

NFCC Covid 19 Report

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

In July 2020 the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) COVID-19 Committee commissioned a piece of independent research to establish out how fire and rescue services had responded to the pandemic between March and September 2020. The report would consider key learning and insights. The report authors, Catherine Levin, Jim Owen and Dr Sara Waring, interviewed Chief Fire Officers (CFO) or their equivalents as well as key stakeholders drawn from government, representative bodies and the ambulance service.

The authors analysed the interviews with the CFOs and identified 10 themes, which form the structure of the report. The findings from the stakeholder interviews are provided in a separate section.

Taken together, the report then sets out key learning that emerged from the interviews and identifies whether it is from the CFOs or the stakeholders, or in some cases both. The report finishes with a set of 12 recommendations for the NFCC COVID-19 Committee to consider.

Recommendations

That the FSMC noted the contents of the report.

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NFCC Covid 19 Report

Background

1. In July 2020 the COVID-19 Committee commissioned a piece of independent research to establish how fire and rescue services responded to the pandemic between March and September 2020. The report would consider key learning and insights. The report authors, Catherine Levin, Jim Owen and Dr Sara Waring, interviewed Chief Fire Officers (CFO) or their equivalents as well as key stakeholders drawn from government, representative bodies and the ambulance service. The telephone and video call interviews were based on a consistent question set and lasted on average 40 minutes.
2. The authors analysed the interviews with the CFOs and identified 10 themes, which form the structure of the report. The findings from the stakeholder interviews are provided in a separate section. Taken together, the report then sets out key learning that emerged from the interviews and identifies whether it is from the CFOs or the stakeholders, or in some cases both. The report finishes with a set of 12 recommendations for the Committee to consider.

Report findings

1. The report starts by looking at the context of fire and rescue services as they worked with local partners to respond to the pandemic. Focusing initially on the interviews with Chief Fire Officers, then moving on to the conversations with stakeholders, the report explores the following themes:
 - 1) Planning and the Local Resilience Forum
 - 2) Leadership
 - 3) Tripartite Agreement
 - 4) Operations
 - 5) Fire Protection
 - 6) Fire Prevention
 - 7) Working from home
 - 8) Communications
 - 9) Data
 - 10) Role of the NFCC
2. The findings offer a rich source of information about the activities carried out by fire and rescue services throughout the first lockdown, up to the early part of September. With almost all fire and rescue services taking part, the report is an important record of the collective experience across the UK.
3. Chief Fire Officers were asked six questions, one of which was about key learning and what they would want to share with others. The results of this are provided in the report and provide a useful reference for fire and rescue services to consider at a local level. A final question about outcomes will be picked up in future work carried out by

Liverpool University, should the COVID 19 Committee wish to commission them to do so.

4. The report authors provided the COVID 19 Committee with 12 recommendations.
5. These cover a range of subjects from the relationship fire and rescue services have with their respective Local Resilience Forums, to future arrangements for coordinating a national response to a future nationally significant event.
6. The COVID 19 Committee have agreed that the 12 recommendations where appropriate are embedded within the refresh of the fit for the future visioning document. The document itself is currently out for consultation.
7. Any recommendation not subsumed within the fit for the future learning objectives and future vision will be actioned through the NFCC Committee structures.
8. All key learning will be disseminated to Services via Chief Fire Officers for consideration in light of the ongoing pandemic and for adoption within each Services Business Continuity plans moving forward.

Next steps

- 1) The research is to be circulated to those who contributed to the research with an accompanying letter setting out what the C19 Committee intends to do as a result of its publication.
- 2) The report is to be, published on the NFCC's website in order to support sector led learning.
- 3) The NFCC Strategic Business Continuity Guidance will be revised as a result of the findings / learning.
- 4) The NHS / Fire & Rescue Service Pandemic Guidance will be refreshed as a result of the findings / learning.
- 5) The 12 recommendations in the report; will be considered (included) within the refresh of the fit for the future visioning document
- 6) The key learning section will be disseminated through the COVID19 Committee to all Services to support current and future activities.
- 7) The COVID 19 Committee will consider if there is scope for more detailed work to be carried out in the longer term – should there is an appetite to commission further work this will be possible using the recordings currently securely stored at the University of Liverpool.