BOARD PAPER

FIRE STANDARDS BOARD

Item Number	Item 5 – Paper 1
Title of Paper	**Fire Standards Progress Update and Chairs' Report**
Decision or Information	For information and decision
Date of Meeting	4 December 2025
Presented by	Fire Standards Team
Attachments	**Appendix A:** Operational Competence and Operational Preparedness Fire Standards Post-Consultation Report **Appendix B:** Code of Ethics Review Report

Summary

This paper provides an update on the progress made in reviewing and maintaining the suite of Fire Standards. It also gives an update on the engagements undertaken by the Fire Standards Board Chairs and the NFCC Implementation Team.

The Board is asked to:

- note the contents of this paper;
- approve the following reviewed Fire Standards for publication:
    - Operational Competence; and
    - Operational Preparedness
- approve the reviewed Code of Ethics Fire Standard for consultation

Exceptional and Periodic Reviews

- **Operational Competence and Operational Preparedness Fire Standards**
  The Fire Standard Team (FST) engaged with the NFCC Operational Response and Control Team to assess the Operational Competency and Operational Preparedness Fire Standards to ensure these standards remained accurate and relevant. Both Fire Standards underwent a consultation from 1st May to 8 June 2025. The FST have worked through the consultation feedback and the post-consultation report. The proposed standards for publication are at Appendix A.

  The Board is asked to approve the reviewed Operational Competence and Operational Preparedness Fire Standards for publication.

- **Operational Learning**
  Following approval from the Board to expand the Operational Learning Fire Standard to Organisational Learning, the FST have conducted two workshops with subject matter experts from across the sector and from within the NFCC Organisational Learning team. The team expects to hold two further workshops in December 2025 before sharing with the NFCC Organisational Learning (OL) Board in January 2025 for agreement. The draft Organisational Learning Fire Standard is expected to be shared with the Fire Standards Board in early 2026 for approval for consultation.

- **Code of Ethics Fire Standard**
  With the support of the NFCC PCL Hub, the FST held two workshops in May and June 2025 to review the Code of Ethics Fire Standard. Work on this Fire Standard was paused whilst the Board deliberated over the approach to handling misconduct.

  In line with the proposals within Paper *3*: Approach to Misconduct Service Self-Assurance, the Board is presented with the proposed changes to the Code of Ethics Fire Standard in Appendix B. The Board is asked to approve the reviewed Code of Ethics Fire Standard for consultation.

- **Protection Fire Standard**
  With support of the Protection Hub, the Protection Fire Standard underwent a review with practitioners via two workshops in May and June 2025, which were followed up by a further workshop with the NFCC Strategic Protection Forum in July to clarify the technical content of the Fire Standard.

  Following the Fire Standards Board meeting in October 2025, the standard was opened for consultation. The consultation closed in November, and the working group will review feedback in December 2025. Any additional proposed amendments will be shared with the NFCC Protection Committee in January 2025 before being shared with the Fire Standards Board for approval to publish.

- **Safeguarding**
  The FST, with the support of the NFCC Prevention Hub, have been in contact with the NFCC Safeguarding Lead, Donna Bentley, to discuss the review of the Safeguarding Fire Standard. A small group has reviewed the Standard and no changes have been proposed. This standard is due to be shared with a broader group of safeguarding practitioners and the Prevention Committee before being shared with the Board in January 2025.

- **Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard**
  The FST have engaged with and coordinated a group of subject matter experts. A workshop is planned to take place in December 2025. Further information on the review will be shared with the Board in due course.

- **Data Management Fire Standard**
  With support from the NFCC Digital, Data and Technology hub, the Data Management Fire Standard underwent review with practitioners in October and November 2025. The proposed amendments to the Data Management Fire Standard will be presented to the NFCC Data Lead, Sally Wilson, and the NFCC Data Board in early January 2026 for agreement, before being shared with the Fire Standards Board for approval.

HMICFRS State of Fire and Rescue 2024-2025

The latest HMICFRS State of Fire report was published in November 2025 reflecting observations following the third full round of inspections.

The support provided by the Fire Standards Board to the sector to help it continuously improve is recognised in the report as is the importance of aligning with national standards to perform better in the relevant inspection areas. The report highlighted specific areas where services continue to struggle, including productivity, leadership and workforce planning, all of which those services adopting the suite of Fire Standards had been able to better address. The challenges of poor values, culture and behaviour and issues around equality, diversity and inclusion remain, which point to the continued importance of supporting services to fully embed both the two leadership Fire Standards and the Code of Ethics Fire Standard into their organisations.

