

24 May 2019

NFCC: Central Programme Office Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

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

Recommendation

Members are to note the contents of this report.

Action

Officers are to take forward any comments for future work.

Contact officer: Roy Wilsher

Position: NFCC Chair

Central Programme Office Update

Fire Commission – NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO) Update – May 2019

People Programme Update

1. The programme held the HR Forum on the 27 February. This is the second of the Forum's that replaces the Workforce Committee meetings and is attended by HR leads from across UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs). This meeting focussed on the outcomes of the first round of inspections with a briefing from Laura Gibb (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services - HMICFRS). A gap analysis of the findings against the existing outputs from the programme was used to identify additional priorities. The forum agreed several actions, but a key outcome was the formation of a working group focussing on talent management and succession planning.
2. The People Programme is establishing a People Engagement Forum to enable us to engage stakeholders such as the FSMC, Home Office, devolved governments and administrations, representative bodies, and other relevant organisations.
3. The programme has terminated the contract with Skills for Justice (SfJ) with English FRSs. They have been fundamental in progressing workforce development issues but the establishment of the CPO and the independent Fire Standards Board has enabled us to move towards independence from SfJ. A position statement is being drafted and a letter to Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) will confirm the position from April 2019 onwards.

Leadership Project

4. Consultation on the Core Learning Pathways closed on 5 April 2019. The programme is currently reviewing responses with a final draft planned for approval later this year.
5. A workshop to initiate a working group focussing on talent and succession was held on the 30 April to address some of the improvement themes emerging from the first round of inspections. The group will consider what national approach might support what is generally perceived as a nuanced local cultural issue.
6. The trial of the 360-feedback process is underway within the CPO facilitated by London Fire Brigade's People Services. There is a good level of interest in the development of this tool and involvement in future trials.

Apprenticeships Project

7. A national strategy is currently being developed and was considered by the project board on 9 May. Further consultation will be undertaken before it's submitted for approval.
8. The programme has also taken on additional resource into the team to engage FRSs with implementation as well as provide advice to the project team on procurement and implementing the strategy.

9. The project is focusing on the provision of end point assessment to meet the immediate needs of FRSs over the next 12 months and a longer-term sustainable solution that meets quality criteria and best value for FRSs. A business case is being developed to assess the viability of a central coordinating function through Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) Services Limited in collaboration with the NFCC Sustainability project.

On-Call Project

10. Two consultations were recently conducted; one is the On-Call Workforce Management Survey which is being run in collaboration with Essex FRS which will draw together data from across the UK FRS to develop a picture of how FRSs are managing their on-call in terms of contracts, pay, availability models etc. By analysing this data we hope to be able to identify good practice and this will inform future strategies around on-call. The data is currently being analysed and final returns sought for this important piece.
11. The second consultation was to consider a draft of guidance aimed at primary employers and their employees who may be prospective on-call recruits. This guidance once finalised will be made available on the www.uncallfire.com website.
12. Further video materials to promote on-call with primary employers is also being developed by Hampshire media team featuring the case study of Howdens Joinery who are working closely with Humberside FRS to release their staff as on-call firefighters. We hope to produce more videos of this sort promoting primary employers and the benefits of releasing staff. These will also be added to the www.uncallfire.com website further improving this tool in attracting on-call staff.

Blended Learning Project

13. The project has finalised the project initiation document and is now moving out of initiation into development.
14. FRSLearn.com, having been in development since 2017 and now fulfilling its core purpose, will be fully launched at the Training Managers Conference in July. The site has a wealth of high-quality e-learning materials shared from across the UK FRS. The operational content aligns to National Operational Guidance (NOG), but the scope of the site covers all training aspects that an FRS may need. A demonstration of the site was also provided to NFCC Full Council in April. The emphasis now falls to ensuring we achieve the benefits of having such a platform. The team will continue to engage stakeholders and build the volume of materials available not limited to e-learning but to include all types of training materials, scenarios, lesson plans, virtual reality etc.
15. The project team will primarily focus on coordinating efforts to implement NOG through training. There is a clear indication of FRSs appetite to collaborate on this but there are a number of barriers which the team need to resolve, some of these in the shorter term and some are longer term aspirations:
 - 15.1. Coordinating FRS that have differing approaches to implementation of NOG
 - 15.2. Assurance of the content and quality of training material

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15.3. Identification of operational good practice to support greater collaboration

16. The Training Managers Forum regional meeting has also been reinvigorated with the first meeting held on 29 April 2019. A contingent from the Operational Guidance Forum attended to ensure that policy and training managers are aligning their priorities and there is clarity for both areas of business in setting the direction, ambition and pace of this piece of work.

Health and Well-being Project

17. The project executive and the programme are working to confirm project management and governance arrangements and scope the outputs of the project. The project executive, Ian Hayton is discussions with the National Police Chiefs Council who have a significant programme of work around health and wellbeing with a view to maximising opportunities for collaboration.

Inclusion (Equality and Diversity) Project

18. The development of the Inclusion Strategy is underway, but it is being developed with implementation and business change as the key focus. The establishment of a project board will be the next priority under this project.

