

# FIRE STANDARDS BOARD<sup>1</sup>

## MINUTES (APPROVED)

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**Date:** Friday 1 February 2019  
**Time:** 10.00 – 13.00hrs  
**Venue:** [etc.venues](#) - Prospero House, 241 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1GA

**Attendees:** Suzanne McCarthy – Chair  
Alison Sansome – Vice-Chair  
Jonny Bugg – Home Office  
Nick Chard –Local Government Association (LGA)  
Susan Ellison-Bunce – NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO)  
Julia Mulligan –Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC)  
Roy Wilsher – National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)

**In Attendance:** Sadie Bryant – NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO)  
Joy Flanagan – NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO)  
Jessica Norman – Local Government Association (LGA)

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<b>10.00 – 10.10</b>	<b>Introductions, welcome and apologies</b>	Chair
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The Chair welcomed attendees to the inaugural meeting of Fire Standards Board.

Jessica Norman from the LGA was in attendance to support Nick Chard.

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<b>10.10 – 10.15</b>	<b>Conflicts of interests</b>	Chair
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No conflicts of interest were expressed by Board members.

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<b>10.15 – 11.00</b>	<b>Terms of Reference</b>	Chair
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*Paper 1 - For decision*

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The Chair explained that comments had been received following the Board papers being dispatched. Those comments had been reviewed and incorporated into a revised version of the Terms of Reference (ToR) distributed the day prior to the meeting. The Board then reviewed the revised version of the ToR with the following comments and amendments noted.

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes produced before branding and logo confirmed

## **Role and Purpose**

*'The board will engage with key stakeholders'* – The Board queried whether any specific engagement with stakeholders had been planned. The Chair explained that the terminology was generic, and a communications and engagement plan would be brought to the next meeting.

The CPO would coordinate communications activity to ensure it remained aligned with all other related communications and engagement activity. It was agreed that any meetings attended by the Chair and/or Vice Chair on behalf of the Board would be a standard agenda item in future.

***Action FSB-A001: Any relevant meetings attended by the Chair and/or Vice Chair to be included on future agendas as a standard item.***

## **Membership and Quorum**

The Board discussed Board membership. The Board was reminded that the original proposal was to include a place at the Board for the College of Policing in an advisory capacity.

The Board expressed a clear aspiration to learn from the College. They noted the strong links that already exist between individuals on the Board and the College and asked that the CPO ensure effective relationships were developed or maintained with their counterparts in relation to the development of Standards. The Board agreed it was not a requirement to include the College onto the Board at this time.

It was noted that both of the current LGA and APCC representatives on the Board may change following elections in 2020. This was noted, and the Board agreed, that specific reference to this did not need to be added to the ToR.

***Decision FSB-D001: The College of Policing will not be invited to join the Board at this time.***

## **Development of Standards**

The Board agreed the proposed changes to this section.

## **Board Member Behaviours**

The Board agreed the proposed changes to this section.

## **Confidentiality**

The Board agreed to the removal of this section as the Collective Responsibility section clarifies the position on confidentiality in respect of Board discussions and decisions.

## **Collective Responsibility**

The Board noted that this section had been changed from the original version distributed. The Board agreed with the new version of this section which reads as follows:

*Board Members are free to express their own views within the context of the meeting discussion. Once a decision is reached, all Board members must abide by it.*

***Decision FSB-D002: The Board approved the ToR subject to agreed amendments.***

***Action FSB-A002: CPO to amend ToR and circulate to Board members.***

**Background & Information**

The CPO introduced the paper explaining that much work that would lead to Standards was already in progress, driven by the NFCC and the multiple practitioner forums.

The Board was asked to note the proposals for areas of priority and the work already in progress as documented in the paper.

**Standards Development Process**

The CPO described the proposed Standards Development Process. The basic process has been based on the process used and endorsed by the British Standards Institution (BSI). In addition, it was explained that a large number of other sectors such as in healthcare and the police follow this process when developing guidance or a standard.

Concern was raised regarding potential duplication of approval routes through the NFCC. The CPO confirmed that Standards development work will be aligned to, and part of, the NFCC Programmes. Therefore, programme and project documents that will inform the Standards development process will be subject to the established NFCC Programme Management Governance structure. Only documentation relating to Standards approval will be presented to the Fire Standards Board.