Communications and Engagement

Review of Chairs' Engagements

The Chairs attended the following engagements:

- Meeting with MHCLG – 20th November 2025
- Meeting with Minister Samantha Dixon – 25th November 2025
- MAGFRR – 27th November 2025

Implementation Support Team Engagement

The NFCC Implementation Team continues to support services with embedding the Fire Standards through an ongoing programme of workshops. The following table shows the team's engagement with services since September 2025:

Engagements September - November 2025	Participant Numbers	Service Numbers
Fire Standard enquiries and engagements	143	41
Thematic Leadership Fire Standards – Regional workshop x 2 • Communications and Engagement • Talent Management	10	5
Fire Standards Implementation workshops x 9: • Procurement and Commercial • CRMP x 2 • Fire Control • Protection • Digital and Cyber • Communications and Engagement • Internal Governance and Assurance • Emergency Preparedness and Resilience	133	37

Evaluation of Fire Standards

In support of the evaluation work, the team have been gathering evidence from the Fire Standard Implementation workshops and is seeing patterns for greater demand for particular Fire Standard workshops. The team have also been gathering additional data about which NFCC products are being adopted in support of the evaluation work.

Headline Numbers

The Implementation team have delivered 30 Fire Standard workshops and 12 Leadership Thematic regional workshops since November 2024~~5~~ and continue to schedule a workshop for most weeks. The individual and thematic regional workshops have been attended by over 700 participants from 43 English FRS.

The data on the next page is from the 30 individual functional workshops.

Most participants attend the workshop to increase their understanding of Fire Standards but there are other areas of interest including reassurance, advice and learning.

The team is delivering workshops based both around the review schedule and demand from services, normally the team delivers one Fire Standard workshop per week. However, when the revised CRMP Fire Standard was published, the spike in demand led to an additional weekly workshop in October.

The following table gives an update of individual Fire Standard workshops between October 2024 – October 2025. This data provides a snapshot of responses from the Implementation Fire Standards workshops since October 2024. The team continues to gather this data during each workshop, which is being shared with the NFCC Analysis and Insight Team for the wider evaluation of Fire Standards and products work.

During the workshops, the team asks which products have been adopted with the table below indicating which NFCC products services are using to support the embedding of each Fire Standard.

Fire Standard	Total Attendance	Total Workshops
Code of Ethics	32	2
Comms and Engagement	44	3
CRMP	46	3
Data Management	29	2
Digital and Cyber	55	3
Emergency Preparedness and Resilience	41	2
Fire Control	55	3
Fire Investigation	33	2
Internal Governance and Assurance	15	2
Ops Competence	27	1
Ops Learning	27	1
Ops Preparedness	20	1
Procurement and Commercial	54	3
Protection	46	2
Grand Total	**524**	**30**

Fire Standard	Top 3 Products per Fire Standard
Code of Ethics	
Core Code of Ethics	8
Implementation Tool	8
Core Code of Ethics Guidance	7
Comms and Engagement	
Prevention Engagement Calendar	29
Leadership Framework	10
Stakeholder and Public Engagement Toolkit	9
CRMP	
Community risk management planning strategic framework	16
Definition of Risk	7
Data and Business Intelligence Guidance	6
Data Management	
Data Management Framework	13
Data Quality Assessment Methodology	8
Unconference Series	6
Digital and Cyber	
DDaT Teams Channels	4
Implementation Tool	4
Digital /AI Working Groups	4
Emergency Preparedness and Resilience	
NFCC National Organisational Learning	14
NFCC Operational Guidance	13
Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Guidance	11
Fire Control	
Survival Guidance	14
Emergency Call Management and Mobilising	14
Emergency Call Management: People at Risk	13
Fire Investigation	
NFCC Fire Investigation competency framework document	23
Code of Practice for Investigators of Fires and Explosions for the Justice Systems in the UK	18
Other	5
Internal Governance and Assurance	
NFCC Implementation Tool	10
NFCC Data Management Framework	3
NFCC Evaluation Methods	1
Ops Preparedness	
SGA	1
Implementation Toolkit	1
Learning library	1
Procurement and Commercial	
Bluelight Commercial	3
Workplace	1
Protection	
Competency Framework	9
The VLE	8
The Strategic Protection Forum	2

FIRE STANDARDS BOARD

OPERATIONAL COMPETENCE & OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS FIRE STANDARDS REVIEW

Purpose

This report contains information on the Operational Competence and Operational Preparedness Fire Standards following the consultation which took place between May and June 2025.

