



NFCC Chair's Update for FSMC

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| Title: | NFCC Chair's Update |
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update on key work within the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

2. Protection Update

Building Safety Regulator (BSR)

- 2.1 The new BSR reached a significant milestone on 1 October 2023, as the design and build of new and refurbished tall blocks of flats are now dealt with under the new regime. NFCC's Protection Reform Unit (PRU) have assisted FRSs to be ready to support a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) to assist the new regulator. The team are working on multiple workstreams in relation to the delivery of the overall project. The PRU are now working with the FRS on the next milestone of 1 April 2024, when buildings in occupation join the new regime. The PRU have secured via a tender process a provider to upskill FRS staff to assure the installation of firefighting facilities in tall blocks of flats.

Protection Board

- 2.2 The Enforcement Review was presented to Protection Board in October. However, further funding for the PRU will be required over the coming years to enact the recommendations. This is aligned with a PRU paper reviewing the fire safety audit process, which presents short, medium, and long term aims and objectives to ensure the process that Inspecting Officers carry out continues to be fit for purpose. The Board also discussed the emerging hazard work, which involves a multi-stakeholder group

who will explore new risks in the built environment and what mitigation and gaps there are at present.

Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Central Enforcement Advisory Team

- 2.3 The PRU have been engaging with DLUHC to ensure the swift remediation of buildings. The work has focused on a central team containing expertise on the new powers FRSs have under the Building Safety Act to advise FRSs on best way of using Remediation Orders and Remediation Contribution Orders.

Legislation and Guidance Update

- 2.4 Section 156 of the Building Safety Act, which amended the Fire Safety Order, came into effect on 1 October 2023. The PRU assisted the Home Office with Article 50 Guidance and produced guidance specifically for FRSs.
- 2.5 The transitional arrangements for the second staircase in new tall purpose-built blocks of flats has been announced.
- 2.6 The PRU continue to assist Home Office with the technical guidance programme that involves updating all the guidance on the Fire Safety Order.

Protection Uplift Fund

- 2.7 The PRU and NFCC's Data and Governance teams continue to assist FRSs in ensuring that the additional funding is being used effectively and efficiently. A presentation on sharing best practice took place at the NFCC Prevention and Protection Conference in November.

General Update

- 2.8 The PRU continue to sit on many British Standards Institute committees, boards, and working groups to assist in improving both public and firefighter safety. The PRU continues to support FRSs around complex enforcement and fire engineering issues via a peer review process. The PRU supported DLUHC and the Home Office in the introduction of the Mass Decant Protocol that was launched in October.

3. Prevention Programme Update

- 3.1 The Prevention Partnership Board met on 12 September and the Prevention Committee met on 11 October. The latest edition of the *Prevention Newsletter* was published in October. The NFCC Prevention and Protection Conference took place in November, with an awards ceremony jointly hosted with Protection colleagues.
- 3.2 The Prevention Evaluation Principles and Checklist, which has been developed with FRSs, has been approved and launched to support evaluation work.

Safeguarding

- 3.3 NFCC has published guidance to support FRSs with adapting to the legislative change to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 which came into force in July: the Joint Guidance on Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Eligibility

Checks for Fire and Rescue Authority Roles, the NFCC Positive Disclosure Risk Assessment Guidance, and the Managing Allegations Guidance. The Safeguarding team continue to successfully host joint webinars with the DBS, with 88% of FRSs in England and Wales attending since they began in the summer. Three strategic workshops are also scheduled. A full evaluation report will be made available following all webinars, as well as a designated area on the NFCC safeguarding webpage for any FAQs.

- 3.4 The NFCC Safeguarding Board will be moving from monthly to quarterly meetings, with standing agenda items covering work priorities and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) *Spotlight Report on Values and Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service*, with 16 of the 35 recommendations related to safeguarding matters. The team have also supported the Fire Standards Board to review any amendments to the Safeguarding Fire Standard. The Safeguarding Practitioners Group and regional groups continue to meet online, with 49 UK FRSs engaged.

Serious Violence Duty

- 3.5 The FRS Serious Violence Duty guidance has now been launched to support the sector.

