

ADDITIONAL FIRE STANDARDS BOARD MEETING

Date: Tuesday 13th June 2023

Time: 14.30 – 16.30hrs

Venue: Virtual (MS Teams)

Attendees:	Suzanne McCarthy (SMcC) – Chair Alison Sansome (AS) – Vice-Chair Ben Adams (BA) – Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC) Jonny Bugg (JB) – Home Office Cllr. Nick Chard (NC) – Local Government Association (LGA) Mark Hardingham (MH) – National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)
In Attendance:	Alfie Bates (AB) – Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC) Jushna Chowdhury (JC) – Home Office Susannah Hancock (SH) - NFCC Rebecca Johnson (RJ) – Local Government Association (LGA) Thomas Pinchbeck (TP) – Home Office
Fire Standards Team (FST):	Joy Flanagan (JF) – NFCC Fire Standards Team (FST) Paul Henbest (PH) - NFCC Fire Standards Team (FST) Brenda Monks (BM) – NFCC Fire Standards Team (FST) Suzan Adesegun (SA) – NFCC Fire Standards Team (FST)
Apologies	Lucy Ellender – Local Government Association (LGA) Jenna Marsh – Home Office Eddie Smithwick - Association of Police & Criminal Commissioners (APCC)

Introductions, welcome and apologies and conflicts of interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. No conflicts of interest were expressed by Board members.

HMICFRS – Report on Values & Culture in Fire and Rescue Services: Consideration of the Fire Standards Board response *Paper 1 for decision*

The recent review carried out by HMICFRS into the culture within fire and rescue services resulted in three of the 35 recommendations being directed specifically to the Fire Standards Board. A further 9 had been identified by the Fire Standards Team and Chairs as potentially having implications for the work of the Fire Standards Board. The 12 recommendations were presented in Paper 1 Appendix A.

SMcC outlined how the meeting would progress and the Board agreed with her proposal.

SMcC asked the Board if, in addition to the recommendations listed in Appendix A, there were any other recommendations they felt should be considered as being directed to or the responsibility of, the Board, either all or in part.

The Board agreed that there were no further recommendations that required consideration, other than those listed in the Appendix.

For each recommendation, the Board then discussed the recommendation, the proposed actions for its delivery and the ability to achieve the target date set by HMICFRS.

Direct Recommendations

Recommendation No. 8

MH reported that the NFCC consultation on Safeguarding Guidance had closed on 2nd June. He felt optimistic that given the progress with legislation and the accompanying guidance the deadline of 1st December to review the Safeguarding Fire Standard as required by the recommendation was achievable.

JB stated that the proposed amendment to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order 1975 was being debated in the Lords that day. JB also agreed that the deadline of 1st December was achievable.

Following the Lords debate there would be some further formalities which, once completed, would allow the Minister to bring the change into law.

The effect of this change would be to make all fire and rescue service employees eligible for Standard Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

It was hoped that this change could take place in the coming weeks and align neatly with the work to develop guidance on this matter through the NFCC Fire Safeguarding Board.

The Fire Standards Team would ensure any review of the wording in the Safeguarding Fire Standard was aligned with the work of the NFCC and the legislation.

Recommendation No.11

The Board agreed with this recommendation and that the proposed deadline of 1st December 2023 was achievable.

Recommendation No. 13

JF advised that clarification of the recommendation's wording to clarify the scope of the changes required was needed from the HMICFRS. She explained that it was important to understand whether HMICFRS were indicating that the requirement applied purely to cases of misconduct in relation to safeguarding or to all cases of misconduct.

JF said that if it was the latter, then there may be a need to reconsider the wording in the Leading the Service and the Leading and Developing People Fire Standards in addition to the Safeguarding Fire Standard.

MH agreed that it was important to clarify whether HMICFRS were referring to all cases of misconduct, or just those relating to safeguarding in the recommendation. He thought that the intention was all cases of misconduct as being the more likely intention. MH also expressed a view that it was not clear how the four bullet points listed within the recommendation had been selected by HMICFRS.

Having discussed the recommendation, the Board agreed that clarification of the recommendation 13's wording was needed and concluded that the proposed actions for this

recommendation were appropriate. It agreed that the target completion date was probably achievable, subject to no delays in the legislation being passed and any feedback received through the NFCC consultation.

When discussing the recommendations generally, AS observed that the language used in several standards might need strengthening in response to this and other recommendations. In terms of achieving this timescale, she proposed that much would depend on the cumulative impact on each standard and on the total number of standards affected by the different recommendations.

JB had some concern that 1st December might not be realistic in respect of all the recommendations.

JF observed that in addition to delivering these recommendations the Fire Standard Team had other work ongoing.

SMcC agreed with JF, and it was decided that in determining whether the Inspectorate's deadlines could be achieved, this had to be considered within the context of the Board's other priorities. There was a need to prioritise the recommendations as the NFCC had limited resources.

Indirect Recommendations with Implications

The Board reviewed nine other recommendations identified as possibly having potential implications for Fire Standards, being Recommendations 1,6,7,9, 12,16, 17, 27 and 28.

After a short discussion, it was agreed that none of these recommendations were for the Fire Standards Board to action.

Regarding Recommendation 7, JF said that if the legislation changed, then the links to it from the Fire Standard would be checked and revised, as required.

Regarding Recommendation 9, it was agreed that clarification should be sought from HMICFRS regarding the reference to, "roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board", as this was incorrect.

With regards to recommendation 28, JF said that the wording of existing standards may need strengthening.

AS referred to the review work that was needed and reminded the Board that a review process for standards was already in place that the Fire Standards Team would follow. She emphasised that the Board should appreciate that where a recommendation would be

supported by the production or revision of guidance, there would be a need to work closely with the NFCC as the Fire Standards Team may be dependent on that work.

It was agreed that the Fire Standards Team would prepare a draft letter for HMICFRS explaining the Board's decisions.

It was also agreed a more detailed Action Plan with timelines would be presented to the July Board meeting.

Decision No: FSB D052 Board agreed to accept the three recommendations directed to it.

Action: FSB A137 Fire Standards Team to draft a letter to HMICFRS explaining the decisions made by the Board and seek the clarifications needed,

Action: FSB A138 Fire Standards Team to develop a detailed action plan to manage the review processes required. This will include a timeline which will be presented at the next Board meeting on 31st July.

Any Other Business

None.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 31st July 13.30 – 16.00 hrs (in person)
Location: Monument, 8 Eastcheap St London EC3M 1AE