The report has been produced for the Fire Standards Board (FSB) to provide assurance and confidence in the approach taken and to request the Board to approve the Operational Competence and Operational Preparedness Fire Standards to be published with the proposed amendments.

Summary

A review of the two Fire Standards took place in December 2024 with support of NFCC Operational Response and Fire Control Hub.

This work was supported by the NFCC Operational Preparedness, Response and Resilience Committee Chair, John Roberts.

Following the review and proposed amendments to the standard, the Fire Standards Board agreed that a consultation was the most appropriate next step. A singular consultation covering the two Fire Standards took place between 6 May – 6 June.

Consultation Responses

A total of 19 responses were received, including:

- 16 English Fire and Rescue Services
- 1 Devolved nation (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)
- Fire Brigades Union

Responding services include:

Bedfordshire	**Hertfordshire**	**North Yorkshire**
Dorset and Wiltshire	**Lancashire**	**Tyne and Wear**
East Sussex	**London Fire Brigade**	**West Sussex**
Essex	**Merseyside**	**Warwickshire**
Hampshire and IOW	**Norfolk**	**West Midlands**

The Consultation

47 comments were analysed, some of which contained multiple points and opinions. Each of these have been reviewed and categorised into the following:

a. Agreed;

b. Partially agreed;
c. Noted; or
d. Declined.

The consultation feedback provided covered a range of topics including:

- Clarity of language and ease of reading.
- Broader queries relating to guidance and legislation

Amendments suggested by respondents that were **declined** included topics such as:

- Changing terminology which is consistent across other Fire Standards

Proposed Amendments to the Operational Competence and Operational Preparedness Fire Standards

Following a review of the consultation feedback, the group agreed to the following additional amendments:

Please note that the below list outlines only new amendments following the consultation. It does not include the proposals that were agreed following the initial review which were taken to consultation.

Desired Outcome

- **Operational Competence**: rewording of first paragraph to clarify employees should be competent to apply hazards and control measures.
- **Operational Preparedness**: inclusion of employees as well as the community when considering who should be kept safe.

To Achieve This Fire Standard

- **Operational Competence:** Inclusion of Local Resilience Forums in point 12.
  Operational Preparedness: Inclusion of Local Resilience Forums in point 12.

Expected Benefits of Achieving the Fire Standard

- **Operational Competence:** No additional amendments agreed
- **Operational Preparedness:** Removal of benefit 5

Legal Requirements and Mandatory Duties

- **Operational Competence:**
- **Operational Preparedness:** Removal of benefit 5

