



# **Fire Services Management Committee**

Agenda

**Friday, 19 May 2023**  
**11.00 am**

Hybrid Meeting - Beecham Room, 18 Smith  
Square and Teams

There will be a meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee at **11.00 am on Friday, 19 May 2023** Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online.

### **LGA Hybrid Meetings**

All of our meetings are available to join in person at [18 Smith Square](#) or remotely via videoconference as part of our hybrid approach. We will ask you to confirm in advance if you will be joining each meeting in person or remotely so we can plan accordingly, if you wish to attend the meeting in person, please also remember to confirm whether you have any dietary/accessibility requirements. 18 Smith Square is a Covid-19 secure venue and measures are in place to keep you safe when you attend a meeting or visit the building in person.

[Please see guidance for Members and Visitors to 18 Smith Square here](#)

### **Catering and Refreshments:**

If the meeting is scheduled to take place at lunchtime, a sandwich lunch will be available.

### **Political Group meetings and pre-meetings for Lead Members:**

Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

### **Apologies:**

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

|                          |                             |   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Conservative:</b>     | Group Office: 020 7664 3223 | email: <a href="mailto:lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk">lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk</a>         |
| <b>Labour:</b>           | Group Office: 020 7664 3263 | email: <a href="mailto:labgp@lga.gov.uk">labgp@lga.gov.uk</a>                                   |
| <b>Independent:</b>      | Group Office: 020 7664 3224 | email: <a href="mailto:independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk">independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>Liberal Democrat:</b> | Group Office: 020 7664 3235 | email: <a href="mailto:libdem@local.gov.uk">libdem@local.gov.uk</a>                             |

### **Attendance:**

Your attendance, whether it be in person or virtual, will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

### **LGA Contact:**

Jonathan Bryant  
[Jonathan.Bryant@local.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Bryant@local.gov.uk) - 07464652746

### **Carers' Allowance**

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

## Fire Services Management Committee – Membership

[Click here for accessible information on membership](#)

| Councillor                            | Authority   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Conservative</b>                   |   |
| Cllr Rebecca Knox (Deputy Chairman)   | Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority        |
| Cllr Mark Healey MBE                  | Somerset County Council                           |
| Mr Roger Hirst                        | Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex     |
| Cllr Nick Chard                       | Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority             |
| <b>Substitutes</b>                    |   |
| Cllr Matt Dormer                      | Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority      |
| Cllr David Norman MBE                 | Gloucestershire County Council                    |
| Cllr Andy Crump                       | Warwickshire County Council                       |
| <b>Labour</b>                         |   |
| Cllr Greg Brackenridge (Deputy Chair) | West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority             |
| Dr Fiona Twycross                     | Greater London Authority                          |
| Cllr Nikki Hennessy                   | Lancashire Combined Fire Authority                |
| Cllr Carl Johnson                     | Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Authority               |
| Cllr Jane Hugo                        | Blackpool Council                                 |
| <b>Substitutes</b>                    |   |
| Cllr Darren O'Donovan                 | West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority            |
| Cllr Les Byrom CBE                    | Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority                |
| <b>Liberal Democrat</b>               |   |
| Cllr Jeremy Hilton (Vice-Chair)       | Gloucestershire County Council                    |
| Cllr Roger Price                      | Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Authority |
| <b>Independent</b>                    |   |
| Cllr Frank Biederman (Chair)          | Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority          |
| Cllr John Shuttleworth                | Co. Durham and Darlington Fire Authority          |
| <b>Substitutes</b>                    |   |
| Cllr Nigel Smith                      | North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority               |

## Agenda

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### Fire Services Management Committee

Friday, 19 May 2023

11.00 am

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

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| <b>3. On call firefighters</b>   |             |
| Presentation from Steve Healey – Deputy CFO,<br>Lancashire FRS             |             |
| <b>4. Wildfires and Climate Change update</b>                              | 9 - 18      |
| <b>5. Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) update</b> | 19 - 26     |
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**Date of Next Meeting:** Friday, 7 July 2023, 11.00 am, Hybrid Meeting - 18  
Smith Square and Online



## Minutes of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

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### Fire Services Management Committee

Monday, 6 March 2023

Hybrid Meeting - Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nottingham and Online

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#### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

| Item | Decisions and actions |
|------|-----------------------|
|------|-----------------------|

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest</b> |
|----------|--|

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. He introduced the new FSMC Equalities Advocate – Cllr Jane Hugo - and paid tribute to Cllr Keith Aspden (who was standing down as a councillor at the May 2023 elections) for all his work on the Committee as Lead Member for the Liberal Democrat group.

Apologies were received from Fiona Twycross, Cllr Roger Price and Cllr Darren O'Donovan. Cllr Les Byrom was substituting for Fiona Twycross.

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>2</b> | <b>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 December 2022</b> |
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The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

|          |                             |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| <b>3</b> | <b>Fire Service Culture</b> |
|----------|-----------------------------|

The Chair invited Mark Norris (MN), Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the report.

MN set out some of the recent issues and incidents which had shone a light on culture within a number of Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) in England and Wales. The importance of the LGA continuing to work jointly with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) on addressing the challenges was stressed. Comments were invited from members on the proposed next steps and future actions outlined in paragraph 35.

Cllr Jane Hugo, FSMC Equalities Advocate, stated that there was plenty of best practice and skills/expertise both within and outside the sector that could be shared, and stressed the importance of all partners working together to address the worrying situation.

Mark Hardingham (MH), NFCC Chair, stated that FRSs were not yet as diverse as they should be and, although there had been progress in recent years, e.g. through establishing a Core Code of Ethics and the Fire Standards Board, there was much work still to be done. The current situation represented a failure of leadership within the sector and the challenge of addressing it ranked alongside the responses to Grenfell and Manchester Arena. MH outlined some of the measures being taken by the NFCC, including internal restructuring and establishing an external advisory group. Finally, it was important to link this into the wider fire reform agenda currently being taken forward by the Home Office.

Alex Hill, HMICFRS, reiterated that their inspection process had highlighted the fact that the people pillar was the one area that FRSs struggled with more than any other. HMICFRS was currently producing a 'spotlight' report on this issue which could feed into the wider work to address the problems. HMICFRS was also learning and adapting its inspection process in the light of emerging incidents and also using learning from recent experiences in police services.

Jonny Bugg (JB), Head of Fire Strategy and Reform Unit, Home Office, stated that this was a key issue of concern for the Minister, and the Home Office response to the Fire Reform White Paper would likely contain more about improving values and ethics. A 4<sup>th</sup> session Bill in Parliament was still on course. He reported that later in the Spring, the vetting system for FRS employees would be upgraded to move it in line with other public-facing professions. The vital importance of maintaining the trust and confidence of the public was emphasised

Members' comments and questions:

- Whilst there were 20 out of the 44 FRSs that HMICFRS had identified as requiring improvement on EDI issues, it should not be forgotten that 24 were performing well and there was plenty of good practice that could be used to support the 20. The LGA's sector-led support offer was highlighted as a means of helping FRAs and it was suggested that there would be benefits of jointly delivering this with the NFCC
- Support and training for EDI champions and other FRA members was requested to enable proper scrutiny of senior officers. The questions asked by HMICFRS of FRS's during an inspection could also be fed in
- It was stated that proposed Home Office reforms around governance and operational independence of CFOs were a distraction and would not address the underlying cultural issues in the sector. By contrast, it was stated that two thirds of the White Paper was about people and professionalism, and the FSMC should therefore get behind and embrace these proposed reforms which were essential in order to drive longer-term cultural change in the sector. The importance of strong leadership, and of embedding meaningful change within all processes in an FRS, was highlighted
- Members felt that the final bullet point in 'next steps' around engaging with the Home Office on sector-led support should be clarified and strengthened, with particular reference to seeking



funding for the LGA to provide peer support. In this regard, it was suggested that, following the publication of the HMICFRS spotlight report, a meeting be convened with the LGA, NFCC and Home Office to work out a way forward in terms of roles, responsibilities and funding. JB agreed that this would be a useful exercise in relation to directing existing funding more effectively

- It was considered vital for FRA members to appreciate the importance of communication and transparency within their service, from the bottom up, and to challenge their senior leadership team on those grounds
- The penultimate bullet point around legal frameworks was considered to be vital. Similarly, how FRSs operate, for example through the watch system, was central to the culture issue and needed to be looked at as part of a fundamental review. The Trade Unions should be a key partner in this work.
- All services could learn lessons from Dorset & Wiltshire, South Wales and London and how they considered, with hindsight, that they might have handled their interactions with the media in particular, differently.

In summarising, the Chair asked that the next steps be strengthened to include engagement, not just with NFCC, but also with the Home Office, HMICFRS and Trade Unions to consider a way forward for the sector as a whole, in order to tackle these deep-seated issues. MN added that officers would draft a revised next steps action plan, based on the comments made during the discussion, and bring it back to FSMC Lead Members for final agreement. This could then be used as a starting point for joint discussions with the NFCC, Home Office, HMICFRS and Trade Unions.

**Decision:**

- FSMC endorsed the next steps set out in the report, subject to the amendments agreed above

**Action:**

- Officers to redraft next steps in line with comments made and bring back to Lead Members for agreement

#### **4 Building Safety Regulator update**

The Chair invited Richard Fowler (RF), Head of Service Delivery and Improvement NFCC, to introduce the update.

RF reminded members of the background and context to the establishment of the new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and how it would be operating, with 9 regional teams and MoUs with individual FRSs, with work carried out on a recharge basis.

RF then outlined current concerns with the new system – (i) recruitment and retention of sufficient FRS staff; (ii) availability of training providers; (iii) sufficiency of funding to resource the required work; (iv) HSE stating that inspection of existing buildings will be the exception, not the norm; (v)

definition of a building in multi-occupancy spaces.

Members' comments and questions:

- Allowing developers to employ their own building control officers was considered to be a mistake. Suggestion that recruiting 'clerks of works' roles could provide an additional layer of security. RF said that monitoring of building works should step up under the new system, albeit not necessarily under a clerk of works
- Could the LGA provide support to FRSs on charging for their work, utilising experience of councils in this area?
- Concern was expressed that funding from FRSs would get diverted into BSR activity and away from day-to-day fire service activities
- Further clarity was sought on the MoUs and when these would be available for FRAs to see and comment on? RF confirmed that MoUs were being prepared between the 9 regional teams and their constituent FRSs and would be available shortly
- Charles Loft, Senior Adviser, added that the LGA's Grenfell Working Group was meeting later in the week and would be discussing writing a letter to the Minister on the concerns around the definition of a building. It was agreed that the FSMC Chair should add his signature to this letter.

**Decision:**

- Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

## 5 State of Fire & Rescue, Spotlight Report and Round 3 Inspections

The Chair invited Alex Hill (AH), HMICFRS, to introduce the update.

AH reported on the recently published State of Fire & Rescue report (the first by new HMI, Andy Cooke), the final tranche of round 2 inspections and plans for the forthcoming round 3 inspections. The key points were as follows:

- An ongoing call for reform in the State of Fire & Rescue report – of the 6 national recommendations, only 2 had so far been implemented
- The importance of the inspection process in driving sustained improvement in services was emphasised
- For round 3, inspections would be in small batches, rather than larger tranches, to enable services to receive their reports in a more timely fashion. In addition, there would no longer be 'pillar' judgements and a 5<sup>th</sup> grade – 'adequate' – was being introduced. An innovative / promising practice section would be added to reports in order to help promote positive good practice
- Overall, the results from tranche 3 had been good although there were 4 new causes for concern
- Fire protection and risk planning had improved significantly
- Many services were still not prioritising prevention activity sufficiently and almost half of services were below 'good'

- Responses to routine and major incidents remained excellent
- Performance on efficiency varied considerably across services with appropriate allocation of resources against risk being a particular concern
- Performance across the people pillar remained worrying with 26 services requiring improvement. An Engage process had been set up with a Fire Performance Oversight Group (FPOG) established. Two services had entered this process on the back of serious concerns around culture

**Decision:**

- Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

## **6 LGA Fire Conference update**

The Chair invited Rebecca Johnson (RJ), adviser, to introduce the update

RJ advised members that the full final conference agenda was now on the website. The Minister would now be joining the conference plenary session online rather than in person. The improvement workshop had had to be withdrawn due to speaker availability but there were still 4 other workshops to choose from. Over 180 delegates had signed up for the conference.

**Decision:**

- Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

## **7 Workforce update**

The Chair invited Sarah Ward (SW), Principal Adviser, Workforce, and Claire Hey (CH), Senior Pensions Adviser, to introduce the update.

CH provided members with 2 updates since the report had been submitted:

- 1) The Home Office had just launched a consultation on the changes needed to the pension scheme regulations to implement the retrospective part of the age discrimination remedy. Officers were currently working through this substantial document and would report back to members. Deadline for submission – 23 May 2023
- 2) The Department for Work and Pensions had recently reset pensions dashboard activity, with a new later connection deadline to be agreed.

SW ran through the pay claims for green, grey and gold book staff as set out in paragraphs 37-48 of the report. Subsequent to the update being sent out, the FBU had just announced that their members had voted to accept the National Employers grey book offer, which had averted strike action by firefighters.

SW highlighted the workshop on the Core Code of Ethics that would be taking place the following day as part of the LGA Fire Conference. She also referred to the work of the Inclusive Fire Service Group and tie in with the Committee's previous discussion on culture in the fire and rescue service.

