



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

15 December 2020

Fire Standards Board

Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

1. The report is to update members on the Fire Standards Board's progress in developing national Fire Standards.

Background

2. In 2017 the Home Office set out its agenda for fire reform which included the creation of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), an independent inspectorate for fire (HMICFRS) and a new professional standards body.
3. A Fire Standards Board was created in February 2019. Its role is to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services (FRS) in England. An independent chair and vice chair have been appointed (Suzanne McCarthy & Alison Sansome) and the remaining Board members are from local government and the fire sector. The Board has met seven times since its inception.
4. As part of the reforms for FRS in England, the Fire Standards Board is committed to the introduction of Standards. The intention being to help drive continual improvement across the services alongside the re-introduction of inspection arrangements.

Fire Standards

5. National Professional Standards are a key component of continuous improvement in any sector. They form a point of focus, against which performance can be measured and further improvement or new requirements identified.

6. To help categorise the areas requiring Fire Standards an activity framework has been developed to capture the activities performed by FRS irrespective of their governance model, budget, or location and who provides those functions.
7. The Board has made progress in developing the Fire Standards included as part of phase one. The first Standard, Emergency Response Driving is complete and awaiting independent quality assurance and publication.
8. Consultation on the Operational Response Fire Standards closed on 10 September 2020 and the Board received 50 responses containing over 600 comments. Final drafts of the Standard will be shared with the NFCC Operations Committee and then with the Fire Standards Board on 9 December 2020 ahead of assurance and publication.
9. Consultation on the Code of Ethics Fire Standard closed on 2 November 2020. This Standard is dependent on the publication of underpinning guidance for FRS on a Core Code of Ethics, developed in partnership between the NFCC and the LGA.
10. Consultation on the Community Risk Management Planning Fire Standard closes on Monday 7 December 2020. It is expected that the first six Fire Standards will be published in February 2021.
11. County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) has provided consultation responses to all draft Standards and will continue to engage with the Board to support their development.
12. Scoping work for a Fire Protection and a Fire Prevention Standard is underway. The Project Board expects these Standards to be published in April 2021.
13. The Fire Standards will be applicable to all FRS in England. It is anticipated that as the Fire Standards are produced, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will integrate those Standards into its inspection framework and judgement criteria.
14. The NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO) has established an engagement team to support FRS in working toward the Standards. Work is ongoing to design an online implementation guide and progress tracker. The CPO is in dialogue with some FRS interested in forming a working group to support this work including CDDFRS.
15. The Fire Standards may impact on the future workloads and resource requirements of CDDFRS as strategies, policies, systems and procedures are likely to need adjustments to ensure alignment with the Standards.
16. Appendix A lists the current planned Fire Standards and expected publication dates.

Recommendations

17. CFA Members are requested to:
 - a. **note** the contents of this report;
 - b. **receive** further reports as appropriate.

Appendix A

Fire Standard	Expected publication
Emergency response driving	February 2021
Operational preparedness	February 2021
Operational competence	February 2021
Operational learning	February 2021
Code of ethics	February 2021
Community risk management planning	February 2021
Leadership	April 2021
Fire protection	May 2021
Prevention interventions	May 2021
Selection and recruitment, including fitness standards	TBC
Promotion and succession planning	TBC
Fire and rescue service data requirements and management	July 2021