



Fire Services Management Committee

Date:	6 March 2023
Title:	NFCC Update
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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) or Chief Operating Officer Susannah Hancock (susannah.hancock@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk).

2. General Update

NFCC Interim Organisational Structure

- 2.1 NFCC have launched a new organisational structure which provides a more integrated model of working. The new structure will combine similar functions across NFCC into centralised teams to allow more collaborative and efficient working using business partner approaches. The new organisational structure involves recruitment across various teams and will continue to be refined until we reach our final target operating model later in 2023.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Reports

- 2.2 The recent HMICFRS State of Fire report highlighted NFCC's work on developing national policy, the Fit for the Future initiative on the future role of the FRS, the continued development of national Fire Standards, and improvements in the regulatory fire safety role of FRSs.
- 2.3 Analyses of areas for improvement identified within the HMICFRS report, such as Prevention and culture and inclusion, are being undertaken by the relevant NFCC teams and assistance is being offered to FRSs where appropriate. Alongside the LGA, NFCC are currently supporting London Fire Brigade (LFB) and Gloucestershire FRS around their improvement plans and as part of the ENGAGE process.

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) Ministerial Board – MAI

- 2.4 The JESIP Ministerial Board has been re-established after not meeting for approximately 12 months. The Board meets in March and is co-chaired by Minister's Philp, Quince, and Tugendhat and attended by blue light and Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners. NFCC and FRSs are represented by the NFCC Chair, NFCC Operational Committee Chair CFO John Roberts, and the NFCC lead for JESIP DCFO Peter Heath.
- 2.5 Alongside further work to improve and embed the JESIP principles, the Board will be the principal Ministerial route through which the Government seeks assurance on the progress of FRSs, blue light partners, and other bodies against the recommendations found in the Manchester Arena Inquiry reports.

Turkey – International Search and Rescue (UKISAR) Deployment

- 2.6 Teams from UK FRSs deployed to the Republic of Türkiye to assist with search and rescue operations following the devastating earthquakes. The 77-strong UKISAR team is made up of firefighters and staff from 14 FRSs. It is deployed through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. They provided specialist technical support and expertise where it was most needed. A team of specialist search and rescue dogs was also deployed.
- 2.7 UKISAR have specialist search equipment, including seismic listening devices to detect and locate people, concrete cutting and breaking equipment, propping and shoring tools, and listening and heavy lifting equipment. UKISAR is on permanent standby to mobilise and assist when requested by disaster-affected countries. It always deploys as an official UK Government team once a request has been made for assistance.
- 2.8 The team is made up from fire services in Cheshire, Essex, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, London, Mid and West Wales, Merseyside, Scotland, South Wales, and the West Midlands.

Business Continuity Planning

- 2.9 FRS have moved a significant amount of work in the last 9 months to ensure they were able to establish the best possible business continuity plans for industrial action and meet the expectations of the National Framework and Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This has involved working closely with NFCC, National Resilience, the Home Office, the MoD and LRFs. There has been a significant amount of learning through the process for all parties and this learning will be captured for future use if necessary.
- 2.10 Linked to these planning arrangements, the Government consultation on Minimum Service Levels in the FRS has been published and NFCC will be considering our response in advance of it closing in May 2023.

3. Protection Update

Protection Uplift Grant

- 3.1 Utilisation of the Protection Uplift Grant continues to increase and a full spending analysis for the quarter is currently being undertaken. The Home Office has confirmed that all 43 FRSs in

England will receive the second half of the 2022/23 Protection Uplift Grant in late March 2023. Discussions are ongoing to confirm whether the grant will be renewed for 2023/24.

Fire Safety (England) Regulations (FSER)

- 3.2 The FSER, which place new requirements on responsible persons (RPs) of high-rise residential buildings (HRRBs), came into force on 23 January 2023. The Protection team is currently working to produce guidance for FRSs to accompany the FSER. The Protection team has also created a toolkit to support FRSs with their messaging and engagement with RPs surrounding the FSER. The team is working with FRSs and national housing providers to establish a standard format for fault reporting to local FRSs, to be finalised by October 2023.

Building Safety Regulator (BSR) Transition

- 3.3 The regional working model for work to be completed under the new BSR has been agreed by all nine FRS regions and work on management and administration functions, which will be provided centrally by LFB, is ongoing. The proposed calculation method for the re-charge model that will fund new BSR burdens has been accepted and is with Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) for formal sign-off.
- 3.4 Recruitment work for FRS roles under the BSR is ongoing. NFCC will host a series of workshops for FRS Protection and HR staff in March 2023 to share the findings of research into staff retention issues.

Policy Position Statements and Communications

- 3.5 In December 2022, the Protection team published a policy position statement on Modern Methods of Construction ([MMC](#)), calling for tighter rules around their testing, and another urging the Government to require that new HRRBs have more than one [staircase](#). The Protection Cost-of-Living Toolkit was launched to FRSs, RPs, and business owners in December 2022. This contains key messages and information on the fire risks linked to recent cost-of-living rises. NFCC have also provided FRSs with a communication pack for potential industrial action.