Finally, SW highlighted the LGA's proposed approach to responding to the Home Office's Minimum Service Levels consultation for Fire & Rescue staff, as set out in paragraph 58 of the report.

Members' comments and questions:

- Cllr Chard, as Chair of the Employer's Side, NJC for LAFRS, thanked the workforce team officers for all their hard work and support in relation to all the recent pay claims. This was echoed by the FSMC Chair.
- The Chair informed members that this was CH's final FSMC meeting before taking up a new role and put on record the Committee's gratitude for all her hard work and support over the years of her employment at the LGA.

**Decision:**

- Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update and **endorsed** the proposed approach to responding to the Home Office Minimum Service Levels consultation set out in paragraph 58 of the report.

## 8 Building Safety update

The Chair invited Marshall Scott (MS), NGDP Graduate, to introduce the update.

MS drew the following points from the report to members attention:

- Latest DLUHC figures on remediation showed a marginal improvement
- Officers continued to promote the work of the Joint Inspection Team
- Ongoing concerns over the establishment of the new BSR (as discussed in item 4)
- The HSE had just launched its 'Be Ready' campaign
- The LGA had been finalising its response to the DLUHC consultation on proposed changes to Approved Document B
- The LGA's improvement work had been progressing well

**Decision:**

- Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

## 9 National Fire Chiefs Council update

The Chair invited MH to introduce the update. MH indicated that he was happy for the report to be taken as read and to take questions as required.

**Decision:**



Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update without discussion.

## 10 Fire Standards Board update

The Chair invited Cllr Nick Chard, the LGA's representative on the FSB, to introduce the update.

Cllr Chard highlighted the conference plenary session on Fire Standards and encouraged members to attend to gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities as FRAs in relation to the Standards. Jonny Bugg reiterated the importance of the new Leadership and People Standards in helping to address the challenges highlighted in previous conversations on culture in the fire service.

### Decision:

- Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

## 11 FSMC update

The Chair invited RJ to introduce the update.

RJ highlighted the upcoming Leadership Essentials course and thanked members for publicising this through their networks. The next meeting of the LGA's EDI Network would also be taking place on 22 March.

Members' comments and questions:

- A further update on the ESMCP programme was requested for a future meeting

### Decision:

- Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

### Action:

- Officers to schedule item on ESMCP at next FSMC meeting

## Appendix A -Attendance

| Position/Role | Councillor             | Authority                                     |
|---------------|------------------------|---|
| Chair         | Cllr Frank Biederman   | Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority      |
| Vice-Chair    | Cllr Keith Aspden      | City of York Council                          |
| Deputy-Chair  | Cllr Rebecca Knox      | Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority    |
| Deputy-Chair  | Cllr Greg Brackenridge | West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority         |
| Members       | Cllr Eric Carter       | Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority          |
|               | Cllr Mark Healey MBE   | Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority  |
|               | Mr Roger Hirst         | Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex |



|               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
|               | <p>Cllr Nick Chard<br/>                     Cllr Nikki Hennessy<br/>                     Cllr Jane Hugo<br/>                     Cllr Jeremy Hilton<br/>                     Cllr Les Byrom (as sub)<br/>                     Cllr Nigel Smith (as sub)</p>   | <p>Kent &amp; Medway Fire &amp; Rescue Authority<br/>                     Lancashire Combined Fire Authority<br/>                     Lancashire Combined Fire Authority<br/>                     Gloucestershire County Council<br/>                     Merseyside Fire &amp; Rescue Authority<br/>                     North Wales Fire &amp; Rescue Authority</p>   |
| Apologies     | <p>Dr Fiona Twycross<br/>                     Cllr Roger Price<br/> <br/>                     Cllr Darren O'Donovan</p>   | <p>Greater London Authority<br/>                     Hampshire &amp; Isle of Wight Fire &amp; Rescue Authority<br/> <br/>                     West Yorkshire Fire &amp; Rescue Authority</p>  |
| In Attendance | <p>Cllr John Shuttleworth<br/> <br/>                     Mark Hardingham<br/>                     CFO Justin Johnston<br/>                     Richard Fowler<br/>                     Alex Hill<br/>                     Alexandra Blohm<br/>                     Jonny Bugg<br/>                     Cllr Carolyn Lambert<br/>                     Susannah Hancock<br/>                     Steven Adams<br/>                     Joanne Livingstone</p> | <p>Co. Durham &amp; Darlington Fire &amp; Rescue Authority<br/>                     NFCC<br/>                     NFCC<br/>                     NFCC<br/>                     HMICFRS<br/>                     HMICFRS<br/>                     Home Office<br/>                     East Sussex Fire Authority<br/>                     NFCC<br/>                     NFCC<br/>                     Chair Firefighters' Pension Scheme Advisory Board</p>                                |
| LGA Officers  | <p>Mark Norris<br/>                     Sarah Ward<br/>                     Rebecca Johnson<br/>                     Charles Loft<br/>                     Claire Hey<br/>                     Marshall Scott<br/>                     Gill Gittins<br/>                     Jamie Osowski<br/>                     Elena Johnson<br/>                     Jonathan Bryant</p>  | <p>Principal Policy Adviser<br/>                     Principal Adviser – Workforce<br/>                     Policy Adviser<br/>                     Senior Adviser<br/>                     Senior Pensions Adviser<br/>                     NGDP Graduate<br/>                     Senior Adviser (Workforce and Negotiations)<br/>                     Adviser - Workforce<br/>                     Firefighters' Pensions Adviser<br/>                     Member Services Officer</p> |

## Wildfires and Climate Change Update Report

### Purpose of Report

For direction.

**Is this report confidential? No**

### Summary

**LGA Plan Theme:** Championing climate change and local environments

### Recommendation(s)

1. Members are asked to consider the range of options for response to the increasing risk of wildfires in the UK.
2. Members are also asked to share views on the idea of a climate change evidence session and the suggested content for this.
3. Members agree the next steps outlined in paragraph 56.

### Contact details

Contact officer: Rebecca Johnson

Position: Adviser

Phone no: 07887 568807

Email: [Rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk)

## Wildfires and Climate Change update

### Background

1. Record breaking temperatures and extremely dry conditions brought devastating wildfires affecting almost every Fire and Rescue Service over the summer of 2022. Wildfires affected urban as well as rural areas across the UK, on the hottest day in July London Fire Brigade recorded their busiest day since the Second World War, fifteen services declared major incidents and many more struggled to cope.
2. In December Paul Hedley, National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Wildfires Lead, delivered a presentation to FSMC updating on the unprecedented extent and impact of the wildfires during the 2022 season and the measures being taken by NFCC to try to mitigate risk. Members also considered [recommendations set out in a report](#) around how FSMC could support the NFCC work on wildfires.
3. It was agreed that officers would undertake further research around wildfire causation to enable FSMC to develop a position on the sale of disposable barbeques and other high-risk items such as sky lanterns and fireworks. This work was to include considering whether to hold a workshop with stakeholders to discuss the issues.
4. This paper is intended to update Members on the progress of this work and present options for next steps.

### Wildfire trends

5. An increase in wildfire activity is understood to be related to climate change – with hotter, drier temperatures creating conditions which make wildfires more likely both because of the increase in fuel availability (dry vegetation available to burn) and the lengthening of the fire season (where conditions are conducive to fire).
6. The effects of this can be seen in many regions across the world with devastating wildfires across Southern Europe and the USA and bushfires in Australia causing extensive damage. There has also been some loss of life in the last few years.
7. Wildfires are been seen as an increasing risk at the national level in the UK and this has been brought into sharp focus following the unprecedented number of wildfires last summer.



8. Data on wildfires is limited by the fact there is no specific category capturing data on wildfires in the national Incident Recording System (IRS), which is the national data collection system administered by the Home Office. Wildfire incidents are currently recorded under 'secondary fires' or 'outdoor primary fires'.
9. Latest [statistics published by the Home Office](#) show that in the year ending September 2022 there was a 44 per cent increase in secondary fires and 63 per cent increase in outdoor primary fires which the narrative in the dataset attributes to the hot, dry summer.
10. We understand that the Home Office is currently working on updates to the IRS to capture more nuanced data about wildfires and their impacts, which are expected to be introduced in 2024.
11. [An Expert Led Report](#) prepared for the Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) on UK wildfires and their climate challenges, published in 2021, provides a useful overview of the risks of wildfires and their impact as well as exploring options for a policy response.
12. Traditionally in the UK wildfires have occurred predominantly in spring/late summer and have affected heathlands, moorlands and grasslands. However, an important factor for consideration for future planning both in terms of the risk to human health and assets is the growing number of wildfires affecting areas in close proximity to built-up areas (the rural-urban interface or 'RUI'). This was seen over the summer with wildfires destroying more than 40 houses and shops on the hottest day in July, including sixteen homes in the large fire in Wennington, east London.
13. Whilst climate change impacts the conditions which make wildfires more likely and influence their behaviour, ultimately, in the UK at least, the cause of wildfire ignitions is nearly always human. Analysis of global wildfire data in [A Review of the Main Driving Factors of Forest Fire Ignition Over Europe](#), indicates that 97% of all wildfires are related to some form of human action (deliberate and accidental).
14. A recent Wildfire investigation project report, commissioned by the Forestry Commission, published in April 2023 outlines that the precise causes of ignition are difficult to pinpoint, and data is limited. The UK does not routinely investigate the cause of wildfire ignitions and has no Fire Investigators qualified in this specialist skill. More research is required in this area to understand causation in more detail.
15. However, reasons for wildfire ignition can include:

- Agricultural practices e.g. escaped management burns, something which occurs in upland and moorland regions of the UK.
  - Campfires and BBQs, which either accidentally or deliberately result in the spread of fire from its original purpose
  - Military training exercises
  - Arson
16. Cigarettes are often anecdotally associated with wildfire ignitions, but there is very little evidence of cigarettes forming a viable ignition source. Evidence also suggests that, when used and disposed of appropriately disposable BBQs do not pose a significant wildfire risk.
17. Without detailed knowledge or clear evidence of causes of ignition, targeting prevention work is made more difficult and is therefore likely that interventions need to have a wider focus.
18. The NFCC launched a survey of all Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) at the end of 2022 looking specifically at the impact of the 2022 wildfires, and on resilience in the sector to deal with wildfires more broadly. Whilst the report has yet to be published there are a range of recommendations and improvements that NFCC will be putting forward. The main themes of these are around:
- National Policy and Strategy
  - Wildfire Training
  - Wildfire Prevention
  - Information and Data
  - Guidance and Policy
  - Partnership Working
  - Health, Safety and Welfare
  - Equipment and Innovation

### Options for response

19. In terms of policy options to reduce the risk of wildfires, there are a number of existing tools that are available and already utilised as well as options that could be considered in the future, once further evidence is available. These are explored below.

### Legislative and non-legislative options

20. Looking specifically at controlling the use of disposable BBQs which was explored at FSMC in December overall, evidence suggests that when used and disposed of appropriately, disposable BBQs do not pose a significant wildfire risk. However, there is some limited evidence that disposable BBQs have caused wildfires and whilst the risk may be small, the impact financially, environmentally, and ecologically can be huge, as seen in Dorset.
21. In terms of supporting an outright ban on disposable BBQs there is no additional evidence to support this since the Committee's last discussion.
22. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) commissioned research to look at the impact of disposable barbecues and sky lanterns (as well as helium balloons) at the end of last year. The research looked at the risks and impacts - including fire - arising from the use of these items, analysed the existing controls on the use and sale of these items and made recommendations for government intervention which would further mitigate against any significant risks.
23. Defra is currently considering the report but have indicated that there was no clear case within the evidence for control of these products, beyond what is already available. They have suggested that more research is needed in this area.
24. There is also some concern about what alternatives to disposable BBQs might be used, for example open fires, which could present even more of a risk.
25. Local authorities do have existing tools available to restrict or prohibit the use of disposable BBQs.
26. Under section 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 byelaws have been used by some local authorities to restrict and enforce the use of disposable barbecues in council owned or managed parks and open spaces. This approach is used by some London boroughs, including [Islington](#). Fines can be issued where byelaws are breached.
27. Officials have indicated that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities are interested in how widely used byelaws are in this area, how effective they are as a tool and issues around policing them.
28. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) are also used to prohibit the use of BBQs in specific parts of a local authority area with fines issued for breaches. PSPOs can be used to tackle the anti-social behaviour element of the use of

disposable BBQs (and open fires). PSPOs are time limited and can last for up to three years at which point they will have to be reviewed. An example of this is the Ban of Open fires and BBQs by [Derbyshire Dales District council](#).

29. Both tools require adequate local consultation and engagement with communities. The main challenge of introducing both policies is the issue of enforcement and the resources required to do this effectively. However, in practice, if clearly communicated they are likely to act as a deterrent and therefore help to reduce the number of potential incidents.
30. As outlined in the FSMC report in December, there has been recognition amongst retailers about the role they can play and some success in retailers voluntarily stopping the sale of BBQs either completely, in certain areas for example close to national parks, or during extreme heat events in response to public pressure.
31. The British Retail Consortium (BRC) have developed [voluntary guidelines](#) for sale of disposable BBQs in partnership with retailers, the NFCC and others, including feedback from Defra. The guidelines are designed to support responsible retailing, encourage retailers to educate consumers on safe use and disposal of BBQs and prevent the spread of wildfires caused by BBQs.