Children and Young People (CYP)

- 3.6 The CYP Strategic Intent has been shared with FRSs, as well as a DBS checks factsheet and legal compliance for CYP programmes. Considerations from the recent CYP survey are being incorporated into CYP business, following a response from 81% of FRSs.
- 3.7 Fire Safety Interventions has refreshed its guidance, which has been approved. The team held a National Practitioners Day in November focusing on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Fire Safety Interventions.
- 3.8 StayWise has just launched its Implementation Toolkit, aligned to the HMICFRS key areas and responsibilities and how to implement StayWise as part of Community Risk Management Plans (CRMPs). A tutor adventure book is also being produced along with new video content for the website following a successful upsurge of users, which reached over 2000 following a joint letter from StayWise and the Department for Education (DfE).
- 3.9 Six Fire Cadet Units took part in UK Rescue Organisation (UKRO) Festival of Rescue in September 2023.
- 3.10 The Fire Service Prince's Trust Association (FSPTA) have noted that currently only 12 of the 47 FRSs in England facilitate a Prince's Trust team programme. A paper was shared with the NFCC Steering Group and Full Council to outline recommendations to support the engagement and delivery of youth engagement and intervention programmes. The team would like to recognise and congratulate Cheshire FRS for celebrating 30 years of Prince's Trust delivery.

- 3.11 Forty FRSs have been visited by the Early Interventions National Liaison Officer offering support to enable FRSs to establish and adapt their early intervention programmes requirements under the Serious Violence Duty and the creation of a “Impactasaurus”.
- 3.12 The great work currently being undertaken in CYP has been profiled in a feature in September’s *FIRE Magazine* and at a webinar which was attended by over 200 practitioners.

Home Fire Safety

- 3.13 The Online Home Fire Safety Check tool has been adopted by 86% of FRSs, with 40,000 assessments completed in England. It was featured at this year’s UKRO event in the Community Village. Workshops for the Online Home Fire Safety Check will be hosted in London and Manchester in partnership with the Home Office and Safelincs.
- 3.14 A new Home Fire Safety Visit Competency Framework has been developed and approved and was launched at the Prevention and Protection Conference.

Water Safety

- 3.15 The National Water Safety Forum (NWSF) Education Group led by Swim England has secured agreement from the Secretary of State for Education and the DfE to include a classroom-based water safety lesson within the English national curriculum from September 2024. The curriculum constitutes guidance, rather than being Ofsted regulated.

Road Safety

- 3.16 Following the inaugural Road Safety Group meeting in August, necessary momentum to help take forward road safety work continues, with UK FRS Single Points of Contact (SPoCs) identified. The group seeks to develop local and national packages, with products to meet the criteria of the road safety education standards being developed by the Department for Transport (DfT). These are to be shared on the StayWise website as a repository of good practice once they have been assessed by educators and aligned to the national curriculum.
- 3.17 Following NFCC work on the definition of risk in road traffic collisions, UKRO has developed a Road Risk Peer Review methodology for FRSs in assessing their Prevention preparedness and response to road traffic collisions and also when creating a CRMP. This has been piloted by Surrey FRS. This work will lead to future national rescue challenge events, including road safety and Prevention-oriented workshops.

4. Operational Response and Fire Control Hub Update

Lead Officers

- 4.1 The recruitment process for the three lead officers is underway. Clare Taylor, the Fire Control Lead Officer (previously NFCC’s Fire Control Project Content Manager) started in November; James Till, the Operational Response Lead Officer will start on

1 December; the Sustainability, Climate, Environment, and Emerging Technologies Lead officer process is scheduled to deliver a lead officer to begin in January 2024.

Emerging Technologies

4.2 Emerging technologies create challenges across Prevention, Protection, and operational response. NFCC Lead Officer Phil Clark is drafting an action plan to deliver a suite of policy and guidance products. This recent work includes:

- Shaping a draft Private Members Bill (The Safety of Electric – Powered Mobility Vehicles and Lithium Ion Batteries Bill 2023) to ensure it was more encompassing.
- A survey has been developed with the NFCC Analysis and Insights team for Lithium Battery Incidents. This is designed to capture the “here and now” as we await the updated Incident Recording System (IRS) and will be launched later this month. Phil has also contributed towards a Government working group for the new IRS in respect of battery incidents.
- Support for the development of now published Fire Kills material referring to li-ion batteries.
- Presentations delivered to a range of conferences and groups: the Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) Fire Conference, the Institute of Healthcare Estates Managers, Recycling & Waste Management, Prevention and Protection Conference, the Fire Commission, and the Fire Service Management Committee. Phil attended the EU Battery Energy Conference – scientists and academics noted that there has been a tangible shift to defensive firefighting and controlled burn for Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) fires.
- Engaging with the Environment Agency on the NFCC position for controlled burn to avoid issues surrounding environmental regulations.
- Working with Home Office and DfT to produce guidance for owners and users of portable light electric vehicles.
- Meeting with the Institute for Vehicle Recovery, DfT, the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) to discuss challenges for recovery operators now seeking to recover and store crash- and fire-damaged electric vehicles.
- Providing ongoing support to FRSs regarding BESS and planning applications.