4. Prevention Update

Fire Kills Advertising Campaign

- 4.1 NFCC has been awarded Fire Prevention grant funding to deliver the Fire Kills national advertising campaign, which ran 1–28 February 2023. The campaign promotes key fire Prevention messages and targets television and online audiences. Toolkits to help FRSs promote the campaign were jointly produced by NFCC and the Home Office.

Children and Young People (CYP) Project

- 4.2 The new UK Fire Cadet (UKFC) Framework which sets out the vision for UKFC for the next three years has been approved. The UKFC Operating Protocol covering relationships between NFCC, UKFC, and FRSs and the MoU between NFCC and the Fire Fighters Charity have both been agreed. An event to boost post-Covid relationships between FRSs, the Prince's Trust, and other key stakeholders will take place on 22 March 2023.

- 4.3 Fire safety intervention awareness training for FRS leaders is ready to be delivered. NFCC are working in partnership with the training provider CVQO to develop two courses for FRS staff who work with CYP. Following the tragic events in December, the Prevention team produced a factsheet and poster for public safety advice around frozen rivers and lakes, and regional workshops are being held in early 2023. A survey has been circulated to FRSs to provide feedback following the launch of the Early Intervention Framework.

Road, Water, and Home Safety Projects

- 4.4 The Project EDWARD action week took place in October and discussions are being held on the charitable status and future of BikerDown! NFCC have supported the RNLI Community Waterside Responder scheme to train businesses at waterside venues, and this scheme now exists in many FRSs. The BeWaterAware campaign begins on 24 April 2023.

Community Mental Health and Fire Risk Project

- 4.5 Nottingham Trent University (NTU) has finalised the mental health and fire risk research, which has 18 recommendations for the sector. The NFCC Community Mental Health Board will be taking forward these recommendations.

Safeguarding Project

- 4.6 The Safeguarding Regional Leads Forum commenced in October 2022. The Self-Assessment Framework is receiving feedback nationally, and there is ongoing partnership work within the care sector regarding hoarding, signs, symptoms, and Prevention messages. NFCC presented at the national NHS Learning Week in November 2022.

5. People Programme Update

- 5.1 In response to reports on culture in FRSs, NFCC has accelerated work on culture and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) to address immediate priorities and support the development of a People Culture and Leadership Workplan. There has been an enhanced level of communications to promote EDI and the Core Code of Ethics (CCoE). NFCC has hosted workshop sessions on the CCoE and Maturity Models with multiple FRSs.

Health and Wellbeing Project

- 5.2 This project is run in partnership with NTU and the Fire Fighters Charity. NTU was commissioned to deliver research on the health and wellbeing support being provided by FRSs to assist the development of a National Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 5.3 The project was due to close at the end of September 2022 but, due to delays, the full draft report was shared at the end of October 2022. The output report and key priorities document have been approved by key stakeholders and is now awaiting sign off from Council. The report will then be published by NTU for the sector.

Recruitment (Tranche 2)

- 5.4 The recruitment project has been developing a major procurement exercise for research support to be delivered in the next financial year, which will examine the National Firefighter Selection Tests. A procurement strategy is in place for a research team to evaluate and make

recommendations on these tests, which outlines the business case for this work, statement of requirement, roles, estimated timelines, and budgets.

- 5.5 A pre-tender supplier day was held in December 2022, where potential suppliers discussed desired research outputs, budgets, and timeframes. Exact costing will be available once the tender process completes by the end of March 2023, but the outputs budget may need to be split across the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. A business case has been prepared and will go to the Service Delivery Change and Investment Board (SDCIB) in April for decision.

Embedding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 5.6 The annual EDI report is on schedule for publication by the end of March 2023. A governance health check of the People Programme included reviewing the structure of the EDI Board, and results were brought to the People Programme Board for consultation in January. The EDI Board will consider moving away from being wholly project focused to also managing and supporting products and providing EDI specialist advice to other projects and programmes.

On-Call Firefighters Project

- 5.7 A business case for an on-call firefighters project has been prepared and will be progressed through governance of the People, Culture and Leadership Coordinating Committee and onto the SDCIB for decision in March 2023. The proposed work includes statistics covering on-call staff numbers, performance and availability data, and a repository of contracts and work patterns across FRSs. The project proposes creating an NFCC-led online On-Call Hub that will include the existing on-call recruitment site and an on-call management toolkit with lessons learned, best practice, and case studies from FRSs.

6. Portfolio and Planning Update

- 6.1 As part of NFCC's organisational restructure, the Portfolio Office has taken on the responsibility for planning and will coordinate and support the creation of an annual plan for 2023/24 across NFCC directorates and teams. An annual planning cycle will launch in August 2023 for the 2024/25 financial year.

