



# Fire Services Management Committee

<b>Date:</b>	07 July 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

### Women in the Fire Service

- 2.1 Many of you will be aware of the outstanding work of Women in the Fire Service (WFS), whose membership works tirelessly to proactively influence matters of equality, inspire and support women to reach their full potential, and contribute towards a truly progressive fire and rescue service (FRS).
- 2.2 NFCC has recently become a corporate member of WFS, and NFCC colleagues attended the WFS National Training and Development Weekend held at the Fire Service College in early June. Women from across the UK FRS benefitted from taking part in some inspirational workshops and a variety of other events. We look forward to seeing our relationship with WFS continue to develop as we identify more ways of supporting each other in our collective work.

## Ukraine Convoy

- 2.3 NFCC is once again proud to have played a part in transporting aid to Ukraine – this time over 2,000 items of vital water rescue equipment, which will be used by the State Emergency Services as they respond to flooding caused by the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam and hydroelectric power station.
- 2.4 Secured through NFCC and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the donations followed an urgent request from the Home Office to NFCC's National Resilience function. FRSs and Fire and Rescue Authorities responded by identifying available kit within 48 hours. This follows five humanitarian aid convoys organised by NFCC, along with FIRE AID and International Development, with support from the wider sector and the Home Office. None of this could have been achieved without the hard work, dedication, and compassion of some truly remarkable people.

## NFCC Wildfire Debrief Report

- 2.5 2022 saw an unprecedented wildfire season across the UK. National Reporting Tool figures for England and Wales recorded 983 wildfires that met the National Operational Guidance (NOG) criteria. This was up from 247 in 2021 and 146 in 2020, increases of 315 percent and 573 percent respectively.
- 2.6 A staggering 84 wildfires were recorded as occurring over the 48 hours of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022. 14 FRSs declared major incidents, nine of which were due to concerns regarding the maintenance of business as usual and the ability to respond to operational demand. Additionally, Operation Willow Beck was implemented as fire control teams faced the significant challenge of dealing with a huge rise in 999 calls, up from a daily average of just over 2,000 to almost 13,500.
- 2.7 Given the unprecedented scale and impact of the 2022 wildfire season, the NFCC Wildfire Group meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022 determined to collate feedback and learning by undertaking the first national wildfire survey of UK FRSs. This was followed by a national wildfire debrief, including a report highlighting the key operational, tactical, and strategic challenges faced by the UK FRS, which will inform future discussions to improve wildfire resilience, response, planning, and prevention, at both a local and national level.

## **3. Protection Update**

### Enforcement Review

- 3.1 The NFCC enforcement review is aimed at obtaining a greater understanding of the range and frequency of enforcement activities carried out by FRSs, along with identifying any inconsistencies and promoting best practices. The NFCC Protection team has completed the first stage of the review, which involved collating and analysing data from numerous sources, including Home Office returns. They found

that the level of enforcement activity varies across services, which demonstrates the need for further review.

- 3.2 The second phase of the review has begun. A survey has been sent to all FRSs, which should provide more granular detail on enforcement actions. This will be complemented by several face-to-face meetings between FRSs and NFCC staff.

### Fire Engineering and Technical Officers

- 3.3 NFCC's engineering team is continuing work on several British Standards (BS) reviews including BS 9991, Approved Document B, and BS 5839, as well as developing a Publicly Available Specification, PAS 8700, for modern methods of construction. We are also participating in workshops to provide feedback on the operational aspect of the prescribed documents which will form part of the Gateway Two approval process in the new building safety regime. This includes the Building Regulations Compliance Document, the Fire and Emergency File, the Construction Control Plan, and the Change Control Plan.
- 3.4 The Protection team has completed the development of Risk Based Intervention Programme guidance, which will support the development of FRSs' Risk Based Inspection Programmes and supplement Integrated Risk Management Planning guidance note four.
- 3.5 The competency framework review will soon be published. A mapping exercise is being undertaken to understand what competency is currently available from FRSs to support the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and its multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs).
- 3.6 NFCC is developing a training presentation that highlights the key points in Section 156 of the Building Safety Act which comes into force in October 2023. This is aimed at both FRSs and the Responsible Persons of high-risk buildings and will help readers understand what the changes to the Regulator Reform (Fire Safety) Order are and what impact this will have on their responsibilities.