Concern was raised about the length of time it may take to produce a Standard, and the Chair was keen to ensure that some Standards were published within the first year. The CPO confirmed that with the extent of work already completed or well underway in some areas, this would be possible.

It was explained that much guidance was already available and had already undergone the required scrutiny and consultation in its development. However, this work would need to be considered as part of the overall work programme. It was agreed that it will be important to determine a work programme for Standards to ensure there is logic behind the order in which Standards are produced.

A concern was raised about the complexity of the work and its apparent current ad-hoc nature. The Board discussed what was learnt from the National Operational Guidance Programme (NOGP). Similar issues were experienced at the start of that programme where some guidance was already in progress, but not necessarily in the order one may choose if you had a blank sheet.

At that time the Programme made the decision to lead with work that was well developed, but also looked at an overarching framework to ensure it was understood where all of the proposed work would fit into that framework. It was suggested that the same challenge exists for Standards, and it would be essential to establish the overarching framework first. It was agreed that the overarching framework would be a priority for discussion at the next meeting.

Concern was raised about what would happen if a standard wasn't met as this Board is not a regulatory body. In comparison, it was noted that guidance produced for the police by the College of Policing had often failed due to

lack of consideration of its impact for local organisations. If the potential implications are not considered at an early stage, Standards may not be adopted which could undermine the work of the Board.

It was clarified that the HMICFRS is not a regulatory body, and that any non-compliance with standards would be raised through its inspection activity. How the HMICFRS and the Standards Board work together and share information will require further clarification.

The importance of working with HMICFRS was discussed as they will be referencing the Standards that the Board produces in future inspections. It was proposed that a Memorandum of Understanding be developed between the Board and the HMICFRS to clarify how the two will align work and share information.

***Action: FSB-A003: The Chair and Vice Chair to meet with HMICFRS and propose a joint working MoU.***

The Board discussed the importance of considering the impact and implications of any standard on all services before it is published. The CPO confirmed that impact assessment would form part of the quality assurance that would take place as part of the Standards development process.

The Board again stressed the importance of learning from, and working with, the College of Policing on this aspect. The CPO confirmed links were in place between the two organisations, but the experience of the relevant Board members in this regard would be highly beneficial as the Board progressed its work.

The NFCC Chair stated his aspiration for fire to be present at relevant College of Policing Board and Committees to aid the cross-fertilisation of work. This is something that the NFCC had been trying to achieve for some time.

It was suggested that a meeting between the Chair of the College and the FSB Chairs may be beneficial at the appropriate time, being once the Board has started to develop and produce Standards. The Home Office offered to help facilitate such a meeting.

The CPO emphasised the importance of engagement with stakeholders overall as part of Standards development which is why the Strategic Engagement Forum and its sub-forums will be an essential part of that engagement process.

The consultation and engagement structure proposed for producing Standards was proven within fire as it replicated what was used for the National Operational Guidance Programme. This was taken into account by the original PSB Project and is partly why the sector-led model utilising the resources and capabilities within the CPO was proposed and selected for professional Standards development.

On an ongoing basis, it was suggested that the CPO consider how to gather feedback on Standards from stakeholders. Experience from policing was shared, and a suggestion was made that the FSB have a simple feedback mechanism to make it easy to gather feedback on the Standards as they are developed and after they are published. The CPO confirmed the approaches they had taken in this regard with National Operational Guidance and would seek to replicate that in the communications and engagement work for Standards.

It was proposed that a short presentation about the lessons learnt from the National Operational Guidance Programme would be beneficial at the next Board meeting.

***Action FSB-A004: CPO to provide a presentation on the journey of NOG at the next meeting.***

The CPO confirmed that more detailed processes would underpin each stage of the process. It was agreed that further work would be done to bring clarity to the process and reported to the next meeting.

***Action FSB-A005: More detail to underpin the standards development process to be brought to the next meeting.***

### **Standards Prototype**

The Board discussed the proposed professional standards prototype.

The LRF Standards template was referenced, and it was agreed the wording of this template was clear and concise. The Board felt it was important that the Standards produced were written in Plain English and at the appropriate level for the workforce.

