

BOARD PAPER

Item Number	Item 4 – Paper 1
Title of Paper	HMICFRS Culture Review Action Plan – Fire Standard Recommendations
Decision or Information	For information
Date of Meeting	31 July 2023
Presented by	Fire Standards Team
Attachments	Appendix A – Recommendations (Extract from HMICFRS Report) Appendix B – Action Plan and Timeline Appendix C – Correspondence with HMICFRS Appendix D – Fire Standards Review Processes

Summary

This paper contains the Action Plan in response to the recommendations directed to the Fire Standards Board in HMICFRS' Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services report.

It confirms what was agreed with the Board at the additional Board meeting held on 13th June 2023 including the detail of the recommendations which were directed at the Board, the timeline showing when review work will take place, and a copy of the agreed FSB' Review Process.

Recommendations and decisions required

The Board is asked to:

- Review and note the paper and confirm if content with progress.

Background Information

This paper lists the recommendations directed towards it from the HMICFRS' Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services report (Appendix A).

The agreed action plan, can be found at Appendix B. This is now being progressed by the Fire Standards Team in conjunction with those within the NFCC also working to address recommendations.

The wording of Recommendation 13 in relation to the handling of misconduct allegations was queried with HMICFRS. They have confirmed that the intention of this recommendation is aimed at

all cases of misconduct, not just those relating to Safeguarding. The correspondence between them and the Chairs is attached at Appendix C.

We can report that the new legislation in relation to Safeguarding has been enacted and links to it on the relevant Fire Standards have been updated.

In addition, the newly developed supporting guidance for services about Safeguarding, which addresses many of the aspects of the recommendations, has been produced and has also been linked to the relevant Fire Standards on the website.

The work outstanding relates to potential wording changes within the Fire Standards themselves.

The agreed review process, which can be found at Appendix D, is being facilitated by the Fire Standards Team. The initial assessments carried out have concluded that the level of change affecting the following Fire Standards is moderate:

- Leading the Service
- Leading and Developing People
- Safeguarding

The steps in the review process for moderate changes are being followed. Workshops are planned in the coming weeks with relevant subject matter experts (SMEs) from within the NFCC and services to support the review process.

The Fire Standards Team will liaise with the FSB Chairs as detailed in the review process.

Conclusions from this process will be reported back to the Board at its next meeting in October.

At this stage it is anticipated the review can be completed within the timescales required, however, this is subject to capacity of the team and access to appropriate SME's.

APPENDIX A – RECOMMENDATIONS

Extract from HMICFRS Values and Culture

Recommendation 8

By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and underpinning guidance. It should:

- clearly state the requirements for background checks undertaken by services.
- clarify the minimum requirements (including levels of DBS checks) for all roles, particularly roles where staff have access to vulnerable members of the public.
- define the standards required to embed a culture across fire and rescue services that empowers all members of staff and local communities to report concerns; and
- be subject to review following any legislative change.

Recommendation 11

By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle staff disclosures, complaints and grievances.

Recommendation 13

By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes. These should include requirements to:

- conduct and complete investigations, whether the staff member under investigation leaves.
- consider whether the incident requires immediate dismissal.
- provide training for staff who are carrying out investigations; and ensure the diversity/neutrality of the investigation panel/person.

APPENDIX B - ACTION PLAN AND TIMELINE

Recommendation	Response	Relevant Fire Standard	Actions Agreed	Proposed Level of Change ¹	Dependencies
8 (Background checks)	<p>Detail required would best sit in supporting guidance.</p> <p>Minor changes to wording in standards may be required.</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>And</p> <p>Leading the Service</p>	<p>Review of wording of <i>outcome</i> and <i>how to achieve</i> sections of standard following NFCC guidance completion and passage of relevant legislation.</p>	Moderate	<p>NFCC Guidance Completion</p> <p>Legislation enacted</p> <p>Availability of Subject Matter Experts to support review process</p>
11 (Staff disclosures, complaints and grievances)	<p>Detail required would best sit in supporting guidance.</p> <p>Minor changes to wording in standards may be required.</p>	<p>Leading and Developing People</p> <p>And</p> <p>Leading the Service</p>	<p>Review wording of <i>outcome</i> and <i>how to achieve</i> sections in both standards in relation to managing staff disclosures, complaints, and grievances.</p> <p>Clarify existing guidance available and linked to standards.</p> <p>Liaise with NFCC and going forward monitor progress of any new</p>	Moderate	<p>NFCC Culture Action Plan Outcomes being delivered.</p> <p>Availability of Subject Matter Experts to support review process</p>

¹ See Appendix XXX - FSB Fire Standards Review Processes

APPENDIX B - ACTION PLAN AND TIMELINE

Recommendation	Response	Relevant Fire Standard	Actions Agreed	Proposed Level of Change ¹	Dependencies
			guidance as and when developed to ensure links to standard(s) are made.		
13 (misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes)	Detail required may best sit in supporting guidance. Existing wording in Leading and Developing People may address this requirement although may need minor changes.	Leading and Developing People And Leading the Service And Safeguarding	Clarify wording of recommendation with HMICFRS in relation to the term misconduct. Review the wordings of the Leading and Developing People, Leading the Service and Safeguarding Fire Standards to ensure these standards contain the right words associated with responsibilities for managing disciplinary cases (both the process and the responsibility for management).	Moderate	NFCC Guidance Completion Legislation enacted Availability of Subject Matter Experts to support review process