### Building Safety Regulator

- 3.7 The BSR is progressing and will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 for new buildings and April 2024 for existing occupied buildings. NFCC is assessing the latest guidance published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), "Criteria for being a higher-risk building during the occupation phase of the new higher-risk regime," to understand what it means for the inspection process, MDTs, and FRSs.
- 3.8 Recruitment for the MDTs is progressing but there are still several positions that FRSs need to resource. The funding for the MDTs is secured and will enable teams to start work with the HSE and Local Authority Building Control to ensure effective delivery.

## 4. Prevention Update

- 4.1 The Prevention Hub was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. We continue to support the work of the regional prevention groups, with most focusing on prevention fire standards, safeguarding, and peer assessment. The Prevention Hub has developed a forward planner of all national prevention meetings to share with FRSs.

### Safeguarding

- 4.2 The draft Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2023 received full parliamentary approval on 14<sup>th</sup> June.
- 4.3 Consultation on three new NFCC guidance documents (managing allegations, positive disclosure risk assessment, and joint guidance on DBS eligibility checks for FRSs) closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023. These documents will be released once approved by NFCC's Safeguarding Board.

### Serious Violence Duty

- 4.4 The Serious Violence Duty has been launched. NFCC guidance is being drafted, and single points of contact (SPOCs) have been established with all FRSs.

### Children and Young People (CYP)

- 4.5 The CYP Executive Board met on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and approved a plan to highlight work for the year 2023–24.
- 4.6 [StayWise](#) has launched five new interactive games, funded by the Home Office's Fire Kills grant. The games link to England's national curriculum and ensure that young people engage with key safety messages. The complementary implementation toolkit will be trialled over the summer period before roll-out later this year.
- 4.7 StayWise Cymru launched at the end of May 2023. The StayWise team is building a picture of national engagement by surveying all SPOCs.
- 4.8 The UK Fire Cadets National Games will be held in Merseyside during August 2023. The NFCC CYP team continues to forge links with other national organisations, including the Princes Trust and Youth Voice.
- 4.9 The Early Intervention Implementation Framework is being embedded in FRSs, with one-to-one support available to services through NFCC.

### Home Fire Safety

- 4.10 The Prevention Committee is overseeing the delivery of the Person-Centred Framework (PCF) through the development of a competency framework and an evaluation framework for home fire safety visits.

- 4.11 The [online home fire safety check tool](#) won Fire Safety Project of the Year at the Fire & Security Matters Awards on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023.
- 4.12 The National Fire Kills advertising project is now closed. Post-project evaluation has shown a high level of reach, and the learning from this project will be fed into future campaigns.
- 4.13 NFCC's furniture fire safety working group is now engaging regularly with the Office for Product Safety and Standards.

### Mental Health

- 4.14 The Mental Health Concordat will be launched to FRSs in July 2023. There are five workstreams, all linked to the PCF, which will actively target areas to support community mental health.

### Water Safety

- 4.15 NFCC representatives attended The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents' National Water Safety Conference, as part of our work as a National Water Safety Forum member. The NFCC Be Water Aware campaign ran from 24<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup> April 2023, encouraging the public to spend time in and around water safely. NFCC also provided FRSs with water safety messaging to be used throughout the year.

### Road Safety

- 4.16 We are renewing the NFCC Road Safety Group, and the creation of an NFCC Road Safety Strategy has begun. FRS SPOC feedback will allow NFCC to establish specific themes and regional structures to assist services with their road safety activity.