### **Public awareness**

32. Raising public awareness about how wildfires start and steps that can be taken to reduce risk are an important given the significant role of human behaviour in causing wildfires,
33. Our view is that public awareness campaigns should be led at a national level by government, with messages amplified and tailored at the local level. We are aware that a wider Wildfire Working Group, which includes NFCC, Home Office, Defra and the Environment Agency, is in the process of drafting comms lines to promote safe behaviour in the event of a [RED Heatwave](#) or RED Wildfire alert.
34. We will work with LGA colleagues to ensure any central comms messages are shared via our own networks.
35. Local authorities and park authorities are already running awareness campaigns at local level. These include campaigns which encourage retailers to stop selling disposable BBQs and messages about safely putting out campfires and cigarettes.
36. There is also a community led [Firewise programme](#) which has been piloted in Dorset and Wiltshire.

37. Firewise-UK has been developed from the USA programme which was created by the National Fire Protection Association in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service. It is a community risk reduction programme which focuses on building an understanding of risks of wildfires among communities and emphasises the role that residents can play in reducing risks. The programme encourages communities to work together to reduce risks by taking practical steps in the area around the home and garden for example mowing the grass, picking up litter, not leaving piles of combustibles in garden.
38. The intention is for this to be lead and delivered by the community, with facilitation support from the FRS. The Firewise UK community wildfire resilience programmes are potentially something that the LGA could promote.

### **Adaptation and mitigation**

39. At a local level local wildfire, alongside other risks of climate change like flooding, should be a part of local risk planning considerations and inform the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). FRAs will already be looking at how the service can adapt to meet future risks, for example through tactical training and equipment and as discussed at the December FSMC, NFCC are supporting FRSs to do this.
40. However, wildfire risk also needs to be considered and understood as part of wider agendas, such as land management. Fires cannot exist without fuel and therefore, the type, load and moisture of fuels and the potential of any changes in these to impact wildfire risk will need to be considered and understood.
41. Defra has a programme of work to support farmers and land managers whose land may be particularly at risk to plan and prepare for wildfires to help reduce their incidents and impacts. Part of this promoting the use of wildfire management plans. These plans are used to assess risks, identify how these will be managed as well as outlining wildfire management techniques. Defra also provides training for land managers on this, as well as on wildfire response and how support FRS.
42. Defra are keen to understand from councils and FRAs whether there is more that they could offer around landscape mitigation, for example additional training and would be happy to share further information on this if it would be useful.
43. As part of government plans to mitigate climate change there has been a focus on conservation. This has included increasing biodiversity and protecting and restoring natural habitats many of which are open habitats such as lowland, upland heath, grasslands and moorlands which are also amongst the UK's most fire prone ecosystems.

44. One example are schemes like rewilding which have been supported by a number of councils over the past few years. Rewilding, which is generally defined as the return or restoration of the environment to its natural uncultivated state, can range from reintroducing a particular species of wild animals to a particular area, to small scale interventions such as leaving parts of parks and private gardens over to nature (e.g. 'no mow May'). Practices which councils use such as leaving verges uncut whilst having clear benefits for biodiversity could have an impact on the type and amount of fuel available to burn and therefore have implications for wildfire risk.
45. Whilst the focus is currently on protection of these landscapes, there is a tension between fire and ecosystem management challenges and conservation and maintenance of existing habitats which may enhance wildfire risk. This was highlighted by Marc Castellnou, a fire analyst with the Catalonian fire services, during a presentation at the LGA Fire Conference in March.

### Wider climate change activity

46. Wildfires are not the only risks related to climate change that will impact FRSs. As climate change continues and extreme weather such as storms and floods, as well as heat and drought expected to become more frequent the impact on the fire and rescue service (FRS) is expected to become more pronounced.
47. We would like to run a one-day evidence session for a small, cross-party group of FSMC Members with an interest in this area to hear from a range of experts and explore these impacts in more detail to inform a policy position.
48. Ideas for sessions and speakers include:
- Overview of climate change impacts:
    - Professor Rowena Hill – research with Exeter & Notts Trent around climate change and sustainability and Ben Brook, NFCC Lead
    - Met office - lead on natural hazards partnership
  - Flooding – Environment Agency
  - Wildfires
    - Paul Headley, NFCC lead
    - Academic/ Wildfires tactical adviser
    - Extreme fire behaviour
  - Land management and land adaptation – building wildfire resilience into the natural landscape - Defra

- Wider council picture – examples of work around mitigation & adaptation what they are doing
  - Future picture
    - rewinding / electric vehicles & risks / unintended consequences
49. We would be grateful for Members views on the idea of an evidence session and the suggested content for this.
50. Councils play a key role in tackling climate change as place-shapers, convenors of communities and partners, delivery agents, commissioners, and owners of assets. The LGA has a wide range of resources for Council around this on the [Climate change hub](#).
51. FRAs also have a role to play in responding to climate change at a local level, alongside local councils. We are in the process of updating the [Climate Emergency](#) handbook for Fire and Rescue Authority Members, exploring current risks, and the leadership role FRA members have in driving this agenda forward. We plan to publish the updated handbook in the summer.
52. The NFCC are currently working on their own toolkit for FRS around climate change which is due to be published shortly and we will share with Members.

### Implications for Wales

53. None

### Financial Implications

54. None

### Equalities implications

55. The impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events are felt unequally and can exacerbate inequalities that already exist. The [LGA has pulled together resources](#) and cases studies to support councils to identify those who are most at risk from the impacts of climate change and look at what is being done to assist the most vulnerable.

### Next steps

56. The following next steps by officers are proposed:

1. Officers work with comms colleagues in the LGA around amplifying any national comms messages
2. Offices draft a climate emergency handbook to be published by FSMC
3. Officers take forward the plan for a climate change evidence session



## Update on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)

### Purpose of Report

For information.

**Is this report confidential? No**

### Summary

This report provides an update to committee members on the progress of the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). In particular, it highlights some of the reports that have recently been published, along with areas of progress.

Choose an item.

### Recommendation(s)

**That the Committee note the content of the report**

### Contact details

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## ESMCP update

### Background

1. The Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) will provide the next generation of mission critical communications for the emergency services in Great Britain. This will in part replace the current Firelink [Airwave] provision, as well as providing secure and resilient mobile broadband capability with near universal coverage across the country. ESMCP is a cross Government Programme led by the Home Office since 2011, but also involving the Department for Health and Social Care, Scottish Government and Welsh Government.
2. ESN will take readily available standard commercial mobile telephony and augment it to provide the levels of coverage, availability and functionality required for emergency services use, where it will inevitably be regularly deployed in the most testing of circumstances. The enhancements include:
  - Additional coverage for the areas where commercial coverage does not exist to provide near universal coverage across Great Britain
  - Priority and pre-emption to ensure that emergency service users can always access the network, even when normal consumers may not.
  - Higher levels of security and resilience, especially given the current cyber security landscape, the type of information being passed through ESN, the impact of climate change on the nation and demands upon the emergency services, and the expectations of the public
  - Devices that work for the emergency services including being more rugged than most phones, the provision of a push to talk (PTT) or transmit button and appropriate battery life
  - A communications application [App] that delivers the full suite of functionality required by the emergency services and staff
  - An air to ground (A2G) capability enabling responders on the ground to interact seamlessly with air assets via ESN, even if FRSs don't have such assets themselves
3. The commercial approach to delivering ESN was to divide into smaller contractual lots, rather than having a single prime supplier. In 2015, Motorola were selected to deliver Lot 2 (User Services), comprising data centres, support services and a push to talk (PTT) application or 'App'. Lot 3 (Mobile Services) was awarded to EE to provide the core mobile network. Other contracts have been awarded for items such as devices, Control Room upgrade development and specialist services, that will all come together to form ESN.

4. The Fire and Rescue Service's ESMCP governance is mainly focussed through the NFCC's ESMCP Fire Customer Group (FCG) chaired by the NFCC's lead for Operational Communications, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Ben Norman from Greater Manchester. The LGA was represented on FCG by former Cllr Eric Carter from Shropshire and Wrekin FRA, taking one of two LGA places on FCG, along with support from Lucy Ellender.
5. Previous updates to the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) were on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021 and 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

## Update

### Public Reports and Programme Scrutiny

6. Since the previous update to the committee, the Programme [ESMCP] has undergone a number of reviews and elements of scrutiny. Some of these have been as part of the internal governance of the Programme within Government. Others have been more visible with the publication of a report by the National Audit Office (NAO) and more recently two oral evidence sessions with the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). The final report from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) into Airwave was also published recently and has a bearing on the Programme.
7. The NAO report published on 8<sup>th</sup> March, identified Progress to date, along with identifying a number of risks in the of commercial, technological, user take up and Programme management arenas. The report includes Home Office forecasts that, between April 2015 and March 2023, the programme will have spent £2.0 billion on ESN and £2.9 billion running and maintaining Airwave. From this the NAO made six clear recommendations on areas to be addressed going forward.
8. As part of the NAO's research work a questionnaire was circulated amongst the emergency services, with 36 English FRSs responding. This provided a triangulated set of data expressing degrees of optimism that ESN will be delivered and meet our expectations, and also confidence in the leadership of the Programme.
9. The report from the PAC has not yet been published, but the two oral evidence sessions probed many areas of the Programme along with associated concerns and risks. The first session on 27<sup>th</sup> March was attended by Home Office Officials, whilst the second on 26<sup>th</sup> April primarily had emergency services representation, with Deputy Chief Fire Officer Ben Norman, the NFCC Strategic Lead for Operational Communications representing the NFCC.

10. The final report from the CMA published on 13<sup>th</sup> April in many senses doesn't differ significantly to those contained within their earlier provisional findings and previously reported to the committee. The key findings are:
- The Home Office and the emergency services in Great Britain are 'locked in' to a monopoly provider, Airwave Solutions, and will be in that position until at least 2026, likely until 2029 and possibly longer
  - Airwave Solutions and its owner, Motorola, now have considerable market power. The Home Office is in a particularly weak bargaining position. Airwave Solutions / Motorola can set and maintain a price substantially above the level would be expect in a well-functioning market.
  - Through Airwave, Motorola generated supernormal [excess] profits leading to emergency services paying almost £200m per year more than they should have since 2020.
  - Motorola's incentives to deliver its ESN Lot 2 obligations effectively and efficiently were dulled by the substantial profits it makes from the continued operation of the Airwave Network. Motorola had the ability to act on such incentives by virtue of its central role in the delivery of ESN.
11. Amongst the measures that the CMA will implement includes a price control or cost cap to limit the price that Motorola can charge to a level that would apply in a well-functioning, competitive market. The detail of this is not yet known, nor how it will play through and representatives from the NFCC and Home Office are working through this detail and complexity. As previously advised, given some of the potential outcomes, FRAs may be best placed not to anticipate any Airwave savings within this financial year.

#### Programme Developments

12. In December 22, Motorola and the Home Office mutually agreed that the Motorola ESN contract, known as Lot 2 or User Services, would terminate early at Motorola's suggestion. This meant that Motorola no longer provides any form of live service for ESN and the Programme need to appoint a new supplier. A years' worth of termination services have been agreed with Motorola which will see testing taking place, deriving as much value as possible from the investment made.
13. With uncertainty over Motorola's long-term interest in ESN, the Programme had already undertaken some scoping and early market engagement to ascertain landscape and supplier appetite, with a number of potential alternatives emerging. Consequently, the Programme is now at an advanced stage in

preparations to reprocore this lot and should be formally launching it within the next few weeks.

14. Key within the reprocorement will be the use of open standards that weren't available at the outset of ESN to allow greater use of an emerging ecosystem of technology, especially as other developed nations similarly look towards the technologies of ESN for their communications needs. It also provides some safeguards against suppliers developing the technology for ESN in a proprietary way and thereby 'locking' in the Government and emergency services in.
15. With the current Lot 3 (EE) contract expiring at the end of 2024, the NAO report publicly highlighted the Programme's ambition to directly award a new contract to EE. Work is progressing well, especially to ensure value for the public purse going forward.
16. Once a new supplier is appointed there will be greater certainty over how and when ESN will be delivered and available for testing ahead of deployment into live service. Both the Programme and users are clear that future plans need to be grounded and realistic to avoid challenges that have previously beset the Programme and impacted upon FRSs. These plans, along with detail from contractual aspects, will be key to the production of a new business case for ESN.
17. Progress is being made in a number of areas. Within coverage, EE have built over 650 new mast sites required under their contract, and there remains just 24 km of contracted road coverage for them left to deliver. Within the Programme's own Extended Area Services (EAS) project, 29 masts sites have gone live, representing 10% of that total, bringing coverage to areas where the network operators do not envisage providing it themselves. Some of this EAS coverage will also be incorporated into the Shared Rural Network (SRN), a wider Government endeavour to bring broadband mobile telephony to harder to reach and previously commercially unviable areas.
18. As a joint endeavour with the other emergency services, FRSs have been assessing the ESN coverage available as part of an exercise known as coverage assurance. This has provided a rich field of data on the availability of coverage, and also the opportunity to report areas where coverage may be insufficient, highlighting them as areas of concern (AOC). A further component has been to assure coverage at locations where it is imperative coverage is provided, known as critical operational locations (COL).