Contaminants

4.3 We are currently working with NFCC Contaminants Group Lead Officer Luke Gazzard to provide support in the following areas: developing a literature review, the gap analysis from the UCLan recommendations, health surveillance, developing an online portal, and training.

Wildfires

- 4.4 Two meetings are scheduled in November where we will support the working group to agree an action plan for the 2022 Wildfires Debrief Report.

Home Office Emergency Alerts System

- 4.5 We have supported meetings with the Home Office to agree how to apply this guidance and NFCC learning regarding the production of an NFCC training packages.

Recent Work

- 4.6 Three subject matter experts (SMEs) have been secured to assist with review of suite of hazardous materials products. Responses to the working at height competency framework consultation has been agreed and shared with SMEs.
- 4.7 The hub is feeding back as a consultee of National Highways regarding the emergency corridors concept and have worked with the Home Office in consultations on draft evacuation guidelines for tall buildings.
- 4.8 The hub has worked with the Police Lead to agree that the recently issued Police document *Dealing with Persons in Crisis – Guidance for Emergency Service First Responders* would become a JESIP guidance document and link to National Operational Guidance (NOG).

Updated Products:

- 4.9 Three guidance products were presented to the Operations, Preparedness Response, and Resilience (OPRR) Committee on 17 October 2023: NOG 092 – Search, Rescue & Casualty Care – Electrical injuries; NOG 093 – Transport – Various minor changes; and a change of wording applicable to all training specifications.

5. People, Culture, and Leadership (PCL) Programme Update

Culture Action Plan and Survey Results

- 5.1 The NFCC Culture Action Plan is a renewed call to action to improve culture and address all forms of discrimination, bullying, and harassment across FRSs in the UK. NFCC published its Culture Action Plan in July 2023. An independent Challenge and Support Panel has been established to provide external scrutiny, challenge, and advice to NFCC in its work around culture and inclusion, including delivery against the Culture Action Plan. The seven panel members' expertise, insight, and experience from a range of sectors will inform NFCC's work around culture and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).
- 5.2 Following on from the publication of the Culture Action Plan, NFCC launched a survey to provide a baseline understanding for the NFCC of Culture/EDI Improvement measures undertaken and planned by FRSs. The survey was sent to all FRSs and was promoted via Chief Fire Officers (CFOs), Heads of HR, and Workplace.
- 5.3 The results of the survey indicate that there is a varying picture of FRS maturity in cultural improvement. This intelligence is being used to inform the development of NFCC People, Culture and Leadership tools, products, and guidance. To measure

performance, identify trends, and provide intelligence, the survey will be repeated in 2024 with the results being compared across both years.

Health and Wellbeing Framework

- 5.4 This project aims to produce a comprehensive framework that answers the recommendations and priorities identified in Nottingham Trent University's (NTU) research into the health and wellbeing support provided in the FRS, published earlier this year. This is currently in the pre-project phase. An academic partner in NTU is in the process of being procured and a working group of sector subject matter experts have been identified to quality assure the draft framework document.

Recruitment, Fitness, and Medical Standards Research Project

- 5.5 This is currently in the pre-project phase, with an outline business case under development.

On-Call Research Project

- 5.6 The On-Call Research Project is part of NFCC's strategy to reduce community risk and vulnerability. The project will address workforce challenges in the On-Call Duty System (OCDS) by conducting a national review to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of on-call resource management and systems across the country. The project will also deliver a standardised data set and approach to on-call data management which will provide the basis for future change. The project will be entering the initiation stage in Quarter 4, subject to a partnership with the Fire Service Research and Training Trust.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Toolkits

- 5.7 New EDI toolkits for FRSs on faith and disability are to be developed as part of the Culture Action Plan. A working group is being developed to review the current material available and scope the project requirements. NFCC will work with the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) to further develop and promote its Religion and Faith Toolkit.
- 5.8 Working within existing resources, NFCC have also begun developing a new Menopause toolkit. The toolkit will contain materials and guidance that were highlighted at the NFCC's first Menopause Conference.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lunch and Learns

- 5.9 NFCC's EDI Hub will host a series of Lunch and Learn sessions to develop knowledge and share experiences on a variety of topics. A working group is currently scoping potential topics, identifying guest speakers, and developing a schedule.