Linked qualifications, accreditations or Fire Standards

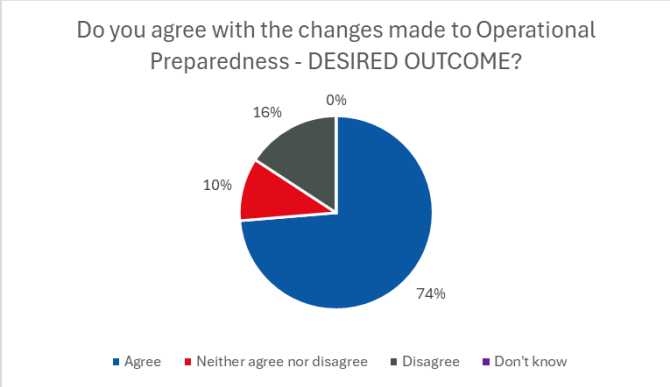
No additional amendments agreed

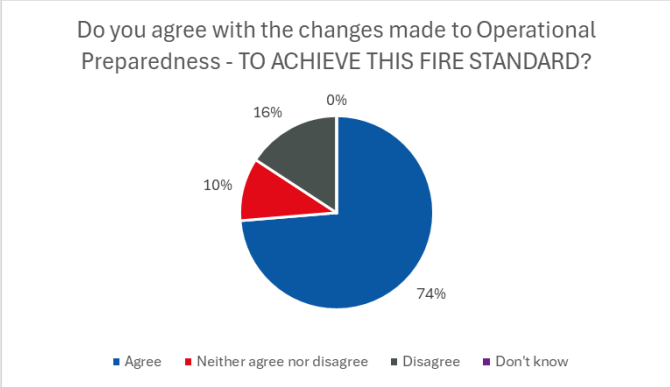
Guidance and supporting information

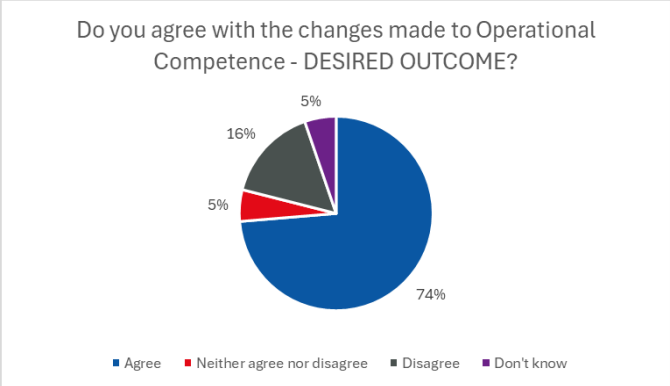
- **Operational Competence: Inclusion** of the following guidance:
  - UKRO Extrication Framework
  - NFCC Emergency Response Driver and Instructor Framework
  - NFCC Leadership Framework
  - NFCC Core Learning Pathways
- **Operational Preparedness:** No additional amendments agreed

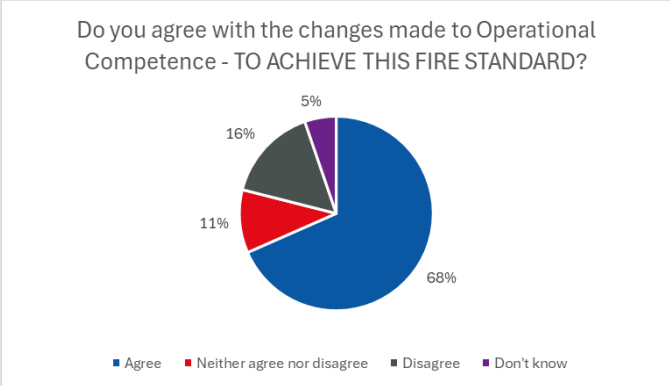
Consultation Questions – Summary of Responses

Responses to questions on the content of the Fire Standard are summarised below.









Conclusion

The subsequent amendments to the Operational Competence and Operational Preparedness Fire Standards were shared with the wider Operational Preparedness Response and Resilience Committee Chair, John Roberts and with NFCC Head of Operational Response and Fire Control, Kerry Blair who confirmed they were content with the amendments.

The Board is now asked to approve the Operational Competence and Operational Preparedness Fire Standards for publication.

OPERATIONAL COMPETENCE FIRE STANDARD

FIRE STANDARDS BOARD

The below table shows the original Operational Competence Fire Standard which was published in 2021 in the left column. The right column shows the amendments following consultation in blue. Minor changes where text may have been moved have not been highlighted.

Title of Standard	**Operational Competence**
Review Date	10/12/2024
Reference Number	FSD-RSP02b
OPERATIONAL COMPETENCE FIRE STANDARD AS PUBLISHED IN 2021	**POST-CONSULTATION PROPOSALS JUL 2025** **Post-consultation proposals are in blue**
Desired Outcome	
A fire and rescue service with competent operational and fire control personnel, who have been trained to use the hazard and control measure approach provided in the National Operational Guidance, applying risk assessment, decision-making and risk management skills. Operational competence provides the structure for a safe and effective response to emergencies, whether: • As a single service • Working with other local or regional fire and rescue services • Working with the National Resilience capabilities • Working in a multi-agency structure The Health and Safety Executive publication, Managing for health and safety, states:	A fire and rescue service that can keep the public safe ~~because it has competent~~ operational and fire control employees who have been trained and are competent to apply the hazard and control measure approach provided in NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance. The service enables its employees to effectively apply risk assessment, decision-making and risk management skills to provide a safe and effective response to emergencies, whether: • As a single service • Working with other local or regional fire and rescue services • Working with the National Resilience capabilities • Working in a multi-agency structure

