

Title of Standard	Communications, Engagement and Consultation
Business Area/Capability	Corporate Services
Sponsoring NFCC Committee	Prevention Committee
Desired Outcome	
<p>A fire and rescue service whose leaders understand and champion its approach to communication, engagement and consultation, underpinning everything it does to keep its community and people safe.</p> <p>It has a positive and inclusive culture, which enables its people to communicate openly, and engage effectively. Its people develop and maintain positive relationships, both within and outside of the service, building trust and resulting in successful collaborations and partnership working.</p> <p>The vision and strategic objectives for the service are understood by all because it tailors its communications to its multiple audiences. It has a two-way approach to communication, welcoming feedback especially through consultation, and communicating effectively to keep people informed and reassured.</p> <p>It evaluates the effectiveness of its communication, engagement and consultation activities to contribute to how it learns and improves.</p> <p>Based on its community risk management planning, it knows who are the most vulnerable and in need in its community and uses effective communication, engagement and consultation techniques to reach them. It contributes to community resilience through education and by encouraging the community to adopt safer practices.</p> <p>When carrying out its civil contingencies' role and in times of emergency and crises, it communicates to warn and inform the public, coordinating with others, when appropriate.</p>	
To achieve this Fire Standard	
<p>A fire and rescue service must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. have a strategic approach to communication, engagement and consultation which includes clear principles about how the organisation will communicate with its audiences, aligned to organisational goals of the service, its values and the principles contained within the Core Code of Ethics 2. have leaders that support the strategic approach to communications, engagement and consultation and are exemplars in good communication 	

behaviours and principles, aligned to those included in the Leading the Service Fire Standard.

3. ensure that everyone in the service understands their responsibilities in relation to communications, engagement and consultation
4. have an appropriately resourced and competent communications capacity that:
 - a. plans for and manages reactive communication issues such as crises (reputational) and emergencies (risk to life and property); and
 - b. plans proactive communications internally and externally
5. have a resilient and out of hours arrangement to handle out of hours enquiries and manage communications during crises and emergencies, in line with the requirements of the Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard
6. support, train and develop those working within its communications capacity (where they are employed within a service) encouraging them to maintain their competency and keep developing their skills, knowledge and new methods of communication through continued professional development
7. deliver inclusive and accessible communications, recognising that every workforce, community and group has different and diverse needs
8. evaluate communications and engagement activity to see whether objectives have been met and if there are any lessons that can be learned and shared
9. carry out meaningful consultations, aligned to the [Gunning Principles](#)

A fire and rescue service should:

1. involve the most senior communications professional in high level discussions with the senior team about matters affecting the organisation to ensure communications and engagement aspects are always considered to avoid reputational risk and to ensure all communication opportunities are optimised and managed well
2. ensure all departments liaise with and take advice from the communications function, when planning any communications or engagement activity
3. use an established and consistent communications planning framework for communications and campaign work
4. use audience insight to inform and tailor communications activity, clearly defining and targeting audiences
5. seek to build effective relationships with relevant media outlets, proactively and collectively planning stories, building mutual understanding and exchanging feedback about proactive and reactive stories
6. place an emphasis on stakeholder relationships and management, mapping and analysing key stakeholders, prioritising audiences and managing influencers
7. ensure collaboration is ingrained within the work of its communication function
8. stay well informed of new communications methods and techniques, applying them where appropriate

A fire and rescue service may:

9. professionalise the communications team by investing in their continued professional development through paid membership of a recognised professional body

Expected benefits of achieving the Fire Standard

1. Improved safety and wellbeing of the public, employees, and volunteers
2. Engaged and informed workforce and positive working environment
3. Heightened service reputation and increased public trust
4. Better planned campaigns leading to better outcomes for key service priorities around prevention, protection and recruitment
5. More effective crisis and emergency communications
6. Improved evaluation to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of communication and prevention work

Legal Requirements or mandatory duties

This Fire Standard reflects only the most appropriate legislation to this topic. We recognise that fire and rescue services must comply with a broader list of legislation to undertake their duties, which would be applicable to all standards. [View the legislation which applies to all Fire Standards.](#)

- [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
- [Public Sector Accessibility Regulations 2018](#)

Linked qualifications, accreditations or Fire Standards

Other Fire Standards:

- [Code of Ethics Fire Standard](#)
- [Community Risk Management Planning](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness and Resilience](#)
- Leading the Service Fire Standard (publication due December 2022)
- Leading and Developing People Fire Standard (publication due December 2022)
- [Operational Competence](#)
- [Operational Learning](#)
- [Operational Preparedness](#)
- [Prevention](#)
- [Protection](#)

Linked Qualifications or Accreditations:

- Chartered Institute of Public Relations – accredited or chartered practitioner
- Chartered Institute of Marketing – associate or chartered marketer

Guidance and supporting information

- [The Government Communications Service's OASIS Campaign Planning Guide](#)
- [GovS 011: Communication](#)
- ['New Conversations'](#)
- [#FutureComms](#)
- [Barcelona Principles 3.0](#)

Some guidance is not in place yet, but it is proposed that the following guidance to support this fire standard is produced:

- Developing An Effective Communications and Engagement Strategy
- Stakeholder Engagement and Mapping Toolkit
- Communication Channel Mapping Toolkit
- FirePRO Death of a Colleague guidance