Direct Entry

- 5.10 The Direct Entry Scheme has successfully appointed six direct entrant Station Managers; five are in service, with the sixth starting on 11 December 2023 (due to notice period).



- 5.11 An Open Day at the Fire Service College took place on 15 November 2023, where the NFCC Chair Mark Hardingham welcomed the Station Managers in development to the fire sector. This also triggered the start of their three-year training programme.
- 5.12 NFCC has agreed to become an approved centre with Skills for Justice to use the Custom Certifications Service (CCS) for the Direct Entry pilot scheme. Skills for Justice have provided free resource to the project develop the CCS, which is an “in house” route for assuring training and provides the learner with an accredited and assured certificate of achievement.
- 5.13 NFCC and the Fire Service College have agreed upon the first steps of a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Framework Agreement that protects both parties’ intellectual property rights and ways of working during and after training periods.
- 5.14 A hard copy of the training programme, *The Prospectus*, has been sent to all CFOs.
- Middle Leadership Programme (MLP)
- 5.15 The MLP project successfully awarded Lot 1 (online portal and content) of the procurement process to Chartered Management Institute, but Lot 2 (blended learning approaches) was unsuccessful on two rounds of procurement.
- 5.16 Approval was granted to offer Lot 2 as a secondment opportunity to a skilled learning and development specialist, up to the allocated budget and time period (for Lot 2). Eight applicants responded to the advert, with the appointment of a specialist secured from Shropshire FRS, who is now working with the supplier and project team.
- 5.17 The project has already developed two of the four modules and will now work with a number of FRS HR volunteers to review and provide feedback on the content, structure, and format of the programme as part of QA.
- 5.18 The project is on track to launch on 1 April 2024.
- Strategic Continued Professional Development (CPD) Masterclasses
- 5.19 There has been an excellent response to the masterclasses, with 486 UK FRS staff attending at least one masterclass and only one service from 54 not attending any. The most recent masterclass, titled *Beyond the Response – Preparing for Scrutiny*, was delivered by London Fire Brigade (LFB) in September 2023, with 67 in attendance. Current and future FRS leaders were encouraged to consider how well

prepared they and their organisations are to deal with potential scrutiny that may arise following a major incident or event.

- 5.20 All masterclasses are waiting to be uploaded onto the new NFCC website.

Core Code of Ethics

- 5.21 Results from the NFCC culture and inclusion survey showed that 32 FRSs use the Core Code of Ethics with 29 FRSs fully embedding this by 2024/25.
- 5.22 The Implementation Support Team continue to work with FRSs to implement the Core Code of Ethics to assure partners that it continues to be at the forefront of work to be delivered by them.
- 5.23 HMICFRS has published its *Effectiveness, Efficiency, and People 2023/25* inspection reports for a number of FRSs – all are noted for their adoption of or compliance with the Core Code of Ethics.
- 5.24 A meeting is planned in December 2023 between the Local Government Association (LGA), and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), and the NFCC Implementation Manager to consider the next steps.

NFCC Interactive Leadership and Careers Pathways

- 5.25 An outline business case for a new project to develop interactive leadership and career pathways has been approved to progress. This interactive tool will be hosted on the new NFCC website and deliver a clear, intuitive, and professional landing page to attract people to the fire sector, helping to support FRSs' recruitment campaigns and showcase the range of career and development opportunities across FRSs in the UK.
- 5.26 The interactive pathways will provide all FRS staff with opportunities and roadmaps that enrich their professional development, either vertically (through promotion) or horizontally. It will provide a clear leadership pathway with the appropriate tools and products to support existing and future FRS leaders and become a central hub for all existing and future people, culture, and leadership products.
- 5.27 The interactive pathways will initially align with areas of work under the People, Culture, And Leadership Programme as a proof of concept, with the aim to widen the scope in phases to ensure it is scalable and manageable. It is proposed to undertake consultation in the new year.

360 Degree Feedback Guidance

- 5.28 National guidance has been produced on 360-Degree Feedback to support FRSs in implementing 360 at all levels, including aligning this to the NFCC Leadership Framework.
- 5.29 This guidance is currently out for consultation, with the proposal to review the results, produce a report for the NFCC Leadership Project Board to approve, and for the publication of the guidance uploaded onto the NFCC website in the new year.