Quality Assurance Project

- 6.2 This project launched on 16 January 2023, and the Portfolio Office will collaborate with consultants from i3works to create a Quality Assurance Framework to ensure quality and continuous improvement across NFCC products. One key stakeholder engagement session has taken place, with a further two scheduled for March. Feedback from these sessions will be used to further develop a gap analysis, which is in progress.
- 6.3 The Portfolio Office are undertaking health checks to understand the state of current projects and programmes. Business case writing and benefits realisation are key areas requiring additional focus, and workshops on these two areas are being planned.

7. Leadership Programme Update

Direct Entry

- 7.1 The Fire Service College has been appointed as the training provider for the operational programme. The NFCC Direct Entry and Leadership Boards have agreed to commence the

recruitment process for Direct Entry recruits on 3 April 2023. Reed Recruitment have been engaged to deliver the work required in preparation for and during the recruitment process.

Supervisory Leadership Development Programme

- 7.2 Since September 2022, the ManagementDirect online learning portal has registered 335 licences from 39 FRSs. Feedback from learners on the programme has been positive, and ongoing support for SPoCs continues centrally with national workshops offered in January and February to build a network where best practices and issues can be shared and discussed. The project will close in April 2023.

Middle Leadership Project

- 7.3 A draft project business case has been approved in principle by the NFCC Middle Leadership Project Board, the Leadership Programme Board, and the SDCIB. Consultation with the fire sector closed on 22 February 2023, with 81 responses received. A full report will be submitted to the Project Board in March, with the results informing the business case.

Strategic CPD Masterclasses

- 7.4 There has been an excellent response to the masterclasses on Finance, Commercial and Procurement, Corporate Governance, and Political Acuity, with over 95% of FRSs attending at least one. An evaluation report on the masterclasses is due in late March 2023. Further masterclasses are planned, including on Environment and Sustainability.

Coaching and Mentoring Portal

- 7.5 The free Mentoring Refresher Training in January, delivered in partnership with Coaching Focus Ltd, doubled the number of mentors registering on the Coaching and Mentoring Portal, and more FRSs continue to register. There are 17 live relationships which will start the process of evaluating the portal. The project will close in April 2023.

Core Code of Ethics

- 7.6 A recent survey found that out of 41 responding FRSs, 37 have adopted the CCoE and 33 have revised their local policies, procedures, and corporate plans to reflect the CCoE. The 2022 HMICFRS assessment of the FRS was encouraged by progress made by many FRSs in implementing the CCoE and meeting recommendations. Work is now focused on FRSs embedding the CCoE with their staff. Partners will hold a workshop on the CCoE at the LGA Conference.

8. National Operational Learning (NOL) Update

- 8.1 NOL saw a decrease in the rate of submissions in Q4 when compared to previous quarters and previous years, but cases are up overall year on year. Further engagement to drive NOL submissions will take place, as well as engagement on the organisational learning processes as they are established. The NOL User Group received 96 cases and processed 73 cases in 2022/23, with a further 17 cases to be reviewed at the March meeting.
- 8.2 The NOL team now produce quarterly learning newsletters to share submitted information. A revised Good Practice Guide to support the Operational Learning Standard was published in July, which has helped to embed learning cultures across FRSs.

- 8.3 The project to establish organisational learning in NFCC has begun and teams restructured to adapt the NOL model for use in other areas. Areas being considered to drive learning include historical learning, prevention of future death reports, fire investigation reports, and Protection and Prevention learning. The team have been processing initial cases as a proof of concept of the interim processes and will be providing a report on NOL and other areas in April.

9. Digital and Data Programme (DDP) Update

- 9.1 Work has taken place to define and implement the new Digital, Data, and Technology (DDaT) Committee and supporting structures. The first Committee meeting took place on 23 February.
- 9.2 NFCC's Digital and Data Strategy is being updated to align with the Fit for the Future Strategy and reflect current priorities. A workshop with DDaT Committee representatives will take place in March 2023 to determine priorities for a DDaT sector strategy. The initial draft is anticipated to be shared with Council in June 2023.

National Fire Data Collection System (NFDCS)

- 9.3 NFDCS is a Home Office-led project to transform the existing Incident Recording System (IRS) into a more comprehensive, flexible, and scalable national fire data collection system. Following delays, the aim is for a supplier to be in place by May 2023 with a view 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, such as Prevention and Protection.
- 9.4 The DDP team supported research mapping incident data to understand what 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

- 9.5 Following publication of the Data Management Fire Standard, the DDP team has defined and commenced development of the underpinning guidance and tools for the new standard. Initial drafts are being prepared for peer review in March 2023. Final publication is anticipated to be in October 2023 following a full consultation over the summer.

Digital, Technology, and Cyber

- 9.6 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. Recruitment to roles to provide national leadership in cyber and information assurance and digital, data, and technology will begin in Q4.
- 9.7 DDP research, funded by the Home Office, on the status of cyber security resilience across FRSs concluded in December 2022. This research will inform where money can be directed to provide support to improve cyber resilience in FRSs. The Home Office will build on DDP's research with detailed Cyber Assessment Framework assessments of each English FRS, which will inform how the next two years of funding are targeted.