly progress the on-call agenda and engaged with a broad range of stakeholders in an area that continues to challenge the sector at a local and national level. The People Programme (and previously the Workforce Committee) is indebted to him for his leadership, perseverance, forward thinking and inclusive approach. We would all like to wish Terry a long, happy and healthy retirement and every success in his future endeavours.

Blended Learning Project

12. FRSLearn.com was presented to the NFCC Full Council in April 2019 and there was clear support and enthusiasm for what the platform can deliver. The feedback that the team took away related to assurance of the products. The team agrees that this is the next challenge to ensure the benefits of sharing learning materials can be realised and had already started to discuss with training managers and other stakeholders how this might be achieved.

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13. The initial step would be to provide a self-assessment so services can provide a level of confidence in the content of the materials particularly in relation to NOG compliance. A full process would likely involve the Operations Committee reviewing operational practices to reduce the differential so that a duplication of effort in developing training materials can be minimised. A dedicated team to manage the process, coordinate a collaborative effort, provide e-learning expertise and produce best practice materials would ensure the benefits and efficiencies of collaboration are driven through. Engagement with relevant stakeholders will take place over the summer and feed into the development of an options appraisal which will be presented to the Steering Group in October 2019.
14. The Training Managers Forum regional group met for its inaugural meeting 29 April 2019. The group showed clear appetite to collaborate and there are significant areas of mutual interest that will be discussed with the wider service at the Training Managers Conference in July 2019. We again heard concerns around assurance of learning materials on FRSLearn and the desire for a more coordinated approach to developing NOG compliant materials to support implementation.

Inclusion (Equality and Diversity) Project

15. As mentioned above the development of an Inclusion Strategy has commenced with an early draft being discussed at the programme board. The board were keen to see an evaluation of the level of improvement around equality and diversity across FRS and to better understand what is and isn't achieving change. In terms of engagement, workshops during the summer will hope to draw a cross section of stakeholders to consider impact assessments both in terms of service provision and globally.
16. The focus for this workstream is on delivering change rather than reading materials. To support this the programme board is keen to establish a project board who can focus specifically on scoping the work and delivering and implementing outputs. Whilst the board will require some expertise in inclusion, equality and diversity, greater value will be placed delivering change, influencing stakeholders and having representation from a cross section of FRSs and other relevant organisations. Any individuals interested in helping to lead this crucial piece of work should discuss with Ann Millington, Programme Executive or Glenn Askew, Inclusion Project Executive.

Community Risk Programme (CRP) Update

17. The Nottingham Trent University (NTU) research report was received by the Project Executive and presented to the Programme Board 2 April 2019. The Board agreed that the report met the objectives set out when this work was commissioned and is now considering the recommendations it makes and how to prioritise them.
18. The Board met on the 23 May and considered the Recommendation Report put forward by the Project Executive of the NTU Research Project. The Board agreed the recommendations within the report and that there was further work to be done on packaging those initiatives into projects and understanding how they interfaced with the Data and Digital Programme.

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19. The Board agreed that the prioritisation of projects would be undertaken at the next Board (25 June) where a Programme Structure workshop would be held to explore the organisation of the projects within the programme.
20. The Board agreed the Communications Plan which is to be carried out by the newly appointed part time Communications Officer. The Workplace Community Risk page will be the primary way of communicating progress to interested parties and will post regular updates.
21. A Community Risk Programme page has also been created on the NFCC website where information about the programme is also held.
22. The programme has sent out a survey aimed at those responsible in their service for the production of (I)RMPs to help gauge views, identify who the programme needs to engage with, and also to serve as an evaluation tool in assessing how successful we've been in raising awareness of the CRP in the future.
23. We continue to raise awareness of the CRP through other forums such as Committee meetings and with external stakeholders. In May we presented the CRP to both the Prevention and Protection Committee and met with the IFE and the HMICFRS. We have a meeting scheduled with the Home Office in June.
24. Following the Board Workshop on 25 June where the priority of the projects will be set, work will then begin on initiating those projects. A Project Manager has been newly appointed to enable to pace of the programme to continue.

Digital Programme Update

25. As part of the Discovery Project the team hosted a data analyst meetup in April to test whether the identified data problems were right and whether they were worth pursuing. The event was both well received and well represented, with representatives from 30 services in attendance. The three data problems identified in our digital and data strategy were discussed at length and agreed by the group.
26. **Outdated IRS:** Closely following receipt of the Home Office update on the delayed status of their IRS replacement project, the group expressed a clear desire for a full IRS replacement and provided rich feedback on what functionality such a system should have, aligning with the ambitions outlined by the Home Office. In lieu of a full replacement, a number of suggestions were made for interim functional improvements and bug fixes on the current system that would enhance value and usability. Of course, many services don't use the IRS directly, but if a national system could be developed that would tempt services to move away from expensive 3rd party options then the savings and efficiencies to be gained over 10 years would be substantial. The NFCC responded to the Home Office update and await further discussions to ensure progress can be made.
27. Data standards and data warehousing: A clear appetite also emerged from the group for data standards across all data, not just for incident data. The group saw major benefits to

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having all data in a single place that is accessible to all, including richer insight and more valid analysis as well as broader commercial opportunities.

28. A one day 'unconference' was held on 8 May, which gave FRSs the opportunity to talk about the digital work they're undertaking. It was seen as a way to match up like minds and see if people can join up what they are doing.

29. Applications for the Programme Executive position are currently being reviewed and an appointment will be made soon. When the programme board first convenes they will review the outputs of the Discovery project and determine the initial structure of the programme to be delivered

Fire Standard

30. The second meeting of the Fire Standards Board (FSB) was held on 2 April.

31. The Board received feedback from the meeting between the Minister and the Board Chair and Vice Chair. This was an introductory meeting for the Chairs to understand Ministerial expectations and priorities and for the Chairs to set out the early progress of the Board. Key headlines from the meeting were:

31.1. Prioritisation – seen as a key focus with a need to make demonstrable progress on matters of importance for the sector. The Minister saw the first HMICFRS reports findings as providing themes as a foundation for the Board's work and key to informing its early priorities.

31.2. Expectations - to understand what 'good' looks like and address inconsistencies across a fragmented system.

31.3. Business change – ensuring that standards produced by the Board are implemented. This is seen as essential by the Minister and a need for strong change management has been noted. The assurance that the NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO) has a specific Business Change function to address this was welcomed.

32. Lessons learned – how lessons were being learnt from other relevant sectors. A comparison was made to the College of Policing and some of the challenges they encountered when establishing themselves. Meaningful consultative mechanisms and strong communications channels are seen to key if the Board wants to see the professional standards well received. The Board have already initiated conversations with HMICFRS and the Chairs will meet regularly with Zoe Billingham. An MoU which will outline how the organisations will work together and share information is an initial action for the Board.

33. Focus was on the scope of standards to be developed and how the Board will prioritise the standards to be produced. It was agreed that the CPO would look to develop the scope by creating an overarching framework (similar to that developed on the NOG Programme). This will help identify all potential areas for standards for the Board to

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consider. In addition, prioritisation criteria will be developed to help devise the work programme, both of which will be brought back to the next meeting. Priorities will be influenced both by areas where good practice and guidance already exists alongside a number of factors including fire reform and the improvement themes coming from the initial HMICFRS inspection reports.

34. The Board also agreed for the CPO to run pilots to test the standards development process. The pilots will be:

34.1. A standard for operational response derived from National Operational Guidance;

34.2. A standard for Emergency Response Driver Training derived from work already developed and the principles of which are already in use in the majority of services including the Devolved Administrations.