The Board discussed terminology used in the Outcome Statement. Learning from the National Operational Guidance Programme was shared which may benefit the language used within Standards. The NOG approach was based around:

- **Must** - related to legal / mandatory required
- **Should** - what we would expect
- **May** - this would be nice

The Board also felt it was important to make clear that any Standards produced would have supporting guidance and that this should be reflected in the Standards development process diagram in some way.

It was suggested that by working with the HMICFRS on this aspect, the Board would have the opportunity to develop something more purposeful than is currently in use in policing.

The Vice-Chair shared experience from other sectors around regulatory powers, and suggested by getting the language correct at this stage, the Standards could help bring clarity to the sector.

Several amendments were proposed by the Board for the CPO to act on.

***Action FSB-A006: Change 'Mandatory Duty' wording on the prototype template to make this more meaningful for a wider audience.***

***Action FSB-A007: Make clear the difference between "best" practice and "leading" practice on the prototype template.***

***Action FSB-A008: Consider the language used from 'fire and rescue service may' to something more meaningful which would result in services being more accountable.***

**Brand and Logo**

The Board discussed the identity of the Board and the need for it to be seen as independent from other existing sector bodies.

It is proposed that the Board would require both a logo and brand that can be used on all related materials and a web platform. Proposed designs were shared with the Board and feedback gathered. Further design work would be completed to develop a final logo and brand which would be shared at the next meeting.

**Stakeholders**

The stakeholder summary was discussed and further clarification on how stakeholders had been grouped was requested. The CPO confirmed that a Communications and Engagement strategy would be brought to the next meeting.

***Action FSB-A009: CPO to produce a Communications and Engagement Strategy including clarity on stakeholder analysis***

**Publishing Board Information**

In line with all public sector bodies, the Board agreed that all Board papers and associated documents would be shared on a web platform when established.

It was also agreed that the Board should establish a social media presence linked to the web platform.

***Action FSB-A010: CPO to establish a Twitter account for FSB in line with Communication & Engagement plan***

The web platform, when established, would include details of the Terms of Reference, Board members' details along with the Standards it produces linked to supporting or other relevant information. All Board members were requested to provide a biography for this purpose.

***Action FSB-A0011: CPO to request outstanding Board members biographies.***

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**Next Meeting:** Tuesday 2 April - [etc venues, 1 Drummond Gate, Pimlico, London SW1V 2QQ](#)

## Actions & Decisions Summary

Action Log				
ID	Date	Action	Action Owner	Due Date
FSB-A001	01/03/2019	Any relevant meetings attended by the Chair and/or Vice Chair to be included on future agendas as a standard item.	CPO	ongoing
FSB-A002	01/02/2019	CPO to amend ToR and circulate to Board members.	CPO	02/04/2019
FSB-A003	01/02/2019	The Chair and Vice Chair to meet with HMICFRS and propose a joint working MoU.	CPO	02/04/2019
FSB-A004	01/02/2019	CPO to provide a presentation on the journey of NOG for the Board's next meeting.	CPO	02/04/2019
FSB-A005	01/02/2019	More detail to underpin the standards development process to be brought to the Board's next meeting.	CPO	02/04/2019
FSB-A006	01/02/2019	Change 'Mandatory Duty' wording on the prototype template to make this more meaningful for a wider audience.	CPO	02/04/2019
FSB-A007	01/02/2019	Make clear the difference between "best" practice and "leading" practice in prototype.	CPO	02/04/2019
FSB-A008	01/02/2019	Consider the language used from 'fire and rescue service may' to something more meaningful which would result in services being more accountable.	CPO	02/04/2019
FSB-A009	01/02/2019	CPO to produce a Communications and Engagement Plan including clarity on stakeholder analysis	CPO	02/04/2019

Action Log				
ID	Date	Action	Action Owner	Due Date
FSB-A010	01/02/2019	CPO to establish Twitter account for FSB in line with Communication & Engagement plan	CPO	02/04/2019
FSB-A011	01/02/2019	CPO to request outstanding Board members' biographies.	CPO	02/04/2019

Decision Log		
ID	Date	Decision
FSB-D001	01/02/2019	The College of Policing will not be invited to join the Board at this time.
FSB-D002	01/02/2019	The Board approved the ToR subject to agreed amendments.