19. A key finding from the first round of inspections has highlighted that many staff, including managers, are not clear on the benefits of diversity. The project is keen to tackle this including the misconception that diversity is primarily about having a representative workforce which is a narrative that is perpetuated throughout the sector. The message that will be promoted is one of talent; limiting our talent pool limits our talent. The strategy will feature this narrative throughout.

20. A model maternity policy has been developed by using resource from a short secondment to Kent FRS from HMICFRS. Nineteen maternity policies have been analysed and the final draft aims to represent best practice whilst identifying areas for local decision. The draft was provided to the HR Forum in February for review. The approval mechanism for this is now being established and the CPO intend to develop other model policies using a similar method.

Community Risk Programme Update

21. The Nottingham Trent University (NTU) research report was received by the Project Executive and presented to the Programme Board on 2 April. The Board agreed that the report met the objectives set out when this work was commissioned and is now considering the recommendations it makes and how to prioritise them. The recommendations will return to the Programme Board on 23 May where the scope will be set out and agreed.

22. The wider publication of the report is also being considered by the Board and how to make it available to interested stakeholders.

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23. The programme has held a number of workshops in the last few weeks that began to explore in detail, benefits and communications at a programme level. The programme is aware that there is much work to do to make sure that messages about the programme are consistent and targeted in reaching its diverse group of stakeholders and that they understand how they are affected and impacted by its work. A communications work-package will be shortly rolled out to ensure that initial awareness of the programme and what it means is raised. This will be actively evaluated to further tailor and refine the next years activity plans. Further workshops around benefits and its evaluation measures are planned to build on the first workshop.
24. A scoping workshop is planned on the 23 May, taking account of the recommendations within the NTU research report, where it will be agreed on what will be in and out of scope for the programme. There are also workshops planned on outputs and outcomes, success criteria and measurement and evaluation, benefits, interdependencies and programme structure.
25. The Community Risk Programme (CRP) has begun to communicate its background, the reason that the programme is needed and how the programme is progressing. The CRP has been presented at the Strategic Engagement Forum, the LGA Conference as well as the NFCC Spring Conference and will continue to be presented to a number of different audiences as we hope to not only inform, but to reach those with skills and experience that could add value in shaping the programme.

Digital Programme Update

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

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29. A one day 'unconference' was held on 8 May, which gave FRSs the opportunity to talk about the digital work they are undertaking. It was seen as a way to match up like minds and see if people can join up what they are doing.
30. Applications for the Programme Executive position are currently being reviewed and an appointment will be made soon. When the programme board first convenes they will review the outputs of the Discovery project and determine the initial structure of the programme to be delivered

Fire Standards

31. The second meeting of the Fire Standards Board (FSB) was held on 2 April.
32. The Board received feedback from the meeting between the Minister and the Board Chair and Vice Chair. This was an introductory meeting for the Chairs to understand Ministerial expectations and priorities and for the Chairs to set out the early progress of the Board. Key headlines from the meeting were:
 - 32.1. Prioritisation – seen as a key focus with a need to make demonstrable progress on matters of importance for the sector. The Minister saw the first HMICFRS reports findings as providing themes as a foundation for the Board's work and key to informing its early priorities.
 - 32.1.1. Expectations - to understand what 'good' looks like and address inconsistencies across a fragmented system.
 - 32.1.2. Business change – ensuring that standards produced by the Board are implemented. This is seen as essential by the Minister and a need for strong change management has been noted. The assurance that the NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO) has a specific Business Change function to address this was welcomed.
 - 32.2. Lessons learned – how lessons were being learnt from other relevant sectors. A comparison was made to the College of Policing and some of the challenges they encountered when establishing themselves. Meaningful consultative mechanisms and strong communications channels are seen to be key if the Board wants to see the professional standards well received. The Board have already initiated conversations with HMICFRS and the Chairs will meet regularly with Zoe Billingham. A Memorandum of Understanding which will outline how the organisations will work together and share information is an initial action for the Board.
 - 32.3. Focus was on the scope of standards to be developed and how the Board will prioritise the standards to be produced. It was agreed that the CPO would look to develop the scope by creating an overarching framework (similar to that developed on the NOG Programme). This will help identify all potential areas for standards for the Board to consider. In addition, prioritisation criteria will be developed to help devise the work programme, both of which will be brought back to the next meeting. Priorities will be influenced both by areas where good practice

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and guidance already exists alongside a number of factors including fire reform and the improvement themes coming from the initial HMICFRS inspection reports.

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

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

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

NFCC Committee Chairs

33. The NFCC has recently appointed a new Committee Chair to the Finance Committee. John Buckley will take over from outgoing Chair Phil Hales. A current list of Committee Chairs is listed below:

33.1. **Finance:** John Buckley, Nottinghamshire

33.2. **International:** Paul Walker, Cornwall

33.3. **Operations:** Chris Lowther, Tyne & Wear

33.4. **Prevention:** Neil Odin, Hampshire

33.5. **Protection and Business Safety:** Mark Hardingham, Suffolk

33.6. **Sector Improvement and Assurance:** Geoff Howsego, Hampshire

33.7. **Sector Resources:** Chris Strickland, Cambridge

33.8. **Workforce:** Ann Millington, Kent