### FRS Elements

19. With the withdrawal of Motorola from ESN, the small number of FRSs using ESN Connect (data capability) in live service have implemented alternative provision at short notice. A small number remain using ESN's secure internet connection from their Control Rooms and are currently working with suppliers and evaluating options.
20. With a significant slowdown or hiatus in ESN activity for FRSs, a multi stakeholder working group, including Home Office representation, proposed that local (FRS) ESN resources should be stood down temporarily until such time that ESN is sufficiently advanced to warrant the resource being available. This was subsequently endorsed at Chiefs Council and enacted from the end of March. Most of the staff involved have been redeployed within FRSs to other work and Programmes. It is hoped that they will be available and have the desire to be engaged with ESN in the future, thereby helping to mitigate against a distinct risk of loss of ESN knowledge and experience.
21. In preparation for the reprocurement, subject matter experts (SME) from FRSs have undertaken a thorough review of our base requirements for ESN along with emergency services and Programme colleagues. These were formally endorsed at FCG in March and recognised that whilst some had changed with the evolution of technology, the majority were largely unchanged, emphasising that the original requirements and direction of the Programme to meet the future needs of FRSs remains valid.
22. As already identified, there has been significant involvement by FRSs in assuring the coverage available for ESN, which has built a rich picture, indicating that available coverage may be better than predicted.

#### Airwave

23. Current FRS wide area communications is provided the Airwave system. It has inherent resilience, and over the years it has generally performed well with high levels of confidence from frontline staff, and this continues to be the case. More recently, significant planning and preparation was undertaken for the Coronation where the Airwave system performed extremely well.
24. The Firelink contract is a managed service meaning that maintenance and replacement of devices either through obsolescence or normal wear and tear is the responsibility of Airwave, and not a direct cost to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). There is currently a yearlong Airwave led Programme to replace all handheld devices, the first such since the Firelink contract was let in 2006.
25. Most FRS Control Systems require an upgrade to enable them to interface with new Airwave technology, called Dispatch Communications Server (DCS),

replacing outdated and obsolete equipment. FRSs are working hard to ensure that the upgrades and associated work is complete by the Airwave set deadline of the end of this year.

26. Inevitably the Firelink contract and the Airwave service will need to be extended beyond 2026. At this stage, it cannot be predicted for how long, or whether there will be a further need to replace other obsolete equipment and if any associated costs will fall to FRAs. The NFCC is working with the Programme to seek the necessary assurances on contract extension and continued viability of the Airwave system.

### Funding

27. At the very outset of the ESMCP journey English FRSs, through Fire Customer Group, agreed a set of funding principles with Government Department, the then DCLG, to ensure that Fire Authorities would not be disadvantaged in the transition from Airwave to the new ESN technology. In particular:
- Equipment will be upgraded or replaced on a like for like basis
  - There will be no second costs for dual running where ESN and Airwave will need to run in parallel for a period of time
  - Funding will be provided for additional resources and staffing to enable ESN transition where required
28. Within the last year, all English FRSs have taken part in an ESN finance deep dive also involving treasurers / S. 151 Officers and Home Office Fire Finance leads. These identified an overall improvement in recording and reporting to the Home Office on Sec. 31 grant funded ESN spend, along with highlighting some notable practice.

### Implications for Wales

29. There is direct representation into ESMCP through the Welsh Senior User for ESMCP working on behalf of the Welsh Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG), and who works closely with counterpart Senior Users from all user communities. Notable differences in approach from the respective Government Departments, particularly around funding, are highlighted in the paper, and any specific queries should be directed to the Welsh Senior User accordingly.

### Financial Implications

30. Given some of the potential outcomes for implementation of the CMA's remedies, FRAs may be best placed not to anticipate any Airwave savings within this financial year.

31. As outlined in this paper, ESN resources in FRSs have largely been stood down and English FRAs should not be drawing down funding for resourcing.

### Equalities implications

32. ESN will be subject to its own equality impact assessment that will identify any equalities implications with this future provision. There are no implications arising directly from this update.

### Next steps

33. The FSMC may wish to consider its representation on Fire Customer Group for the two places available to the LGA.
34. With NFCC representatives continuing to work closely with the Programme and Programme Leadership through mature and effective relationships, the FSMC may wish to be provided with an update at an appropriate point in the future.



## Culture in the fire and rescue service

### Purpose of Report

For direction.

**Is this report confidential? No**

### Summary

The report outlines the findings of the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Spotlight report on values and culture. Mark Hardingham and Rob MacDougall will be coming along from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to discuss their draft Culture Action Plan with members.

**LGA Plan Theme:** Other service specific support

### Recommendations

#### That the Board

- 1. discusses and provides feedback on the NFCC draft Culture Action Plan (Appendix B);**
- 2. Considers how we will work together to achieve improvements; and**
- 3. Approves the revised next steps list (paragraph 37).**

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## Culture in the fire and rescue service

### Background

1. Since the discussion at the last FSMC meeting in March the inspectorate has now released their spotlight report into values and culture in the fire and rescue service. The NFCC have also published their draft culture action plan for feedback. The NFCC are attending the meeting to discuss their action plan.
2. This report outlines the key points from the report and the recommendations. There are some specific recommendations targeted at the LGA, the Fire Standards Board (of which we are a part) and at fire and rescue authority employers and Chief Fire Officers, however members will have an interest in a wider number of the recommendations.
3. A reviewed set of Next Steps are included in paragraph 37.

### HMICFRS Spotlight Report

4. HMICFRS's spotlight report into values and culture was published on 30 March. It highlighted that HMICFRS had found examples of bullying, harassment and discrimination in every service.
5. In writing the report HMICFRS focused predominantly on evidence collected from their second round of fire and rescue service inspections, particularly looking at those services that were:
  - Issued with a cause of concern or are for improvement in these areas
  - Issued an outstanding grade in these areas;
  - Or showed examples of innovative or promising practice in these areas.
6. They also reviewed evidence relating to how services are using the Core Code of Ethics, evidence on watch cultures and the influence of other factors or organisations. They used the following sources of evidence:
  - service inspection reports
  - HMICFRS evidence gathering templates
  - the HMICFRS independent reporting line
  - their staff survey (to which they received 11,486 Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) staff responses)
  - their national reports

- their policing reports on similar matters
- relevant external research in this area
- relevant literature sources, including evidence from other sectors
- publicly available evidence on how FRS cultures may be influenced.

## Findings

7. HMICFRS found that many services had invested in their attempts to improve their values and culture. Progress had been made but they found that in many services efforts to improve values and culture have not always meant improvements in staff behaviours. Bullying, harassment and discrimination were to varying degrees present in all services.

## Subgroups, watches, challenging poor behaviour

8. They found that subgroups within services can have an impact on the culture overall, with some groups having their own culture within the service. Watches were cited as a particular example of this, with many creating their own subcultures. They also were told of differences in experiences of operational and support staff.
9. HMCIFRS said that they had found instances where some staff had felt the need to fit in with the prevailing culture, which staff can then find difficult to challenge. In some services they found that a lack of action on previous cases around these issues has contributed to poor behaviour, that people did not trust the grievance processes and that they have either been targeted, or fear being targeted, for speaking up. The idea that sometimes poor behaviour is dismissed as “banter” was a recurring theme, with HMCIFRS saying that “staff told us of racist, sexist and homophobic comments and behaviours which had gone unchallenged or been dismissed as banter.” There outlined that some staff had spoken of an “old boys’ club”, where people can get away with inappropriate behaviours “if they know the right people”.
10. Similarly, they found that some managers felt unable to deal with or challenge inappropriate behaviours. There may be a range of reasons for this including a lack of confidence, or fear about the impact on their career etc.
11. They stated that staff need a secure way to raise concerns without fear of reprisals, and that will ensure that their concerns are taken seriously and investigated with appropriate outcomes. They said that there was no consistent process, policy or standard for FRS staff in carrying out these cases. Information

shared by services in relation to misconduct, grievance and complaint cases showed that in the course of investigations a quarter of individuals were dismissed, and almost half were permitted to resign or retire.

### Background checks

12. The report stated that background checks needed to improve. There are currently no consistent standards for FRSs to follow for background checks for staff and there are no specific legal obligations for services to conduct checks on existing staff.

### Leadership

13. Leadership was identified as key to creating a positive culture. They stated that the behaviour of leaders set the tone for the service, but only 27 per cent of respondents to HMICFRS's staff survey agreed that senior leaders consistently model and maintain service values. A clear understanding of discipline and grievances, promotions, retention and successful recruitment practices was present in services where a lower proportion of staff reported experiencing bullying, harassment and discrimination. Those services also had good training, used equality impact assessments, and promoted positive action that was understood by staff.
14. They stated that further training was needed for supervisors and middle managers to support them in their leadership and management roles. Without training it can mean that managers do not feel able to challenge or address issues such as bullying, harassment and discrimination.

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

15. HMICFRS stated that services needed to do more to improve their diversity, as well as being more inclusive to support and retain existing staff. Equality impact assessments were generally being completed but their quality was varied. They found that staff were not receiving ongoing and relevant EDI training, and that it was not frequent. Most services did have EDI training but it was not mandatory, leading to a patchy take up across staff.
16. Positive action was also often misunderstood, with a lack of understanding about the benefits. Positive action was sometimes seen in a negative light.
17. The report outlines that many services do not have a good understanding of the diversity of their staff, and are not using their equality and diversity data to direct

activities. The said that services are not clear on what action they need to take to improve the diversity of their staff.

### Operational and non-operational staff

18. Staff can have different experiences depending on whether they are operational or non-operational, which can also have an impact on career progression and opportunities. They said that on call staff often said that they experienced worse treatment than their wholetime counterparts.

### Talent management, progression

19. Progression opportunities can be limited. Some leadership adverts require incident command experience, which limits the pool of candidates. Not all services were found to have fair and accessible promotion processes for all staff.
20. Poor talents management, promotion processes and succession planning can lead to unfairness. Most services have a fair and transparent process but many staff perceived them as unfair. There were perceptions of nepotism apparent in services where there was no effective talent management process.

### National work

21. The inspectorate highlighted the work of the Fire Standards Board, who had recently introduced two new standards called “Leading the service” and “Leading and developing people”, building on the Core Code of Ethics. There is also the Code of Ethics Standards.
22. They also outlined the work on the NFCC in promoting values and culture though promoting best practice, and its people programme was in its second phase. They have also produced tools and guidance for FRSs to use and have begun to map the Fire Standards Board’s standards against their people programme.
23. The Core Code of Ethics was praised as a key development. They found that most services were adopting the Core Code of Ethics.
24. They also said that the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England should be strengthened, and that the Government should consider the findings and recommendations of their report when doing so.

## Recommendations within the report

25. There are a total of 35 recommendations in the directed at a range of organisations. There is one recommendation directed at the LGA, as well as some directed at fire and rescue authorities and employers. These recommendations are:
- **Recommendation 2:** By 1 October 2023, National Employers, the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council should review any current independent arrangements whereby staff can raise concerns outside their FRS. They should then ensure that all FRS staff have access to an independent reporting line that can be used as a confidential way to raise concerns outside their own FRS.
  - **Recommendation 15:** By 1 October 2023, the Home Office should work with the National Fire Chiefs Council and fire and rescue service employers to make sure there is a process to handle misconduct allegations against chief fire officers. The Home Office should immediately notify HMICFRS of any allegations and outcomes that it is aware of.
  - **Recommendation 26:** By 1 October 2023, as a precursor to the development of the College of Fire and Rescue, chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council should work with the Home Office to consider how they can improve the training and support they offer to staff in management and leadership development. This should include authority members in respect of their assurance leadership roles and should ensure that opportunities are offered fairly across all staff groups.
26. There are also a number of others for chief fire officers particularly but which pertain to member's role in holding chief fire officers to account for their delivery. Members will therefore have an interest at a local level on these recommendations and in ensuring that they have assurance that activities are being completed.
27. A number of recommendations have been directed at the Fire Standards Board, of which the LGA is a part, with Councillor Nick Chard representing the LGA. There will be an extra meeting of the Fire Standards Board to look at how to respond to the recommendations directed at them.
28. The full list of recommendations is included in **Appendix A**. Areas within recommendations where it is expected FRAs members will wish to take an interest in have been highlighted in the Appendix. These would be areas where FRAs would need to hold Chief Fire Officers to account for their delivery, receiving information as well as setting expectations.

## LGA response

29. The [LGA responded in the media to the publication of the report](#). Lead Members have also discussed the possibility of a formal response to HMCIFRS to highlight where there are issues of interest to the LGA even if we are not formally included within the recommendations.
30. We have held some initial discussions with the Home Office on the recommendations.

## NFCC

31. The NFCC held their culture conference in March with a range of contributors including the Fire Minister, Nazir Afzal, the Fire Brigade's Union, Women in the Fire Service, the Asian Fire Service Association, the Firefighters Charity amongst others. At the conference the NFCC committed to producing an action plan on culture and inclusion following the discussions with attendees.
32. At the end of April, the NFCC released their draft Culture Action Plan (**Appendix B**) for wider discussion with the sector. The NFCC's draft Culture Action Plan has been mapped against the principles in the Core Code of Ethics and including short, medium and long term activities.
33. Mark Hardingham and Rob MacDougall will be attending the FSMC to discuss their draft action plan.

## Implications for Wales

34. Fire and rescue related policy is a devolved matter and much of the Committee's work will focus on changes for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, with the Welsh Local Government Association leading on lobbying for Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities.

## Financial Implications

35. None

## Equalities implications

36. HMCIFRS's spotlight report highlights a number of EDI issues for the sector. Including the lack of diversity within the workforce, a lack of data on diversity, a

lack of targeted activity, poor understanding of positive action and training on EDI issues etc.