## **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 NFCC has accelerated work on culture and EDI to address immediate priorities and support the development of a [Culture Action Plan](#). This plan is NFCC's commitment to work with FRSs to deliver a positive working culture by cultivating effective leadership, embedding EDI, finding and nurturing diverse talent, and supporting the health and well-being of all FRS staff. This will result in improved confidence from the public, staff,

and FRS stakeholders, and a more diverse workforce from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. The draft was published in May and was open for consultation for five weeks.

- 5.3 Framed by the Culture Action Plan, 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 UK FRS, introduce work from our Leadership and People Programmes, and ensure that the recommendations of reviews into UK FRS culture are fully addressed and integrated into services.

#### Culture Action Plan

- 5.4 Consultation on the Culture Action Plan is now closed. Comprehensive written and oral feedback was received from stakeholders both within and without the fire sector. The feedback has been analysed and considered as part of the redrafting process.
- 5.5 In addition to new products, NFCC will incorporate our existing products into the Culture Action Plan and engage with the sector regularly. The planned date for the publication of the Culture Action Plan is the 19th July 2023. NFCC will continue to monitor and review progress against the plan after publication, drawing on feedback to ensure delivery against ambition.

### **6. Leadership Programme Update**

#### Direct Entry Project

- 6.1 The Direct Entry recruitment process closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 with an impressive 839 applications received for the seven Station Manager posts. Applicants came from a wide range of industries including education, the Armed Forces, the NHS, and the National Grid. As hoped, the process attracted a diverse pool of applicants: 21 percent were female, 19 percent were from a minority ethnic background, and five percent declared a disability. After a rigorous shortlisting process, each service selected four to six candidates to proceed to the next stage, which is assessment and final selection.

#### Middle Leadership Project

- 6.2 The project team conducted early market engagement between 11<sup>th</sup> April and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023 to seek suppliers who may be interested in collaborating with NFCC to provide an accessible online learning portal. The portal will host bespoke online learning modules, aligned to the NFCC Leadership Framework, CCoE, and the Level Five Apprenticeship standard for middle leaders.
- 6.3 This early engagement provided NFCC with an indication of costs, ensuring that informed buying decisions could be planned in advance of the official tender process.

Our engagement received interest from 24 suppliers. The formal procurement process commenced on 30<sup>th</sup> May and ran until 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023. In the next update, we will provide further details, including the successful supplier.

#### Strategic Continued Professional Development Masterclasses

- 6.4 There has been an excellent response to the masterclasses. Over 97 percent of FRs have attended at least one session. The next masterclass, on the theme of sustainability, the environment and climate change, will take place on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

#### Core Code of Ethics

- 6.5 The Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners met with NFCC's Implementation Lead in May 2023, during which the outcomes of the HMICFRS Culture Report were reviewed. Another meeting is planned for December 2023.

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

- 7.1 NFCC's new Operational Response and Fire Control Hub Lead will take up the position on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023. The post-holder will play a significant role in the day-to-day support of NFCC's Continuous Improvement Directorate, providing technical expertise, advising leaders, and providing managerial support to the Operations Committee.

#### Guidance and Learning

- 7.2 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. Areas already being considered to drive improvement include historic learning, prevention of future death reports, fire investigation reports, and protection and prevention learning.
- 7.3 One new guidance document (Terrorist Attack NOG third edition), one fire control guidance document (multi-agency NOG), and eight change requests for NOG were approved in May and are now live on [UKFRS.com](https://www.ukfrs.com). The eight change requests cover a wide variety of workstreams: hazardous materials, water rescue, utilities and fuel, fires in buildings, and transport.
- 7.4 The terrorist attack guidance replaces previous iterations of marauding terrorist attack guidance and complements Joint Operating Procedures for Terrorist Attack still marked as official sensitive.
- 7.5 Fire control NOG training specifications have now been published for the following subjects: fire control command, fire survival guidance, water survival guidance, emergency call management, and multiple calls and multiple incidents.

