

Title of Standard (working title to be finalised post-consultation)	Internal Governance and Assurance
Business Area/Capability	Enabling
Sponsoring NFCC Committee	Improvement
Desired Outcome	
<p>A fire and rescue service whose governing body and community have confidence in it and its people because they are assured that the strategic objectives and priorities for the service, identified through its community risk management and other strategic planning activities, have been translated into delivery and organisational development plans that are clear and understood by all within the service. It manages change and transformation through effective projects and programmes which support the service and its continued organisational development.</p> <p>The service has an internal governance structure and business planning processes which enables its senior leaders to maintain comprehensive oversight of its internal activities to ensure them that the service is operating effectively. It has the necessary and appropriate levels of delegated authority to enable its leaders and people to make progress against its delivery plans, and make evidence-based and ethical decisions in a structured way, avoiding unnecessary internal bureaucracy. It takes a proactive and reflective approach to managing corporate risks.</p> <p>The service has a learning culture which informs its business planning processes and considers insights such as internal and external feedback; inspection outcomes; new innovations or developments; and changes in risk to, or demand from, its community. It plans, reviews, and regularly evaluates what it does, to make effective use of its resources in order to identify opportunities to improve productivity and operate more efficiently.</p> <p>It monitors its performance against its plans and provides assurance it is delivering against these. It conducts its business in accordance with the law and demonstrates it does so by reporting progress in a consistent manner, which is published and shared in a clear and accessible manner to all of its audiences.</p> <p>Its internal change and improvement projects are managed through robust development, approval and initiation processes to ensure such projects are aligned to the vision and strategic objectives of the service. Projects are coordinated and successfully executed because the service recognises the value, where appropriate, of utilising specialist skills and following industry standards to lead and manage them.</p>	

What is required to achieve the Fire Standard

A fire and rescue service **must**:

- 1) have a business planning process and cycle to support organisational development which is understood by its people and enables it to:
 - a) develop and monitor relevant functional delivery plans in line with the vision and strategic objectives of the service, agreed by its governing body and senior leadership;
 - b) clarify those who are responsible and accountable for the business planning process and cycle and delivery against agreed plans across the service;
 - c) co-ordinate all work designed to drive change, and which contribute to organisational development including managing and mitigating associated risks;
 - d) remain agile and able to adapt plans in response to changing demands;
 - e) continuously evaluate its performance through internal audit or self-assessment;
 - f) consider all forms of feedback to measure progress and inform forward plans and new projects or initiatives, to ensure it remains efficient, effective and compliant with legislation and standards;
 - g) produce the annual statement of assurance and any other performance related reports or evaluations in line with its business planning cycle;
 - h) appropriately consider business cases for new work, projects or initiatives ensuring that any associated costs and resources have been forecast accurately and remain monitored, if agreed; and
 - i) identify and coordinate the management of risks associated with delivering its functional plans associated with its project and programme plans.
- 2) have a clear internal structure with appropriate governance arrangements that ensure:
 - a) all internal decision-making boards, groups, or regular meetings have clear terms of reference which are regularly reviewed and include agreed levels of delegated authority to enable effective decision making;
 - b) progress against delivery and project or programme plans are monitored, scrutinised and challenged to ensure objectives are being achieved within agreed timescales and budgets, and, if necessary, pausing work; and
 - c) the service can provide its annual statement of assurance evidencing its compliance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework, providing information about its performance against its community risk management plan and finance, governance and operational matters.

- 3) ensure that organisational decisions and the measures implemented support equality, diversity, and inclusivity, are non-discriminatory and that appropriate impact assessments are undertaken.
- 4) utilise good communication and engagement to build trusting relationships with both internal and external stakeholders.
- 5) have arrangements in place to enable it to receive and act on feedback about its business planning and project management processes through proactive staff and stakeholder engagement.

A fire and rescue service **should**:

- 6) utilise recognised projects, programme and change management methodologies to ensure impacts are understood, intended outcomes are delivered, and benefits are realised. This incorporates, but is not limited to, managing the following aspects:
 - a) risks, issues, and dependencies
 - b) budgets
 - c) post-project lessons learnt and evaluation results
- 7) support organisational development using identified learning to tailor and improve what it delivers to the community by:
 - a) identifying, capturing, evaluating, and sharing learning which could benefit the service and others, engaging with national learning arrangements where they exist; and
 - b) collaborating and learning from other services, benchmarking performance enabling more accurate comparisons with others.
- 8) recognise when it may need support and draw on the appropriate networks, national guidance, and tools to support its own organisational development.
- 9) maximise opportunities gained from supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) network by sharing learning and experiences, collaborating with others, and contributing to the continual improvement of the service.

Expected benefits of the achieving the Fire Standard

1. Continuously improved quality of service provided to the public.
2. Effectively lead and manage the service evidenced by its transparent ways of working and accountable leadership.
3. More productive, motivated, and efficient workforce.
4. Improved levels of recruitment and retention.
5. Internal cultures and positive working environments that are open to learning, self-evaluation and receiving feedback.

Legal Requirements or mandatory duties

[Fire and rescue national framework for England](#) (specifically sections 3.13, 3.14, 4.6, 7.12 –7.16)

Linked qualifications, accreditations or Fire Standards

[Code of Ethics](#)

[Community Risk Management Planning](#)

[Communication And Engagement](#)

[Data Management](#)

[Emergency Planning and Resilience](#)

[Leading The Service](#)

[Leading and Developing People](#)

Procurement and Asset Management (in draft)

Guidance and supporting information

- [Statements of assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Leading the fire sector – Governance Support](#)
- [Leading the Fire Sector: oversight of fire and rescue service performance](#)
 - [Fire Authority Members' Guide](#)
 - [The Role of Fire and Rescue Authority Members](#)
- [Political Oversight of Fire and Rescue Service Performance](#)
 - [Effective FRA Governance in Times of Crisis](#)
- [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities](#)
 - [The Good Scrutiny Guide](#)
 - [A Councilor's Workbook on Scrutiny](#)
 - [Diverse by Design Guide](#)
 - [Fire and Rescue service national framework](#)
 - [CIPFA's code of corporate governance](#)