### Next steps

37. The next steps were discussed at the FSMC in March. They have now been amended in line with that discussion:

- Engagement with the NFCC, HMICFRS, the Home Office, and the Unions was a key principle of making sure that work on this issue would be effective going forwards.
- Respond to HMICFRS's spotlight review with input from across the LGA.
- A free, one-day conference for members looking at their governance and leadership role in EDI, alongside their employer role. This is planned for the 27 June 2023. The programme would be worked on jointly with the Workforce team and with input from the Equalities Advocate. It would be a mix between discussion and practical training sessions.
- Refresh and renew the membership and remit of the EDI Champions Network.
- Look at the wider programme of governance and leadership training for leaders in the service, especially scrutiny of senior officers in this area.
- Engage with the NFCC on the development of their action plan.
- Engage with the IFSG once its next steps are identified as well as on potentially reviewing its social media guidance.
- Prepare media lines to respond to any inquiries the LGA may receive around fire service culture.
- Consider the relevant employment law and related legal framework in which fire authorities act, including in relation to watches.
- Continue to engage with the Home Office on sector-led support and wider issues around culture seeking funding to support a sector-led improvement offer on these issues.
- Sharing lessons learned from services that have experienced issues



## Appendix A

### Raising concerns

**Recommendation 1:** By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.

**Recommendation 2:** By 1 October 2023, National Employers, the **Local Government Association** and the National Fire Chiefs Council should review any current independent arrangements whereby staff can raise concerns outside their FRS. They should then ensure that all FRS staff have access to an independent reporting line that can be used as a confidential way to raise concerns outside their own FRS.

**Recommendation 3:** By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should **review the support available for those who have raised concerns** and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.

**Recommendation 4:** By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should assure themselves that updates on how concerns are being handled are shared with those who have raised them. The updates should be given in an accessible way that encourages trust and confidence in the service response. Consideration should be given to creating a **professional standards function** to handle conduct concerns in service (or from an external service) to have oversight of cases, to make sure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.

**Recommendation 5:** By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure they provide accessible information for all staff and members of the public on **how they can raise concerns and access confidential support** (including through external agencies). Chief fire officers should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.

### Background checks

**Recommendation 6:** By 1 January 2024, the Home Office, working with the Ministry of Justice, should make sure that the Government incorporates fire and rescue authority employees within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 so that they are eligible for the appropriate DBS checks.

**Recommendation 7:** By 1 May 2024, the Home Office, working with the fire and rescue sector, should make sure that the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002, or a similar appropriate legislatively enabled solution, makes detailed provisions for fire and rescue services.

**Recommendation 8:** By 1 December 2023, the **Fire Standards Board**, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and underpinning guidance. It should:

- clearly state the requirements for background checks undertaken by services;
- clarify the minimum requirements (including levels of DBS checks) for all roles, particularly roles where staff have access to vulnerable members of the public;
- define the standards required to embed a culture across fire and rescue services that empowers all members of staff and local communities to report concerns; and
- be subject to review following any legislative change.

**Recommendation 9:** By 1 January 2024, chief fire officers should:

- immediately review their current background checks arrangements, and make sure that suitable and sufficient background checks are in place to safeguard their staff and communities they serve; and
- make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the **Fire Standards Board**.

**Recommendation 10:** By 1 September 2023, chief constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services.

## Misconduct handling

**Recommendation 11:** By 1 December 2023, the **Fire Standards Board**, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle staff disclosures, complaints and grievances.

**Recommendation 12:** By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.

**Recommendation 13:** By 1 December 2023, the **Fire Standards Board**, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes. These should include requirements to:

- conduct and complete investigations, whether or not the staff member under investigation leaves;
- consider whether the incident requires immediate dismissal;
- provide training for staff who are carrying out investigations; and
- ensure the diversity/neutrality of the investigation panel/person.

**Recommendation 14:** By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.

**Recommendation 15:** By 1 October 2023, the **Home Office** should work with the National Fire Chiefs Council and **fire and rescue service employers** to make sure there is a process to handle misconduct allegations against chief fire officers. The Home Office should immediately notify HMICFRS of any allegations and outcomes that it is aware of.

**Recommendation 16:** By 1 October 2023, the National Fire Chiefs Council should develop and manage a national barred list that holds details of staff who have been dismissed for gross misconduct (including staff who have already left services). It should ensure that this list is referred to in all appointment processes to prevent those who are barred from rejoining another service. After the College of Fire and Rescue has been established (see recommendation 25), it should take responsibility for managing the list.

**Recommendation 17:** With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any **allegations** that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that:

- involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRSs;

- are of a serious nature; or
- relate to assistant chief fire officers or those at equivalent or higher grades.

**Recommendation 18:** By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that **all parties are supported** in relation to ongoing investigations.

**Recommendation 19:** By 1 July 2023, the Home Office should examine whether any **appeal processes** for fire and rescue misconduct cases are appropriate.

## Leadership

**Recommendation 20:** By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should have plans in place to ensure they meet the **Fire Standards Board's** leading the service standard and its leading and developing people standard.

**Recommendation 21:** By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a **full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all senior leaders and managers** (assistant chief fire officer equivalent and above) in service.

**Recommendation 22:** By 1 September 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a **full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service**. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports.

**Recommendation 23:** By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should **seek regular feedback from staff about values, culture, fairness and diversity, with due regard to the leading and developing people standard**. They should show how they act on this feedback.

**Recommendation 24:** By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should put plans in place to **monitor**, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.

## Management and leadership training and development

**Recommendation 25:** By 1 January 2025, the Government should establish a College of Fire and Rescue, as proposed by the White Paper Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service. There should be no further delay to its implementation.

**Recommendation 26:** By 1 October 2023, as a precursor to the development of the College of Fire and Rescue, chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council should work with the Home Office to consider how they can improve the training and support they offer to staff in management and leadership development. This should include **authority members in respect of their assurance leadership roles and should ensure that opportunities are offered fairly across all staff groups.**

## Diversity data

**Recommendation 27:** By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their **equality impact assessments** are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality impact assessment toolkit.

**Recommendation 28:** By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review how they gather and use **equality and diversity data** to improve their understanding of their staff demographics, including applying and meeting the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality, diversity and inclusion data toolkit.

**Recommendation 29:** By 1 December 2023, the Home Office should publish greater detail on the protected characteristic data it collects about FRS staff, including joiners and leavers, by rank and role.

**Recommendation 30:** By 30 December 2024, the Home Office should align the data it collects on protected characteristics with the Office for National Statistics harmonised standard and publish this data.

**Recommendation 31:** By 1 December 2024, the Home Office should collect and publish experimental statistics on public complaints and conduct matters in relation to FRS staff, similar to that which it currently publishes on police forces in England and Wales.

## Improving diversity

**Recommendation 32:** By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should, as a priority, specify in **succession plans** how they intend to improve diversity across all levels of the service. This should include offering increased direct-entry opportunities.

**Recommendation 33:** By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should develop plans to promote **progression paths** for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity.

### The Core Code of Ethics

**Recommendation 34:** With immediate effect, chief fire officers should review their implementation of the **Core Code of Ethics** and make sure it is being applied across their services.

### The fire and rescue national framework for England

**Recommendation 35:** By the end of this Parliament, the Government should consider the findings and recommendations in this report when refreshing the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.



## NFCC Draft Culture Action Plan

Our fire and rescue services serve and protect the public, and our people are at the heart of it. Our Core Code of Ethics sets out our commitment to putting our communities first, with dignity and respect, equality, diversity and inclusion, integrity and ethical leadership at the centre of everything we do.

The NFCC is committed to working with fire and rescue services to deliver a positive working culture by inspiring leadership, embedding equality, diversity and inclusion, finding and nurturing diverse talent, and supporting the health and wellbeing of all our staff.

The NFCC recognises that fire and rescue services have fallen short of this commitment. We have rightly received criticism for not doing enough to tackle discrimination and abuse or to ensure that a positive working culture is the reality for all those who serve within fire and rescue services. We know that this has had a negative impact on public trust and confidence. Critical reviews and inspections into fire service culture going back to at least 1999 have called for substantial culture change. <sup>(1)</sup> And whilst much work has been done, much more is needed to deliver the step change that the public and our staff need and deserve. We must move forward, we must do so right now and with pace and renewed vigour to ensure all our fire and rescue services are open, inclusive and welcoming places to work.

Following the NFCC's Culture and Inclusion Conference on 27 and 28 March 2023 and the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) spotlight report entitled 'Values and culture in fire and rescue services', released on 30 March 2023, the NFCC has developed a draft Culture Action Plan for the next 18 months to address culture and inclusion within the fire and rescue sector. This will address recommendations made in the 2022 white paper 'Reforming our fire and rescue services' and realise the ambitions of Fit for the Future and the NFCC Member Strategy, in addition to the [suite of existing NFCC products developed for fire and rescue services](#).

This NFCC Culture Action Plan is our renewed call to action to improve culture and end misogyny, racism, bullying and harassment across UK fire and rescue services. Working together we can and must change our culture for the better.

We can only deliver on this action plan in partnership. The ongoing involvement and engagement of stakeholders is vital to ensure sustained progress towards our shared vision of a positive working culture which extends into the communities served by fire and rescue services.

Working with partners, the NFCC will continue to monitor and review progress against the plan, drawing on feedback and learning to ensure we deliver against our shared ambition.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the appendix

## NFCC Culture Action Plan: Summary

All of our activity will support delivery against our Core Code of Ethics to ensure we are fit for the future



Putting our communities first



Dignity and respect



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Integrity



Ethical leadership

|  | Short Term (Q1 2023-24)   | Medium Term ( Q2-Q3 2023-24)  | Long Term (Q4 2023-24 & 2024-25)  |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | Go live of <b>Direct Entry Programme</b> to quickly develop excellent candidates to leadership.<br>Launch the <b>Positive Practice Portal</b> to champion innovative practice across the sector.  | Research and report on options available to the sector regarding <b>investigations and hearings</b> and <b>professional standards</b> .<br>Launch the <b>Organisational Learning Portal</b> to encourage cross-sector working for the benefit of all.<br>Appoint <b>successful direct entrants</b> into FRSSs.  | Supporting our staff to best protect the public by launching the <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> framework.<br>Launch of <b>Direct Entry training programme</b> with the Capita Fire Service College, training new direct entrants to the highest calibre.<br>Deliver on preferred options in relation to <b>investigations</b> and track impact. |
|  | Publish our ground breaking research on <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> to support the sector to develop its offer.<br>Establish independent <b>Challenge and Support Panel</b> to hold the programme to account on meeting it's ambitions around culture.<br>Circulate our <b>Culture Action Plan</b> for peer review by the end of April 2023.  | Put <b>professional standards</b> first and develop best practice for investigations and hearings across all levels of the sector.<br>Evidence progress made on delivery against the recommendations from the <b>HMICFRS Spotlight report</b> .<br>Communicate out progress across the sector.<br>Develop <b>Challenging Behaviour Toolkit</b> for FRSSs. | Promote excellent standards by introducing and embedding the <b>Challenging Behaviour Toolkit</b> .<br>Produce guidance to underpin <b>Fire Standards</b> relating to HMICFRS recommendations, if required.   |
|  | Further signposting relating to <b>independent reporting lines</b> .<br>Strengthen involvement of key sector bodies such as <b>Women in the Fire Service, Asian Fire Service Association</b> and <b>The Fire Fighters Charity</b> in our work around culture and inclusion so they have input into the work.<br>Expand our capacity and capability within NFCC to support the work on culture and inclusion, including bringing in <b>EDI expertise</b> . | Drawing on good practice across public sector, develop a <b>cultural dashboard methodology</b> to enable Fire and Rescue Services to track progress against key culture measures and benchmark practice.  | Launch and support the implementation of a <b>cultural dashboard methodology</b> .  |
|  | Publish our <b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> sector report.<br>Facilitate training sessions on <b>Equality Impact Assessments</b> for all Fire and Rescue Services.<br>Continue our popular series of <b>Lunch &amp; Learn sessions</b> and <b>Strategic Masterclasses</b> on key cultural topics.  | Building on our successful range of toolkits by delivering toolkits on <b>faith and disability</b> .  | Host a follow-up <b>NFCC Culture &amp; Inclusion conference</b> to review progress and discuss future developments.   |
|  | Deliver <b>coaching &amp; mentoring</b> masterclass creating a coaching culture of inclusion over the next three months.  | Put rounded development and feedback centre stage by publishing options available and best practice tools relating to <b>360-degree feedback</b> .<br>Bring out the best in our workforce by creating an <b>interactive career pathway</b> .<br>Develop the <b>Middle Leadership Programme</b> .  | Develop our people to be the best they can by launching <b>Middle Leadership Programme</b> and reviewing our <b>Executive Leadership Programme</b> .  |

The NFCC Safeguarding Board will be discussing the creation of a similar visual to represent the work outlined in the list below at the next board meeting in early May.

### Short-term (by the end of May 2023)

In addition to the [suite of existing NFCC products provided to fire and rescue services](#), the NFCC has worked closely with suppliers of independent reporting lines and sent our [signposting information](#) to all fire and rescue services to enable them to establish independent reporting lines if they don't already have them.