"Competence is the ability to undertake responsibilities and perform activities to a recognised standard on a regular basis. It combines practical and thinking skills, knowledge and experience." The same publication also states: "The competence of individuals is vital, whether they are employers, managers, supervisors, employees or contractors, especially those with safety-critical roles. It ensures they recognise the risks in their activities and can apply the right measures to control and manage those risks."	
What is required to meet the Fire Standard	
A fire and rescue service **must**: 1. Comply with health and safety legislation when delivering an operational response 2. Base their operational policies, procedures and tailored guidance on National Operational Guidance, unless by exception its content is not relevant to the service 3. Have policies, procedures and tailored guidance in place, that provide operational and fire control personnel with current information and instructions about foreseeable hazards and the control measures that can be applied 4. Base their training for operational and fire control personnel on National Operational Guidance 5. Train operational and fire control personnel to a level of competence that enables them to carry out operational	A fire and rescue service **must**: 1. Have a strategy to embed NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance to maintain employee competency 2. Comply with health and safety legislation when delivering an operational response 3. Base its operational policies, procedures and tailored guidance on NFCC Operational Guidance, unless by exception its content is not relevant to the service 4. Have policies, procedures and tailored guidance in place, that provide operational and fire control employees with current information about foreseeable hazards and the control measures used to reduce the risks arising from those hazards 5. Base its training for operational and fire control employees on NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance

activities safely and effectively; this includes the ability to recognise hazards and put effective control measures in place to mitigate those hazards 6. Be following the tactical actions provided in the suite of National Operational Guidance, unless by exception a tactical action is not relevant to the service 7. Be able to evidence how their policies, procedures and tailored guidance are linked to the training of operational and fire control personnel 8. Be able to evidence any exceptions to National Operational Guidance, with an appropriate impact assessment 9. Develop working arrangements with other fire and rescue services and responder agencies, to improve their operational response to multi-agency incidents To meet this Fire Standard, **competent operational and fire control personnel should**: 10. Be able to evidence the training they have received to maintain their competence 11. Be able to demonstrate their ability to safely and effectively apply risk assessment, decision-making and risk management skills To meet this Fire Standard, **a fire and rescue service may**: 12. Use the training specification component of National Operational Guidance to inform their training needs analysis	6. Train its operational and fire control employees so they are competent to carry out operational activities safely and effectively; this includes the ability to recognise hazards and use control measures to reduce the risks arising from those hazards 7. Deliver the strategic actions provided in the NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance Frameworks, unless by evidenced exception a strategic action is not relevant to the service 8. Follow the tactical actions provided in the NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance frameworks, unless by exception a tactical action is not relevant to the service 9. Be able to evidence how its policies, procedures and tailored guidance are linked to the training of operational and fire control employees 10. Be able to evidence any exceptions to NFCC Operational Guidance or Fire Control Guidance, with an appropriate impact assessment 11. Align relevant policies, procedures and tailored guidance in preparation for working with other fire and rescue services, National Resilience, other Category 1 and Category 2 responders and Local Resilience Forums, to improve its operational response to multi-agency incidents To achieve this Fire Standard, **competent operational and fire control employees should:** 12. Be able to evidence and record the training received to maintain competence through appropriate assessment.

13. Work within regional, national or thematic groups to develop and improve their policies, procedures, tailored guidance and training for operational response	13. Be able to demonstrate their ability to safely and effectively apply risk assessment, decision-making and risk management skills To achieve this Fire Standard, **a fire and rescue service may**: 14. Use the training specification component of NFCC Operational Guidance to inform its training needs analysis 15. Work within regional, national or thematic groups to develop and improve its policies, procedures, tailored guidance and training for operational response
Expected benefits of achieving the Fire Standard	
1. The ability for those outside the service, including coroners or those responsible for matters such as public inquiries, to recognise that the service is delivering a competent operational response 2. For inspectorates, including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and the Health and Safety Executive, to be able to base their expectations of the operational competence of the service on: 3. Adherence to the legislative requirements for operational response 4. How comprehensively the National Operational Guidance has been considered and applied 5. Having competent operational and fire control personnel, who are able to apply risk assessment, decision-making and risk management skills 6. Constant improvement to the quality of service provided to the public	1. The ability for those outside the service, including coroners or those responsible for matters such as public inquiries, to recognise that the service is delivering a competent operational response 2. For inspectorates, including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and the Health and Safety Executive, to be able to base their expectations of the operational competence of the service on: 3. Adherence to the legislative requirements for operational response 4. How comprehensively the NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance has been considered and applied 5. Having competent operational and fire control employees, who are able to apply risk assessment, decision-making and risk management skills 6. Continuous improvement of the quality of service provided to the community