- 7.6 Major incidents guidance consultation is now closed. Guidance is expected to be published in August 2023. This will bring the guidance in line with recommendations from inquiries and changes to supporting documents such as the JESIP doctrine.
- 7.7 A working group has been established to review fireground radios guidance. The guidance document originally published in 2018 requires updates to reflect changes in technology and learning from incidents.
- 7.8 NFCC is actioning the joint organisational learning recommendation to address issues with multi-agency working at water rescue incidents, and an updated water survivability model is being developed. This work is being led by the National Ambulance Resilience Unit and supported by multi-agency partners.
- 7.9 The NFCC learning team has published two new packages. The first addresses Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC), a package developed in conjunction with NFCC's Protection Reform Unit to address rising concerns regarding RAAC in premises such as hospitals and care homes. The second addresses the Torre Dei Morro fire. Following an NFCC visit to Milan, the learning is being shared via an eLearn case study developed by the Fires in Tall Buildings Group.

#### Grenfell Tower Inquiry

- 7.10 The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Recommendations Survey was issued to every FRS in February 2023, the results were compiled at the end of April, and the final report was submitted to the Home Office in preparation for the anniversary of the fire in June. The results of the survey show continued progress in FRS work towards the completion of all recommendations.
- 7.11 The Minister's Grenfell Tower Inquiry Recommendations Oversight and Governance Board has been reconvened to track performance ahead of the release of the Phase Two recommendations expected in early 2024.

#### Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) Connect Project

- 7.12 Following extensive work by the two project working groups (the ICT User Group and the Control User Group), the MAIT Connect Project released the invitation to tender notice to the market on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2023.
- 7.13 After a thorough procurement process was completed in June 2023, the contract will be awarded in July 2023.



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

- 8.1 NFCC has created a new DDaT Committee, which will consolidate leadership and expertise to determine priorities and oversee the development and delivery of a roadmap of national DDaT ambitions. To support the committee, the NFCC has wound down the Digital and Data Programme (DDP) and established 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 To develop a broader understanding of the 'art of the possible' and to maximise learning, the DDaT Committee is working with the TechUK industry association, National Police Chiefs Council, and Police Digital Service to create an NFCC DDaT roadmap.
- 8.3 A strategic partnership between NFCC DDaT and TechUK is being explored. The benefits of a partnership include increased industry awareness of the remit and objectives of NFCC and TechUK among the wider fire sector and supplier communities, a more transparent and accessible market for technology in the fire sector, and strengthened relationships between the fire and private sectors to empower the sharing of public safety responsibilities. A similar strategic partnership was established in 2021 [between TechUK and the Police Digital Service](#).
- 8.4 Research to develop the strategic roadmap has begun, and initial findings will be made available in the third quarter of 2023–24. The DDaT team will engage with all NFCC Committee Chairs to ensure that priorities and anticipated DDaT-related activity are recorded.

### National Fire Data Collection Systems (NFDCS)

- 8.5 NFDCS is a Home Office-led project to transform the existing Incident Recording System (IRS) into a more comprehensive, flexible, and scalable data collection system. Following unexpected delays, the aim is to deliver an initial solution in the summer of 2024. This will prioritise the scope of the current IRS datasets with subsequent expansion into other areas, including prevention, protection, and workforce data. Home Office has recently appointed a supplier to develop the new system and the project is entering its delivery phase.

### Data Management Framework (DMF)

- 8.6 Following the publication of the Data Management Fire Standard, the DDaT team has defined and developed complementary underpinning guidance and tools. The DMF has undergone peer review and amendments have been made ahead of full consultation in July 2023. The final publication is anticipated in the third quarter of 2023–24.

## Digital, Technology, and Cyber

- 8.7 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.
- 8.8 The Home Office has allocated three-year funding to improve cyber resilience in English FRSs. 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 that NFCC will play in supporting improvement. A report on the findings is expected in July 2023.
- 8.9 The DDaT hub will collaborate with the Fire Standards Board to commence production of digital and technology standards in September 2023. Supporting guidance and tools will be identified as this workstream develops.