Through our People, Culture and Leadership Programme, we will:

- Communicate out to all partners on the NFCC's response to the spotlight report and the Culture and Inclusion Conference including how we will deliver against recommendations
- Circulate our action plan for peer review by the end of April 2023
- Identify independent Chair and establish an independent Challenge and Support Panel, to offer scrutiny, oversight, challenge and support to NFCC in its delivery against the action plan
- Strengthen involvement of key sector bodies such as Women in the Fire Service, Asian Fire Service Association and The Fire Fighters Charity in our work around culture and inclusion so they have clear voice and input into the work
- Expand our capacity and capability within NFCC to support the work on culture and inclusion, including bringing in EDI expertise



- Deliver sessions on Equality Impact Assessments
- Launch recruitment process for the Direct Entry Programme
- Launch our Health and Wellbeing report and key priorities
- Publish our EDI Sector Report for UK Fire and Rescue Services
- Provide ongoing programme of Lunch and Learn sessions (such as Women in the Fire Service, Menopause, Bullying and Harassment)
- Deliver a coaching and mentoring masterclass on creating a coaching culture of inclusion
- Launch the Positive Practice Portal
- Continue delivery of a programme of strategic masterclasses (4 masterclasses already delivered)

Through the NFCC Safeguarding Board we will:

- Provide a ministerial pack, including draft guidance, to the Ministry of Justice which supports the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act business case (to enter the Houses of Parliament and Lords on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023)
- Produce and undertake stakeholder engagement consultation on NFCC Safeguarding Managing Allegations Guidance, including:
  - o Safeguarding Safe Share Initiative
  - o Additional reference for a joint guidance on the referral reporting route (flowchart) between HMICFRS and the Safeguarding Board to be produced to highlight the 'how'
  - o Commitment to the importance of safeguarding
- Produce and undertake stakeholder engagement consultation on Positive Disclosure Risk Assessment Guidance
- Produce and undertake stakeholder engagement consultation on Joint DBS & NFCC Guidance on levels of checks
- Produce NFCC Safeguarding Children and Adult Competency Framework 2022-25

Should Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) request this, the NFCC could undertake a supported procurement exercise with independent reporting lines.

### **Medium-term (by December 2023)**

Through the People, Culture and Leadership Programme, we will:

- Evidence progress made on delivery against the recommendations from the HMICFRS spotlight report. Communicate our progress across the sector
- Develop a Challenging Behaviour Toolkit to share with fire and rescue services
- Drawing on good practice examples, develop methodology for a Cultural Dashboard for FRSs
- Undertake research and report on options available to the sector regarding investigations and hearings, to include identification of options at individual service level, regional level and national level for potential professional standards function/s
- Create an interactive career pathway
- Appoint successful direct entrants into fire and rescue services
- Develop the Middle Leadership Programme
- Produce guidance on options available and best practice tools relating to 360-degree feedback
- Launch the Organisational Learning Portal
- Produce and launch further EDI toolkits (including disability and faith)

The NFCC, in conjunction with the Fire Standards Board, will also consider whether further guidance is needed in order to underpin Fire Standards addressing HMICFRS recommendations.

Through the NFCC Safeguarding Board, we will:

- Provide joint DBS and NFCC online workshops to support the DBS Guidance on levels of checks Provide NFCC Safeguarding Safer Recruitment and Managing Allegations continuing professional development (CPD) training (sector specific) and manual
- Review the Fire Standards Board's Safeguarding Fire Standard
- Provide an updated template letter to be provided to CFOs to submit to Chief Police Constables, upon legislative change
- Receive the request from the Home Office to support this amendment to the Police Act for the Safeguarding Board to research existing legislations to establish most appropriate route
- Review the Safeguarding Guidance and Self-Assessment
- Publish NFCC Safeguarding Managing Allegations Guidance
- Publish Positive Disclosure Risk Assessment Guidance
- Publish Joint DBS & NFCC Guidance on levels of checks
- Publish Safeguarding Children & Adult Competency Framework 2022-25

There is also an HMICFRS recommendation for national barred list holding details of staff who have been dismissed for gross misconduct. This is being considered as part of the NFCC's work in the medium-term.

### **Longer-term (2024/5)**

In the longer-term, through the People, Culture and Leadership Programme we will:

- Launch and disseminate the Challenging Behaviour Toolkit/s, and track impact
- Launch the Cultural Dashboard methodology
- Deliver on preferred option/s in relation to investigations and hearings and professional standards
- Produce guidance required to underpin Fire Standards re. HMICFRS recommendations
- Commence the Direct Entry training programme with the Capita Fire Service College
- Develop and launch Middle Leadership Programme
- Review the Executive Leadership Programme to ensure it remains fit for purpose
- Develop and launch Health & Wellbeing Framework

Through the NFCC Safeguarding Board we will:

- Work with the People, Culture & Leadership Programme on conduct/performance procedures guidance relating to Safeguarding Managing Allegations procedures
- Request inclusion within the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The NFCC is also committed to hosting a follow-up Culture and Inclusion Conference to review progress and discuss future developments.

### **Governance:**

The NFCC People, Culture and Leadership Co-ordinating Committee will lead our work around culture and inclusion, supported by the NFCC Safeguarding Board and NFCC Organisational Learning.

In addition, the NFCC Council will review progress against the action plan. The NFCC Board of Trustees will provide strategic oversight and accountability.

The NFCC will work closely with the Fire Standards Board, HMICFRS, Home Office, LGA, National Employers and wider partners in ensuring that progress is made against the action plan, and we will report on progress at regular intervals.

Our independent Challenge and Support Panel will play a key role in providing scrutiny, advice, challenge and support to the NFCC in its delivery against the action plan.

**Appendix**

Drivers relating to the need to improve the culture in fire and rescue services go back as far as 1999 and they continue until as recently as March 2023. In 1999 the previous fire inspectorate published Equality and Fairness in the Fire service Report which stated that “We [the inspectorate] are strongly of the opinion that substantial change is necessary in the management and culture of the service to achieve an environment where equality and fairness can be integrated into its whole operation and organisation”. This evidences that the measures that have been taken to improve culture over the years have been insufficient and have not been as effective as they needed to be.

A selection of these reports are as follows:

September 1999: Equality and fairness in the fire service: a thematic review by HM Fire Service Inspectorate

May 2001: Managing a Modern Fire Service: Bridging the Gap by HM Fire Service Inspectorate

16 December 2002: [The Future of the Fire Service](#) by Sir George Bain

20 May 2008: [Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018](#) published by the Department for Communities and Local Government

17 May 2013: [Facing the future](#) by Sir Ken Knight

February 2015: [Independent review of conditions of service for fire and rescue staff in England](#) by Adrian Thomas

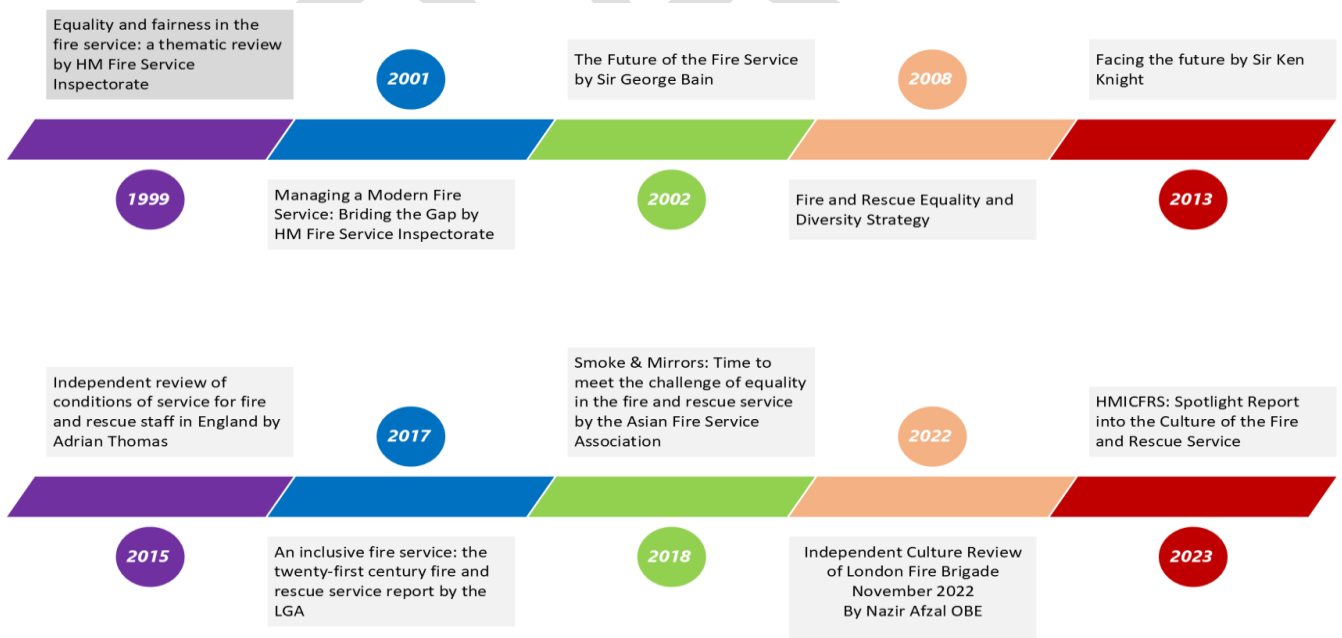
7 March 2017: [An inclusive fire service: the twenty-first century fire and rescue service](#) report by the LGA

13 March 2018: [Fire Vision 2024](#) report by the LGA

20 May 2018: [Smoke and Mirrors: Time to meet the challenge of equality in the fire and rescue service](#) by Asian Fire Service Association

November 2022: [Independent Culture Review](#) into London Fire Brigade by Nazir Afzal OBE

March 2023: Spotlight report on [Values and culture in fire and rescue services](#) by HMICFRS







## Fire Services Management Committee

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Date:</b>         | 19 May 2023  |
| <b>Title:</b>        | NFCC Update  |
| <b>Presented by:</b> | Mark Hardingham, NFCC Chair  |
| <b>Contact:</b>      | <a href="mailto:chair@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk">chair@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk</a> |

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update on key work within the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).
- 1.2 Any questions or requests for further information can be sent to either NFCC Chair Mark Hardingham ([chair@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk](mailto:chair@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk)) or Chief Operating Officer Susannah Hancock ([susannah.hancock@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk](mailto:susannah.hancock@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk)).

### 2. General Update

#### Minimum Service Levels (MSLs) Consultation

- 2.1 NFCC has responded to the Home Office's MSL consultation. We welcome the opportunity to work with Government, the Local Government Association (LGA), and other partners as the legislation progresses.
- 2.2 NFCC's response was clear in its call for a consistent approach that can be easily understood and implemented, both for staff and senior leadership, which allows for local adaptation and flexibility to consider local risks and needs. Further clarity is also needed on implementation.
- 2.3 Public safety at times of industrial unrest is critically important. It is also important that the introduction of MSLs does not limit or undermine the ability of fire and rescue services/employers (FRSs) to resolve workplace disputes. Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) and FRS senior leadership teams will need to work closely with their staff around the

implementation of MSLs to ensure that positive engagement is maintained, and MSLs do not lead to a deterioration in employee relations.

### Coronation of King Charles III

- 2.4 NFCC Chair Mark Hardingham, along with other UK FRS leaders, attended the coronation to represent FRSs across the UK. CFO Ben Ansell (Dorset and Wiltshire FRS) led the FRS part of the Civilian Services Contingent with Assistant CFO Michelle Hickmott (Staffordshire FRS).
- 2.5 NFCC supported colleagues at London Fire Brigade (LFB), Royal Berkshire FRS, Norfolk FRS, and Scottish FRS with preparations for the day. FRSs undertook preparatory activity including prevention and community outreach, safety inspections, specialist site visits, and response to incidents. The collaboration between FRSs, police services, Transport for London, the Home Office and others was invaluable and ensured the event went ahead safely and successfully.

### Ukraine FRS Convoy

- 2.6 On 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023, a fifth convoy of fire appliances, kit, and equipment left Merseyside and then Kent FRS to support firefighters on the frontline in Ukraine. The humanitarian aid convoy was organised by NFCC and FIRE AID & International Development, with support from the wider sector and the Home Office. Items were also donated by police services coordinated through the National Police Chiefs Council.
- 2.7 The convoy is made up of 25 vehicles packed with more than 8,000 items of life-saving kit and equipment. 80 volunteers from FRSs will ensure its safe passage across Europe. Firefighters will hand over the convoy in Poland, where it will then be delivered to where it is needed most.

### Fire Reform – College of Fire

- 2.8 NFCC is engaged with Home Office about aspects of fire reform related to the 2022 white paper consultation, and we await the publication of the Home Office response to the consultation. One area of particular interest and activity is the proposed College of Fire and how such a function might be established, and in what form. The suggested functions of a College of Fire are currently established in the NFCC and with the Independent Fire Standards Board, so ensuring continuity into any new arrangements would be critical to both FRSs and Fire Authorities.

## **3. Protection Update**

### Protection Uplift Grant

- 3.1 Utilisation of the Protection Uplift Grant continues to increase and a full spending analysis for Q4 2022/23 is being undertaken. The Home Office has confirmed that all 43 FRSs in England will receive the same grant in 2023/24 as last year, which will

again be paid in two halves. The NFCC Protection Reform Unit (PRU) will hold a workshop on the use of technology for FRSs in Q2 2023/24.