APPENDIX B - ACTION PLAN AND TIMELINE

Timeline

Fire Standards	2023												2024											
	Q4 22-23			Q1 23-24			Q2 23-24			Q3 23-24			Q4 23-24			Q1 24-25			Q2 24-25			Q3 24-25		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Resources - Financial Management	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	5,6	7 & 8									
Resources - Asset Management	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3,4	5,6	7	8											
Resources - Procurement	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3,4	5,6	7	8											
Resources - Internal Governance and Assurance	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3,4	5,6	7	8											
Digital and Technology													1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3,4	5,6	7	8
Review: Leading the Service																								
Review: Leadership and People																								
Review: Safeguarding																								
Review: Code of Ethics																								
Review: Operational Competence																								
Review: Operational Preparedness																								
Review: Operational Learning																								
Review: Emergency Response Driver																								

Key for Development Tasks

Stage	Activity and outputs	Time estimate
1	Scoping and planning	2 mths
2	Development work including peer review and production and then sign-off pre-consultation draft	3 mths
3	Consultation period, consultation analysis and report produced, production of post-consultation draft	3 mths
4	FSB Sign off for QA	1 wk
5	Quality Assurance	3 wks
6	FSB Final approval	1 wk
7	Publish	1 wk
8	Launch	2 mths
9	Implementation support, gathering feedback on impact and benefits realisation	Ongoing

APPENDIX C – HMICFRS CORRESPONDENCE

Letters sent to HMICFRS and received from HMICFRS as per Action Plan for Recommendation 13

13th June 2023

Mr Andrew Cooke QPM QL
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BH

Dear Andy,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us this week to discuss the Fire Standards and explore how the Fire Standards Board and the Inspectorate can work together to the benefit of England's Fire and Rescue Service.

The Fire Standards Board met earlier this week to consider the three recommendations that the Values and Culture Report directed to the Board. The Board accepted these recommendations. A worked-up action plan for their delivery will be discussed at the Board's next meeting on the 31st July. We will come back to you after that meeting to confirm the Board's view of its ability to meet the dates for completion referred to in the individual recommendations.

In its discussion of the recommendations, the Board identified areas for which clarification from the Inspectorate would be helpful as detailed below:

Recommendation 13:

By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes.

Is the reference here to "misconduct" referring to all cases of misconduct, gross misconduct or just those related to safeguarding?

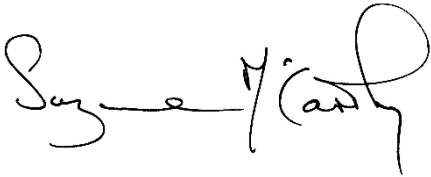
Recommendation 9:

.... make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board.

The Fire Standard Board does not identified roles which require background checks within Fire and Rescue Services. We assume this direction given in this recommendation is a misunderstanding. Any new guidance on safeguarding that is produced jointly by the DBS and the NFCC will, of course, be appropriately referenced and signposted in appropriate Fire Standards once finalised.

Alison and I greatly appreciated your invitation to present at one of your staff events. As you will understand, getting dates in the diary early is always helpful, and we look forward to your team contacting our team with details about this event.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne McCarthy'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Suzanne McCarthy

Chair, Fire Standards Board

Andy Cooke QPM DL

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary
His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire &
Rescue Services

Sent by email:

Suzanne MCarthy
Chair
Fire Standards Board

29 June 2023

Dear Suzanne,

Letter of 13 June 2023

Thank you for your letter of 13 June and for taking the time to meet me and HMI Wilsher. We appreciate the update you have provided on the Fire Standards Board's consideration of our values and culture spotlight report recommendations. I look forward to receiving any updates you may have, following the Board's next meeting on 31 July.

The Board asked for clarification in relation our recommendations, which I have endeavoured to respond to below. I hope this is helpful, but please let me know if you require anything further:

Recommendation 13

Misconduct in relation to this recommendation refers to all cases and alleged cases of misconduct and gross misconduct, including safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes.

Recommendation 9

We would expect that the standard would refer to the relevant guidance regarding the levels of background checks required for different staff groups, in the same way the protection standard refers to the competence framework and the leadership standard refers to the leadership framework.

Our next all-staff event will take place on 2 November; I do hope you are available. As soon as we have a confirmed venue my office will be in touch to establish your availability.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Cooke'.

Andy Cooke QPM DL

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services



Fire Standards Maintenance and Review Processes

Version 2.0

June 2023

REVIEW PROCESSES

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Version Control

Date	Version	Author	Summary
December 2021	1.0	Joy Flanagan	Initial version – content agreed by Board December 2021.
13/6/2023	1.1	Joy Flanagan	Converted from Board Paper content into stand-alone document June 2023
20/6/2023	1.2	Joy Flanagan	Amendments following sharing with FSB Chairs
23/6/2023	2.0	Joy Flanagan	Final amendments and approval by FSB Chairs

REVIEW PROCESSES

Maintenance and Review of Fire Standards

It is essential that Fire Standards remain current and relevant. Therefore, it is important that they are periodically reviewed and that any changes required can be adequately managed.

