

Item Number	5
Title of Paper	Paper 3
Decision or Information	For information
Date of Meeting	4 June 2020
Presented by	Joy Flanagan
Attachments	None

Summary

This paper updates the Board on activities completed by the CPO since the last Board meeting including:

1. Recruitment and building capacity
2. Impact of COVID - forward plan
3. Communications aims
4. Pilot Fire Standard - update

Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the contents of this report.

Background Information

Recruitment and building capacity

Following the agreement reached on funding and the employment status of the additional capacity needed within the CPO to deliver the improvement programmes and Fire Standards, the CPO is actively recruiting.

The collective efforts of the CPO have contributed and will continue to contribute to Fire Standards development; support of the Board; the FSB's website, communications and engagement activity. However, a number of posts are now being added to the team specifically to build the capacity and support work needed to deliver the Fire Standards and the underpinning guidance produced through the NFCC programmes. This capacity includes analytics to develop evidence base data, a communications and engagement team to increase levels of engagement with services and provide implementation support and a quality assurance function to deliver quality assurance across all portfolio products including Fire Standards.

Other functions such as finance, procurement, IT support are provided by other parts of the CPO team and these are also being increased to meet demand.

The posts being filled and which will report to Joy Flanagan, the Head of Portfolio – Quality and Standards include:

- **Senior Project Manager** - focussed on supporting Fire Standards development coordination
- **Portfolio Analyst** - focussed on analytical work across the portfolio including managing the Strategic Improvement Model (SIM). Results from this model will help the NFCC better understand and interpret the external reviews and commentary about fire and rescue service performance to ensure improvement programmes have the correct focus and priority
- **Communications Manager** – overseeing a team of **Engagement Officers** and **Communications Support Officers** helping services with implementation of national products including Fire Standards
- **Fire Standards Support Officer, Standards Administrator and Quality Assurance Administrator** – support roles for the team and Board

Recruitment to these posts will be staggered as the impact of recruitment activity has to be balanced with continuing to be able to deliver.

It is envisaged that the project management post and portfolio analyst posts will be filled by July. The Communications Manager and other support posts will likely follow in September and the remaining posts filled later in the Autumn.

These timings may be impacted by post-COVID lockdown activity as the country enters a new-normal state combined with the availability of suitable candidates. The latter is traditionally compromised over the summer holiday period.

Impact of COVID

Learning from COVID

As reported at the last Board, the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown conditions has, and will continue to have, an impact on the certain activities of the CPO.

There is likely to be learning gained that may very well impact future Fire Standards in terms of other activities or requirements moving up the priority list such as business continuity.

The NFCC has appointed a Lead Officer and a Committee will be established to review the learning from COVID and oversee efforts of any new activities required and how they align to existing planned work. The focus will be on recovery and reform activities. The full impact of the virus is currently unknown, but may have an impact on the Fire Standards delivery plan.

Communication and engagement

Communication and engagement activities with services will mainly focus on the various consultations on Fire Standards that will be taking place over the coming months.

While only limited activity can be undertaken on a Fire Standard once a consultation begins, that time can be spent working on other areas that are further behind in the process or on the evaluation of consultation responses for completed consultations.

The CPO will plan and coordinate this work alongside the NFCC programmes to avoid multiple consultations being open at any one time.

Communications

The first newsletter from the Board has been produced providing a summary of the work to date and the forward plan.

This has been distributed through various means via the NFCC to services. Board members were also asked to share within their own networks.

As with consultations, communications related to the various Fire Standards will be aligned and coordinated with NFCC programme communications to avoid duplication or overload on services.

Further editorial pieces in industry journals are planned as we want to bring consultations and the other work we are doing to the attention of services.

Work to develop other aspects of the website, such as to host the approved Fire Standards now the format is agreed, is underway.

Pilot process update

Communications between the NFCC and the Home Office are continuing in order to resolve the issue of the planned legislation relating to emergency response driving and minimum training times.

The NFCC group which is responsible have considered all consultation responses and are contacting those services who raised specific queries. Changes to the supporting training and competency framework have been made and an update at the next national meeting of practitioners affected (end users of the guidance) is planned for 2 June 2020.

The Board will be provided with an update on progress being made regarding this Fire Standard at its next meeting or when it happens, whichever is earlier.