6. Community Risk Programme Update

- 6.1 The programme has almost completed its original aims, and is moving toward closure and the transition of products to business as usual. The programme has identified areas for further work and business cases will be produced for future consideration.
- 6.2 A Community Risk Coordination Group consisting of heads of NFCC's Protection, Prevention, and Operational Response Hubs, the Head of Service Delivery, and a Strategic Lead for Community Risk is part of business as usual activities.

Economic and Social Value (ESV) Project

- 6.3 The ESV digital tool is now available to FRSs and the project has closed.

Guidance Project

- 6.4 The final guidance documents have now been published and are available on the UK FRS website. This project has now closed.

Definition of Risk Project Update

- 6.5 The Road Traffic Collision Methodology is now available online and work is progressing well to deliver the Other Building Fires Methodology.

Evaluation of FRS Interventions Project

- 6.6 The evaluation framework is now available online and the project has closed.

7. Data, Digital and Technology (DDaT) Hub update

- 7.1 The DDaT Committee continues to develop its governance structure. A Data Board and Digital, Technology and Cyber (DTC) Board have been established under the committee to lead on their respective areas, with cross-organisation subject matter experts as members. A recruitment process recently concluded to determine the new voluntary chairs of each board. CFO Jonathan Dyson (North Yorkshire FRS) is Chair of the Data Board, and CFO Callum Faint (Leicestershire FRS) is Chair of the DTC Board. The chairs have also become the respective lead officers for each subject matter area. Terms of reference for each board will be signed off at the first meetings in November.
- 7.2 The DDaT Hub has concluded recruitment of the full-time positions of Strategic Data Lead and Strategic Digital, Technology and Cyber Lead. These roles will become de-facto vice chairs of the boards outlined above and will be the day-to-day leads on delivery in each area, working to the Head of DDaT. The Strategic DTC Lead commenced in post in October 2023, and the Strategic Data Lead will commence in post in Q4.
- 7.3 The DDaT Committee continues to work on developing a strategic roadmap for the sector. To gain an understanding of the current landscape, a survey was shared with all other NFCC committee chairs to identify any current and planned committee activity which has a DDaT element that may need to be considered. Deep dives into each area will be conducted from Q3. An overarching strategy document has been drafted and shared with the DDaT governance structures for initial feedback.

- 7.4 A MOU for the NFCC's strategic partnership with techUK has been drafted and is undergoing final review. The strategic partnership aims to facilitate and foster a culture where the NFCC and tech companies work together collaboratively exchanging ideas, knowledge, and skills. The aim of the partnership will be to overcome barriers to industry collaboration with the NFCC and provide tech companies with an equal opportunity to showcase their solutions, problem solve, horizon scan and drive innovation across the sector. Final signing is expected in December 2023.

National Fire Data Collection System (NFDCS)

- 7.5 NFDCS is a Home Office-led project to transform the existing IRS into a more comprehensive, flexible, and scalable national fire data collection system. There are two major workstreams underway, one is the technical development of the new system, the second is the data review. The suppliers are fully mobilised and have started the alpha phase of development. The data review is focussed on incident data which is likely to take the rest of this calendar year and then be reviewed in January 2024. Review of other datasets, including those for Prevention, Protection, and workforce, will likely commence after spring 2024. The target for an initial solution to be in place for incident data is summer 2024.

Data Management Framework (DMF)

- 7.6 Following publication of the Data Management Fire Standard in 2022, the team defined and developed the underpinning guidance and tools for the new standard. The DMF has undergone consultation and amendments to the guidance have been made ahead of final QA processes and publication in December 2023.

Digital, Technology, and Cyber

- 7.7 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.
- 7.8 The Home Office has three-year funding to improve cyber resilience in English FRS. Home Office partnered with IBM to conduct detailed research into FRS compliance with the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) which has determined a set of recommendations for the sector. The DDaT team are working with SMEs to turn these recommendations into a prioritised action plan. NFCC will lead on the options appraisal and business case development for national actions, and funding may be available from the Home Office cyber programme to support delivery. A draft action plan and recommendations paper will be shared with DDaT governance in November 2023.
- 7.9 The DDaT hub will collaborate with the Fire Standards Board to commence production of digital, technology and cyber standard(s) in Q3. Supporting guidance and tools will be identified as the standard(s) develop into 2024.