### Fire Safety (England) Regulations (FSER)

- 3.2 The FSER, which provides additional stipulations to responsible persons of High-Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs), came into force on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023. The draft guidance was produced to assist FRSs, and NFCC is awaiting feedback to publish a final guide. PRU is working with the Home Office to evaluate the impact of the FSER and work through the issues that FRSs are experiencing with poor plans and fault reporting.
- 3.3 Section 156 of the Building Safety Act
- 3.4 Section 156 comes into force in October 2023. It makes changes to the Regulator Reform (Fire Safety) Order and enhances the synergy between the new building safety regime and the existing regulatory regime for HRRBs.
- 3.5 Section 156 also ensures that all fire risk assessments are recorded regardless of the size of the premises. The PRU will publish guidance to assist FRSs with Section 156 and assist the Home Office with Article 50 guidance.

### Building Safety Regulator

- 3.6 The PRU continues to work with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Local Authority Building Control, and the LGA in testing the new regime. We continue to respond to secondary legislation and HSE consultations to ensure FRS voices are heard.
- 3.7 Not all mixed-use HRRBs will be inspected under the new regime and discussions are ongoing about how this would be applied in practice to meet the aims of the regulator and improve building and resident safety.

## **4. Prevention Update**

- 4.1 The NFCC Prevention Board met on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and the NFCC Prevention Committee met on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023. At their recent meetings in April and March respectively, both the Prevention Board and the Prevention Committee approved the paper outlining the transition from the Prevention Programme to the Prevention Hub. This includes governance, structures, and resourcing, and the Prevention Programme Board has transitioned into a Prevention Partnership Board to support collaborative working with our partners. The Prevention Team has produced a [video](#) that highlights the achievements of the Prevention Programme and the Children and Young People's Portfolio in 2022/23.

Safeguarding

- 4.2 The amendment to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act business case has now been introduced into Parliament with a schedule for debate taking place over 12-16 weeks. Once it has been debated and signed by the Minister(s), it will be acted on immediately.
- 4.3 As part of our short-term plan, we have drafted three pieces of guidance that have been peer-reviewed by the NFCC Safeguarding Practitioners Group and will be consulted on in May/June 2023.

Person Centred Framework

- 4.4 The online Home Fire Safety Check has 62% of FRSs fully onboarded, 17% partially onboarded, and 13% engaged. There has been an increase in the number of online home fire safety assessments completed, as the tool has received a lot of media support in relation to the cost-of-living crisis.
- 4.5 75% of English FRSs attended the Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) Competency Framework development workshops.

Prevention Evaluation Framework

- 4.6 The draft framework has finished formal consultation, with 61% of English FRSs providing feedback.
- 4.7 Building on this work, we will continue to develop standardised tools with FRSs starting with the HFSV, which is already in progress. This work has also been aligned with the Community Risk Programme's evaluation work.

Fire Prevention Grant to Support Fire Kills National Advertisement

- 4.8 NFCC was awarded the Home Office Fire Prevention Grant on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022, and the national advertising campaign ran from 1<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The reach of the campaign was over 42.7 million people in England, with over 123.1 million impressions.

Children and Young People

- 4.9 NFCC continues to support local FRSs to deliver effective prevention activities to children and young people, including early interventions, Firesetters, Princes Trust, and Fire Cadets.
- 4.10 The Fire Prevention Grant supported the further development of [www.staywise.co.uk](http://www.staywise.co.uk) with new fire safety resources for children and those working in the community.



## 5. People Programme Update

### Culture in the FRS

- 5.1 The sector continues to be shaken by revelations made through independent reviews of culture and the media. Responding to reports regarding culture in FRSs, NFCC has reiterated that the behaviours outlined are unacceptable and that there is no place for harassment, bullying, or discrimination in any workplace. NFCC is committed to working with all FRSs to support a sector-wide culture of inclusion and openness. NFCC's equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) sector report was [published](#) in March 2023.
- 5.2 The need for equality in FRSs was acknowledged by the previous fire inspectorate in 1999; however, measures taken to improve the situation thus far have not been sufficient. In response, NFCC has accelerated work on culture and EDI to address immediate priorities and support the development of a [Culture Action Plan](#). The draft has been published and the People Programme is seeking feedback.
- 5.3 A key part of NFCC's response to the LFB Independent Culture Review was engagement with stakeholders at NFCC's first Culture and Inclusion Conference in March 2023. The two-day conference culminated in a session identifying how the sector should work together to address gaps and find solutions to create inclusive FRSs. This output was fed into the development of the Culture Action Plan.
- 5.4 NFCC is establishing a cultural reform programme to highlight and share the good practice and learning that has been identified in some individual FRSs and other sectors. This will help embed the Core Code of Ethics (CCoE) across the UKFRS, introduce work from our Leadership and People Programmes, and ensure that the recommendations of reviews into UKFRS culture are fully addressed and integrated into UK FRSs.

### Culture Action Plan

- 5.5 The draft Culture Action Plan details the next 18 months' action. This will address recommendations made in the 2022 white paper, 'Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service', and realise the ambitions of Fit for the Future and the NFCC Member Strategy. It also incorporates the suite of existing NFCC products for FRSs. NFCC will continue to monitor and review progress against the plan, drawing on feedback to ensure delivery against ambition.
- 5.6 Three focus group sessions are taking place in May 2023, which you can sign up to attend [here](#). This will be an opportunity to feedback on the Culture Action Plan. If you are not able to attend a focus group session, views can be provided by email to [NFCCPeople.Programme@nfcc.org.uk](mailto:NFCCPeople.Programme@nfcc.org.uk) by 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023. This will ensure the widest possible breadth of views and representation from the sector. Feedback will be collated and actioned, with a view to publishing the final plan in July 2023.

Health and Wellbeing

- 5.7 The Health and Wellbeing Report was completed at the end of October 2022. The output report and key priorities document was presented to Chiefs Council in March. Council endorsed the report, and it has been [published](#).

On-Call Firefighters Project

- 5.8 Deputy CFO Steve Healey of Lancashire FRS is the NFCC Lead for on-call and will be supported by Assistant CFO Andy Cole from Dorset and Wiltshire FRS. They are scoping the required work, which is likely to involve research and data studies into the productivity, efficiency, and sustainability of the on-call duty system.

**6. Leadership Programme Update**Direct Entry

- 6.1 The Direct Entry recruitment campaign successfully launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023. Seven FRSs are seeking to hire a direct entrant at Station Manager level. The participating FRSs are East Sussex, Staffordshire, Avon, Oxford, North Wales, Leicestershire, and Shropshire. In the first month, over 400 applications were received – 75% male to 25% female, which is above the national average for FRSs. The recruitment process closes on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023.

Supervisory Leadership Development Programme (SLDP)

- 6.2 Since September 2022, 404 learners have registered for the SLDP across 41 FRSs. The feedback from those who have completed the programme has been overwhelmingly positive. The SLDP project was formally closed in April 2023 and handed over to the NFCC Content and Implementation Function.

Middle Leadership Project

- 6.3 The project business case was approved in April 2023. The project team are conducting early market engagement regarding the development of the project and have opened discussions on a 360 toolkit with potential suppliers. Formal procurement will begin at the end of May 2023.

Strategic Continued Professional Development Masterclasses

- 6.4 There has been an excellent response to the masterclasses, and over 97% of FRSs have attended at least one session. Themes have included finance, commercial and procurement, corporate governance, and political acuity. Further masterclasses are planned on topics including sustainability and inquests and inquiries.

Coaching and Mentoring Portal

- 6.5 The portal continues to attract staff in the fire sector with an increase in all categories since January 2023. It now has 305 members, 37 qualified coaches, 48 mentors, and

26 live coaching relationships. Feedback from users continues to be positive and a progress report to the Home Office was well received. The team plan to produce evaluation reports in the coming months demonstrating the benefits of the portal. The coaching and mentoring portal project was formally closed in April 2023 and handed over to the NFCC Content and Implementation Function.

### Core Code of Ethics

- 6.6 NFCC and partners, the LGA and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, held two workshops on the CCoE at the LGA Fire Conference in March 2023, which were well received. Following further positive feedback in the HMICFRS Report on Values and Culture on the CCoE, NFCC and partners are committed to ensuring the CCoE is fully adopted, implemented, and embedded in all FRSs. A meeting with partners is planned for May 2023 to consider the next steps.

## **7. Operational Response and Control Hub Update**

- 7.1 NFCC has appointed a new Operational Response and Fire Control Hub lead and will shortly be advertising for supporting roles. The post holder will play a significant role in the day-to-day support of the Continuous Improvement Directorate, providing technical expertise, advising NFCC leaders, and providing managerial support to the Operations committee.

### Year-End Update

- 7.2 In 2022/23 the NFCC Content team published: two new fire control guidance documents; six fire control training specifications; a National Operational Guidance (NOG) document review; 53 changes based on National Operational Learning (NOL) feedback and legislative change; and four national training packages covering major incidents, emerging risks, and technical knowledge areas.
- 7.3 Three further fire control documents, one guidance review, and fourteen change requests are in the final stages of approval before publication in Q1 of 2023/24.
- 7.4 The new and revised guidance produced this year covers a range of subjects including:
- Lessons identified by the Manchester Arena Inquiry, new guidance for terrorist attacks, survival guidance for members of the public at risk, and advice for the public on basic first aid.
  - Recommended changes to how FRSs handle casualties during road traffic collisions and revised guidance regarding water survivability.
  - Incidents involving psychological trauma and suicide.

Ongoing Work

- 7.5 The Major Incidents guidance consultation has recently closed. Changes will align with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) doctrine updates and will move the sector closer to addressing lessons learned over the past five years.
- 7.6 A Working Group has been established to review fireground radios guidance.
- 7.7 Workplans for guidance reviews in 2023/24 are yet to be confirmed but are likely to include hazardous materials and wildfires.

Grenfell Tower Inquiry Survey

- 7.8 The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Recommendations Survey was issued to every FRS in February 2023 for completion in April. The final report is due for submission to the Home Office in May. It is intended that a final report will be issued to the Home Office in preparation for the anniversary of the fire in June.

Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) Connect Project

- 7.9 Following extensive work by the two project working groups (ICT User Group and Control User Group), the MAIT Connect Project released the invitation to tender notice to the market on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The final draft of the full suite of procurement documents was reviewed by an independent legal team before release to the market.
- 7.10 The timeline for the ongoing procurement process has now been set. It is hoped that this will lead to the award of a contract in late Q2 of 2023. The project manager is now working with NFCC colleagues and Home Office stakeholders to scope the governance structures that will be necessary to support the MAIT contract once awarded.

Fire Control Guidance Project

- 7.11 Two key pieces of guidance related to the outcome of the Manchester Arena Inquiry (Multi-Agency for Fire Control and Terrorist Attack Survival Guidance), have now finished consultation. Pending agreement at NFCC Steering Group, the guidance will be published in Q2 of 2023/24.

Learning Update

- 7.12 NOL has now received over 500 submissions since the launch of the online tool four and a half years ago. This has resulted in 41 action notes.
- 7.13 In the year 2022/23, NOL received 105 cases and the NOL User Group (NOLUG) processed 99 cases, which includes: 37 cases with wider organisational impacts; 21 cases with multi-agency impacts; and six international incidents.

- 7.14 Deputy Assistant CFO Stewart Nicholson (Scottish FRS) has overseen significant improvements to the NOL process since he was appointed NOLUG Chair.
- 7.15 The NOL team will shortly publish a centralised database of Prevention of Future Deaths Reports which will be updated quarterly highlighting relevant learning for FRSs. The NOL team has also reviewed over 180 historic incidents against NOG for consideration by NOLUG.
- 7.16 The project to establish organisational learning in NFCC is progressing and teams have been restructured to adapt the NOL model for use in other areas. The aim is to work with ten trial FRSs in the first two quarters of 2023/24.
- 7.17 The Academic Collaboration, Evaluation, and Research Group (ACER) group, chaired by Dr Rowena Hill from Nottingham Trent University has now held two meetings and agreed on areas for focus. They are currently drafting bids for further funding from the Economic and Social Research Council to establish a fire research centre.
- 7.18 A form for submission of academic work to help NFCC identify and share ongoing and completed research has been launched on the [NFCC website](#).

## **8. Data, Digital and Technology (DDaT) Update**

- 8.1 NFCC has established a DDaT Committee, which will consolidate leadership and expertise to determine priorities and oversee the development and delivery of national DDaT ambitions. NFCC is winding down the Digital and Data Programme (DDP) and establishing a permanent DDaT function, providing strategic leadership and delivery for the committee's priorities. Recruitment for strategic leadership roles and board chairs has commenced.
- 8.2 NFCC's Digital and Data Strategy is being updated to align with Fit for the Future and current priorities. TechUK, the UK's technology trade association, kindly hosted members of the DDaT Committee and TechUK members to help shape the strategy at an early stage and ensure it works in partnership with industry.
- 8.3 It is anticipated that an initial draft strategy will be shared with Chiefs Council in June 2023. Further engagement will be done with CFOs and committee chairs over the coming months to further understand and define priorities.

### National Fire Data Collection System (NFDCS)

- 8.4 NFDCS is a Home Office-led project to transform the existing Incident Recording System (IRS) into a more comprehensive, flexible, and scalable system. The aim is for a supplier to be in place by June 2023 to deliver an initial solution by summer 2024. The initial solution will prioritise the scope of the current IRS datasets with subsequent expansion into other areas, including prevention, protection, and workforce data.

- 8.5 The DDaT team previously supported a mapping exercise to understand the additional data FRSs collect above that which is captured by the IRS. The analysis was presented to the Home Office in February and will inform a series of dataset review workshops that the Home Office will run with FRSs in the coming months. These workshops will provide FRSs with an opportunity to advocate for additional incident datasets to be captured within the new system.

