



Local Government Association and National Fire Chiefs Council Fire & Rescue peer support offer

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report updates Fire Commission on the LGA and National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) peer support offer including elements under current review and development.

Recommendations

That Fire Commission members note the progress with developing the peer support offer and accompanying resource.

1. In particular members are asked to note and disseminate information on the new Leadership Essentials format as detailed in paragraphs 8-12.
2. Members are also asked to consider whether their authority would be willing to host a Masterclass on Culture, Inclusion and Diversity or Scrutiny in the 2019/20 period as detailed in paragraphs 13-15.

Action

1. Officers to promote the offer to members, deliver the peer support offer and continue to monitor, review and adapt the offer as appropriate and with reference to members wishes.

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Introduction and background

1. In 2018 the LGA and NFCC introduced a revised sector-led improvement offer to Fire & Rescue Authorities to complement the newly introduced HMICFRS Inspection (see **Appendix 1** – LGA and NFCC Fire & Rescue Peer Support Framework).
2. Peer challenge remains at the core of the offer with the central principles also remaining unchanged:
 - 2.1. A team of peers acting as ‘critical friends’
 - 2.2. The provision of constructive challenge informed by engaging with the service and authority plus a wide range of stakeholders
 - 2.3. The focus being on helping the service/authority to improve
3. However, under the new Peer Support Framework, peer challenge is more flexible and will aim to complement, not duplicate, any inspection activity.

Our Offer of support

4. The LGA’s offer of support to fire & rescue authorities is threefold:
 - 4.1. **Peer Challenge** – including Operational Assessment and Equalities & Diversity
 - 4.2. **Leadership & Governance Peer Support** – including Leadership Essentials and Masterclasses
 - 4.3. **Targeted Peer Support** – including themed and targeted peer challenge
5. Each element of the offer is flexible and will be designed and delivered to address the local circumstances and needs.
6. The LGA is also developing improvement resources to assist authorities to continue their self-improvement activity; a Scrutiny toolkit is due to be launched this summer with an inactive module to follow.

Update and progress

Peer support offer

7. In 2018/19 the newly revised offer was being developed and tested with the sector. In addition, the first tranche of the inspection programme was underway, therefore, take up of the offer was limited to only three fire & rescue authorities taking part. This, however, is changing in 2019/20, with the LGA in discussion with several FRA’s to develop the offer and deliver peer support across a range of different areas including:
 - 7.1. Leadership and Governance



- 7.2. Safe and Well
- 7.3. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion
- 7.4. Protection

Leadership Essentials programme

8. Following a review of the Leadership Essentials programme for fire and rescue members, this year the LGA is piloting a one-day Leadership Essentials on 26 June at Warwick Conferences aimed at new members of fire authorities and those who have not attended the programme before and may benefit from the programme. The programme will take place over a 24 hour period with a pre-dinner talk from Dr Sabrina Cohen-Hatton the night before and full day programme the next day.
9. By the end of the course, delegates will have had the opportunity to:
 - 9.1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of the fire sector, including clarity on duties and responsibilities and on key partners like the Fire Services Management Committee, National Fire Chiefs Council, Home Office and fire unions.
 - 9.2. Develop skills around collaborative leadership in fire and rescue authorities (FRAs).
 - 9.3. Gain a thorough understanding of Scrutiny in fire and rescue authorities and practical skills to apply that understanding.
 - 9.4. Improve knowledge of the key strategic issues facing the sector, including building safety, the fire inspections regime and the emerging issue of culture, inclusion and diversity in the fire sector.
 - 9.5. Share ideas and network with leading members from a variety of FRAs.
10. As new members take up their places on fire authorities in the next couple of months we consider this programme the perfect opportunity to attend a Leadership Essentials designed around new member needs.
11. On the 26-27 September the LGA will be running the usual two-day programme also at Warwick Conference. The longer programme is still under-development, but will cover all the content on the shorter programme with a more focused look at key areas likely to include collaboration, partnerships and engagement.
12. For more information please see [here](#) and for booking enquiries please email Grace.Collins@local.gov.uk.

LGA Masterclasses

13. During 2019/20 the peer support offer included five regional Diversity and Inclusion Masterclasses which took place in London, West Yorkshire, Lancashire, Exeter and Birmingham. These programme included a range of expertise including member peers, chief fire officers from the host services, Her Majesty's Inspectorate and the Asian Fire Services Association.



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14. In response to the tranche 1 inspection results we would like to continue this work with two regional workshop in the 2019/20 period with a widened remit of Culture, Diversity and Inclusion.
15. As previously we would like to solicit offers from fire authorities for the use of your service facilities to host these events. For more information on volunteering your services facilities please email Jessica.Norman@local.gov.uk.



Appendix A - LGA and NFCC Fire & Rescue Peer Support Framework

The challenges facing fire & rescue are significant but sector-led improvement, including OpA & Fire Peer Challenge, has proven to be a success in supporting improvement.

Given the ongoing challenges and the introduction of the HMICFRS inspection for fire & rescue services, the LGA and NFCC have taken the opportunity to revise the sector-led improvement offer in order to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the sector going forward.

There is a range of practical support available under a new 'Peer Support Framework', on a free of charge and/or subsidised basis, to enable the sector to drive continued improvement.

Our refreshed offer provides different tiers of support depending on the intensity of the challenges being faced locally. The range of tools and support available have been shaped by what the sector has told us it needs and what would be most valuable to them.

In addition, we continue to maintain an overview of performance in the sector so that we are able to offer support on a proactive basis, helping those facing the most severe challenges.

Our Offer of Support

The Peer Support Framework comprises a flexible and tailored set of products to meet the changing and different needs across the sector.

Peer Challenge

Peer Challenge remains at the core of our offer. This is more varied than the approach to Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge but still retains the core principles:

- Of a team of peers acting as 'critical friends'
- The provision of constructive challenge informed by engaging with the service and authority plus a wide range of stakeholders
- The focus being on helping the service/authority to improve

Under the Peer Support Framework, peer challenge will be flexible and complement any inspection activity. For example, a peer team could visit before or after an inspection, they could look at broad areas (such as efficiency, effectiveness and leadership) or more narrowly defined ones (such as emergency response standards or fire fighter competency). The size and make-up of the team would be tailored to the objectives and the amount of time they spend in a place will also vary.

The peer team will provide verbal and written feedback and openness and transparency around the outputs and outcomes will be maintained with all FRS/FRAs publishing the relevant materials.

Leadership & Governance Peer Support

With changes in governance arrangements in some places, the LGA is well placed to provide support through its elected member peers.



The LGA also offers a 'Fire & Rescue - Leadership Essentials' programme aimed at elected members with leading roles on FRAs.

In addition, support is available to senior leadership teams through a top team development offer. The support would be multi-faceted and dependent on the needs of the FRS/FRA.

Targeted Peer Support

Overseen by the LGA Principal Advisers based in the region, and working closely with NFCC, targeted peer support would entail a team of sector peers working alongside an FRS/FRA to address areas of under-performance identified as part of an inspection. This approach demonstrates that the sector is collectively responsible and has the capacity to address its own improvement.

How to access our sector-led improvement offer

Support is accessed through the LGA's regionally based Principal Advisers or the NFCC leads. They are the focal point for discussions with FRS/As about their improvement needs and the support we can make available.

LGA Principal Advisers Contact

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Fire Commission

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