As set out in the Development Process, at the point of approval for each Fire Standard a periodic review date is set three years after the publication date. The maintenance schedule held by the Fire Standards Team¹, sets out when future Fire Standard periodic reviews are due.

This document details both the periodic and exceptional review processes.

Periodic Review

The purpose of the periodic review is to assess the continued relevance of the standard's content three years after publication and revise, as necessary. While not exhaustive, the current periodic review process takes into consideration:

- how the standards have been received and acted upon by services, informed by feedback directly via the NFCC Implementation Support Team or other sources;
- external influences on the sector or drivers for change that have or are likely to have an impact on a Fire Standard, such as new or amended legislation;
- external reviews or inquiry outcomes that generate learning and may propose new ways of working for services based on that learning;
- feedback or recommendations made by HMICFRS or based on its inspection findings; and
- feedback from services through the network of Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) in liaison with the NFCC implementation team.

Following review, the nature and level of change required will be assessed by the Fire Standards Team and proposals will be made to the Board for consideration and agreement.

Exceptional Review Process

There may be instances where a Fire Standard will require an earlier review outside of the normal review process. The Exceptional Review process explains how this type of review is managed.

The Exceptional Review Process may be initiated due to a variety of reasons with information or requests for change coming from differing and multiple sources.

¹ At time of publishing this process, the resources support the FSB are provided by the NFCC.

REVIEW PROCESSES

Upon receiving information or a change request, the Fire Standards Team would:

1. record the request and advise the Chairs (subject to the potential level of change required)
2. conduct an assessment of the extent and urgency of the change requested
3. share the findings from the assessment and any proposals for action with the FSB Chairs for consideration and agreement. (The Board would be informed subject to the level of change identified.)

Should a change be considered necessary, the Exceptional Review process has three possible “change levels:”

- Minor change
- Moderate change
- Major change

The definition of each of these is explained in the table below:

Type of Change	Definition
Minor	A small change to the Fire Standard which does not change the fundamental meaning of the standard or how services achieve it. Examples of this include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • typo or missing punctuation • broken web links • the addition of links to any new supporting information or legislation
Moderate	A moderate change to the Fire Standard which does not change the fundamental meaning of the standard or how services achieve it. Examples of this include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a revision to language in the standard providing clarification to readers • conclusions from learning or recommendations from external sources • new guidance or tools made available • significant additions or changes to other components of the standard
Major	A major change to the Fire Standard wording or supporting guidance and information which does change the fundamental meaning of the standard or how services achieve it, therefore will require engagement and consultation. Examples of this include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wording that alters the fundamental meaning of the agreed outcome of the standard, or the activities a service must do to achieve it; • adds any new activities to what a service must do to achieve the standard.

Once a decision about the level of change has been identified, the actions below will be instigated:

Minor Change

1. Any minor change will be considered and approved by the nominated responsible manager for supporting the FSB and fire standards development, review and maintenance (responsible manager).
2. The responsible manager will present the change and rationale for the change to the FSB Chairs (Chairs) for confirmation that it can progress as a minor change.

REVIEW PROCESSES

3. The Board will be informed at the next scheduled meeting of any changes of this nature.
4. Communications to services, the NFCC Implementation Team and other stakeholders about any change made once it has been published (dependant on the extent and impact of the change).

Moderate Change

1. Any moderate change will initially be considered by the responsible manager.
2. The responsible manager will present the change and rationale for the change to the Chairs.
3. The Chairs will review and decide whether to approve the change.
4. Should the Chairs not reach a decision about the change or feel it requires discussion by all Board members, they will put the issue to the Board.
5. If the Chairs have decided on the issue, depending on the extent and urgency of the change, the Board will be informed either at the next scheduled meeting or via email.
6. Communications to services, the NFCC Implementation Team and other stakeholders about any change made once it has been published.

Major Change

1. The requirement for any major change with rationale will be presented to the Board for consideration and decision.
2. Should the Board approve, the Fire Standards Development Process will be instigated, including commissioning, consultation on changes and full Board approval.

Re-Publication

On completion of any change, with approval at the levels described above, the Fire Standards Team will then publish the revised Fire Standard. Depending on the extent and impact of the change, services and other stakeholders will be notified through the usual communication channels.

As part of the review process, the Periodic Review date will be reconsidered and, in agreement with either the FSB Chairs or the Board, may be appropriately extended. This is dependent on the extent of the change being made and where that Fire Standard is within its periodic review cycle.

Change Request Checklist

- Change request recorded on the Change Request Log by the Fire Standards Team.
- FSB Chairs alerted and assessment of level of change conducted.
- Findings of assessment shared and steps to carry out review followed in accordance with the agree level of change needed.
- Publication of revised Fire Standard.
- Appropriate communications and engagement to notify services and stakeholders of the revised Fire Standard.
- Action taken recorded in the Change Request Log by the Fire Standards Team.

Change Request Flow Chart