#### Data Management Framework (DMF)

- 8.6 Following the publication of the Data Management Fire Standard, the DDaT team has defined and developed the underpinning guidance and tools for the new standard. The DMF is undergoing peer review until 15<sup>th</sup> May and full consultation is expected to launch in June 2023. The final publication is anticipated by October 2023.

#### Data Analytics

- 8.7 As part of the One NFCC Programme, NFCC data capability has been restructured and its disparate components brought together. This aligns with the recommendations from the National Data Analytics Capability design developed by the DDP, and the supporting processes will feed into the new target operating model for this function. The newly structured function is in place for the start of 2023/24 as the Analysis and Insight Team.

#### Data Conference

- 8.8 In April 2023, DDaT Committee Chair Andy Hopkinson hosted a hugely successful NFCC Data Conference in Liverpool attended by more than 100 strategic leaders and those in professional data roles. The 'data-driven future' two-day event welcomed engaging, inspiring, and thought-provoking speakers from a broad range of private and public organisations highlighting how data is being used across the fire and rescue sector, and our everyday lives, to shape how leaders make transformational strategic decisions.
- 8.9 Senior representatives from the Home Office and HMICFRS hosted a session on how data is driving transformation and reform in FRSs. Other speakers included representatives from the Metropolitan Police, Palantir Technology, BT, Trigon Fire Safety, Nottingham Trent University, and two excellent sessions from ACER group chair, Dr Rowena Hill.

#### Digital, Technology, and Cyber

- 8.10 Work on the five-point framework for digital, technology, and cyber remains a key focus. The framework comprises strategy; standards; governance and structure; cyber; and promote, engage, motivate, and collaborate.
- 8.11 The Home Office has secured three years of funding to improve cyber resilience in FRSs in England. The Home Office has partnered with IBM to conduct detailed

research into compliance with the Cyber Assessment Framework which will inform how the next two years of funding are targeted and the role NFCC will play in supporting improvement.

- 8.12 The DDaT hub will collaborate with the Fire Standards Board to commence production of digital and technology standard(s) in September 2023. Supporting guidance and tools will be identified as the standard(s) develop.

## **9. Community Risk Management Programme (CRMP) Update**

### Guidance Project

- 9.1 The project has delivered significant guidance to support the CRMP Framework that reflects the Fire Standard. The remaining guidance: hazard identification, risk analysis, and decision making are all on track for publication in summer 2023.

### Definition of Risk Project

- 9.2 The project is currently finalising methodologies for road traffic collisions and other building fires. Following publication, workshops will be held to assist FRSs in implementing the methodologies.

### Evaluation of FRS Interventions Project

- 9.3 The Evaluation Methodologies Compendium is nearing completion and will be published in the summer of 2023.

### Competencies for Risk Management Project

- 9.4 The [Competency Framework for Risk Management Planning](#) has been published.







|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Title of Paper</b>            | <b>Fire Standards Progress Report</b>                               |
| <b>Decision or Information</b>   | For information   |
| <b>Title and Date of Meeting</b> | LGA Fire Services Management Committee<br>19 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 |
| <b>Attachments</b>               | None  |

### Summary

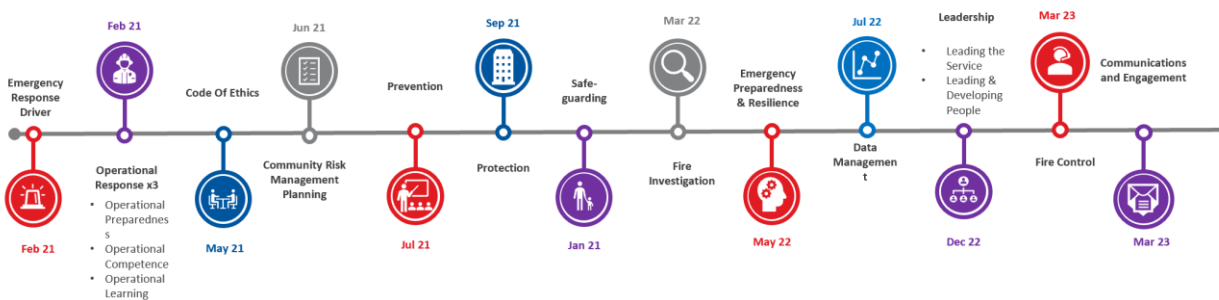
This paper provides members of the LGA Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) with a summary of the progress on the Fire Standards. The Fire Standards Board (FSB) last met formally on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and they next meet on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

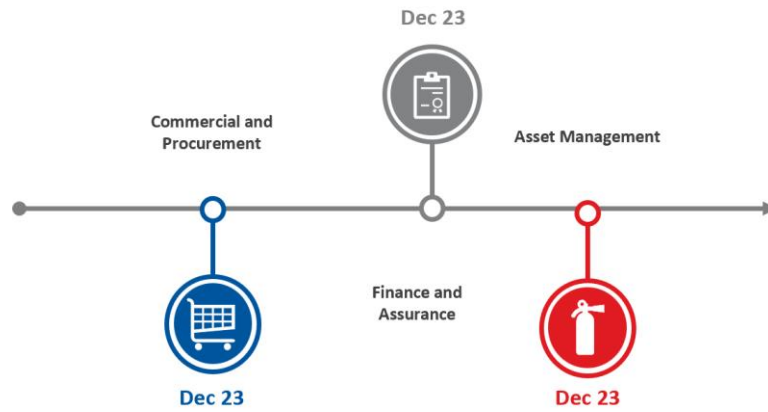
- note the contents of this report for information;
- provide ongoing support to officers in enabling and empowering them to engage in the development and implementation of the Fire Standards both in production and when published; and
- encourage the monitoring of the benefits of the Fire Standards in their services.

### Current Status



There are now sixteen approved and published Fire Standards which are available on the [Fire Standards Board](#) website and shown in the timeline figure below.

The second and third phases of Fire Standards development is progressing with the remaining standards underway shown on the timeline diagram below, with a summary of the current status by standard:



## Development Update

### Leadership and People Fire Standards

- The FSB approved the publication of the **Leading the Service** and **Leading and Developing People Fire Standards** on 21 December 2022. Launch of the two standards took place in January 2023.

A third phase of development work was approved by the FSB at the Board meeting on 15 June 2022. The Board agreed to the following standards for production as part of phase three:

| No. | Activity / Potential Fire Standard     | Activity Framework Category |
|-----|--|-----------------------------|
| 1   | Fire Control                           | Service Delivery            |
| 2   | Communications and Engagement          | Cultural and Enabling       |
| 3   | Commercial and Procurement (Resources) | Enabling                    |
| 4   | Finance and Assurance (Resources)      | Enabling                    |
| 5   | Asset Management (Resources)           | Enabling                    |

### Fire Control Fire Standard

- Development on the Fire Control Fire Standard commenced in September 2022.
- Peer review took place in October 2022.
- Consultation on the standard closed on 6 February 2023
- The FSB approved the publication Fire Control Fire Standard in March 2023.

### Communications, Engagement and Consultation Fire Standard

- Development on this standard commenced in September 2022.
- Peer review took place in October 2022.
- Consultation on the standard closed on 6 February 2023
- The FSB approved the publication Communications and Engagement Fire Standard in March 2023.

### Resources Fire Standards: Commercial and Procurement, Finance and Assurance, Asset Management

- Initiating, scoping and early development of these three standards commenced in March 2023
- Peer review is expected to take place in Summer 2023
- Consultation is expected to take place in Autumn 2023
- Further updates on this will be provided in the next report.

It is anticipated that the full suite of standards will total approximately 21.

## **Implementation support**

The FSB, through the NFCC Fire Standards and Implementation Teams, will be continuing to support services as they work to achieve the Fire Standards. Implementation tools are provided with all published Fire Standards.

## **Impact and Benefits Realisation**

The FSB are keen to understand the impact of the Fire Standards now that the first standards have been published. As part of both the development process and the consultation on each Fire Standard we ask services about potential impacts.

The FSB engaged with services across England between July and November 2022 to help better understand impacts and review progress to date. They have gathered a wide range of feedback from services and have used this to develop a Communications and Engagement Strategy which was approved at the 21 December Board meeting. Following this approval, a Communications and Engagement Plan is currently being developed which will aim to support services through ongoing engagement and development of communications tools.

## **Review of Fire Standards**

The recent HMICFRS Spotlight Report on Culture and Values identified a number of recommendations for the Fire Standards Board. In light of this, it is anticipated that throughout 2023 a review of a number Fire Standards will take place. The Fire Standards Team are currently developing a plan with indicative timelines of when these will take place and an exceptional Board meeting to discuss this plan is due to take place in June 2023. This plan will be shared in due course.

The FSB has a defined periodic review process in place following publication of a Fire Standard but can initiate an exceptional review should the need arise. The first Fire Standards to undergo the agreed periodic review are as follows:

- Operational Preparedness
- Operational Competence
- Operational Learning
- Emergency Response Driver

The FSB are developing plans alongside the review of Fire Standards identified in the HMICFRS Spotlight Review on Culture and Values and will confirm when the review of Fire Standards will take place within the next report.

## Background notes for information

The Fire Standards Board (FSB) is responsible for the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England. Led by an independent Chair and Vice Chair, membership of the Board includes the NFCC, employers (both the LGA and the APCC) and the Home Office.

The LGA representative on the Board is Cllr Nick Chard.

The FSB continues to meet regularly to review the progress made on Fire Standards development. Its next meeting is scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

Given the various stages of development required and the time needed for engagement with services in the early stages, as well as through formal consultation, development work and publications are staggered. This is primarily done to align capacity and resources in a considered way, but also to pace the rate at which standards are released to services.

Once approved, Fire Standards are shared on the [Fire Standards Board website](#).

Services should now be aware of the requirements being placed upon them through these Fire Standards. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will be referencing the standards in their inspection arrangements and therefore services should be prepared to evidence their progress towards achieving them.

The Fire Standards Board would welcome and appreciate the support of fire authority chairs and members in:

1. Ensuring their services are enabled to engage in Fire Standards by releasing their subject matter experts to support development work and peer review through the NFCC where appropriate and feasible.
2. Responding to the Fire Standards consultations as they are published; and,
3. Supporting activities to achieve those Fire Standards through implementation once approved and published.

## Fire Services Management Committee Update Paper

### Purpose of Report

For information.

**Is this report confidential? No**

### Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Fire Services Management Committee not covered under other items on the agenda.

**LGA Plan Theme:** Support for councillors

### Recommendation

That the Committee note the report.

### Contact details

Contact officer: Rebecca Johnson

Position: Adviser

Phone no: 07887 568807

Email: [Rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk)

## FSMC update

### Board updates

#### Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP)

1. Cllrs Brackenridge and Chard attended the JESIP Ministerial Oversight Board at the end of April, which was attended by ministers from the Home Office, and the Departments of Health and Social Care and Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
2. The focus of the meeting was the second report from the Manchester Arena Inquiry and the recommendations made by the Inquiry on how to improve emergency service interoperability at incidents.
3. The Board received updates on the work to embed the recommendations across the three emergency services. Two major themes emerged during the meeting: joint training and exercising by all three services; and how to provide assurance that JESIP principles and ways of working are properly embedded. As a result there are likely to be further discussions with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and the Care Quality Commission about establishing a baseline across the police, ambulance and fire and rescue services over the next year.

#### NFCC Strategic CPD Masterclass Corporate Governance

4. In March Cllr Frank Biederman presented at an NFCC Strategic Masterclass for senior Fire Officers on the theme of Corporate Governance outlining the role of FRA Members and the LGA. The event was facilitated by the NFCC Chief Operating Officer, Susannah Hancock.
5. Other speakers included Diana Mellville, Governance Advisor at the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Peter Murphy, Professor of Public Policy and Management at Nottingham Business School.

### Home Office – Professionalism workstream

6. In April, FSMC Lead Members attended a session facilitated by the Home Office's Policy and Innovation Lab (CoLab) to help inform the design of the future of fire professionalism, a key part of government's reform programme as outlined in the [recent white paper](#).
7. Home Office shared progress on and findings from their work to better understand the future of professionalism for fire and rescue services and invited views and feedback on the ideas for activities that could be run centrally to support the sector in areas of research, data, leadership, ethics and achieving professional standards.

### Events

#### Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials

8. We held a Fire and Rescue (Leadership Essentials) course between Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 March at Warwick Conferences. Speakers included Home Office, HMICFRS, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and Cllr Keith Aspden.
9. The session was well attended and received good feedback from FRA Members who attended.

#### Fire Inclusion and Diversity Member Champions Network

10. Cllr Jane Hugo, EDI Champion for FSMC, chaired an EDI Champion network meeting on Friday 28 April. The meeting was well attended with speakers including HMICFRS who updated on their spotlight review and both Gloucestershire and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services who shared experiences around driving change in culture and EDI.
11. We encourage all authorities to make sure that they have a representative on the Committee's Member Champions Network. Please get in touch with Rebecca Johnson for further information [Rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk).

### Implications for Wales

12. None

### Financial Implications

13. None

### Equalities implications

14. HMICFRS's inspection reports highlighted a range of issues that impact on equality, diversity and inclusion within the fire and rescue sector. The LGA's Fire Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network has been specifically established to assist authorities in improving equality, diversity and inclusion in fire and rescue services.

### Next steps

15. The Committee note the report.