Legal requirements or mandatory duties	
Fire and rescue services are responsible, under legislation and regulations, for developing policies and procedures and to provide information, instruction, training and supervision to their personnel about foreseeable hazards and the control measures used to reduce the risks arising from those hazards. There are many references to relevant legislation and regulations made throughout the National Operational Guidance framework. Some of the fundamental ones are shown below. • **Fire and Rescue Services Act** This act is the principal legislation for the fire and rescue services of England and Wales. It describes the duties and powers placed on the fire and rescue service, in particular: ○ To provide an operational response (sections 7, 8 and 9) ○ The power to respond to other types of emergency (sections 11 and 12) • **Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act** This act imposes a duty on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable: • **The health, safety and welfare at work of all of their employees (section 2)** The health and safety of others is not affected by the work carried out by their employees (section 3)	Fire and rescue services are responsible, under legislation and regulations, for developing policies and procedures and to provide information, instruction, training and supervision to their employees about foreseeable hazards and the control measures used to reduce the risks arising from those hazards. It is recognised that fire and rescue services must comply with a broad list of legislation to undertake their duties. This Fire Standard reflects only the most appropriate legislation to this topic and should not be regarded as exhaustive. Much of the legislation that relates to this Fire Standard can be found on the webpage that describes legislation which applies to all Fire Standards. • Fire and Rescue Services Act • Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act • Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations • Fire Service Order

The act also means that employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work (section 7). • **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations** Regulation 3 states that employers have to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work, and the risks to the health and safety of people not in their employment arising from work carried out. Regulation 4 states that where an employer implements any preventive and protective measures the following principles (in Schedule 1) apply: ○ Avoiding risks ○ Evaluating the risks which cannot be avoided ○ Combating the risks at source ○ Adapting the work to the individual, especially as regards the design of workplaces, the choice of work equipment and the choice of working and production methods, with a view, in particular, to alleviating monotonous work and work at a predetermined work-rate and to reducing their effect on health ○ Adapting to technical progress ○ Replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or the less dangerous ○ Developing a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work, working conditions, social relationships and the influence of factors relating to the working environment	

○ Giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures ○ Giving appropriate instructions to employees Regulation 5 states that every employer has to make and record appropriate arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventive and protective measures.	
Linked qualifications, accreditations or Fire Standards	
• Code of Ethics • Operational preparedness • Operational learning	**Linked qualifications and accreditations** • Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship **Fire Standards** • Operational Preparedness • Operational Learning • Fire Control • Community Risk Management Planning
Guidance and supporting information	

• National Operational Guidance (NOG), in particular:
  ○ The tactical actions for each control measure throughout the suite of guidance
  ○ Supplementary information, in particular where procedural training is provided
• The Operational Response implementation guide
	• NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance, in particular:
	  ○ The Strategic Gap Analysis Tool to measure progress against strategic actions
	  ○ The tactical actions throughout the frameworks
	  ○ The corresponding Training Specifications
	• Foundation material that supports comprehension of the Operational Guidance, Fire Control Guidance and Training Specifications
	• JESIP
	• UKRO Extrication Framework
	• NFCC Emergency Response Driver and Instructor Framework
	• NFCC Leadership Framework
	• NFCC Core Learning Pathways

OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS FIRE STANDARD

FIRE STANDARDS BOARD

Title of Standard	**Operational Preparedness**
Review Date	10/12/2024
Reference Number	FSD-RSP02a

OPERATIONAL COMPETENCE FIRE STANDARD AS PUBLISHED IN 2021	**POST-CONSULTATION PROPOSALS JUL 2025** **Post-consultation proposals are in blue**
Desired Outcome	
A fire and rescue service that is prepared for responding to emergencies, as identified through its risk management planning. Operational preparedness includes having in place: • Competent operational and fire control personnel • Appropriate resources, vehicles, equipment and systems • Comprehensive operational policies, procedures, tailored guidance and training Operational preparedness includes being able to safely and effectively respond to emergencies, whether: • As a single service • Working with other local or regional fire and rescue services • Working with the National Resilience capabilities • Working in a multi-agency structure	A fire and rescue service that is prepared for responding to emergencies, as identified through the Community Risk Management Planning, in order to keep the public and employees safe. It is prepared to meet its operational needs because it has in place and actively manages its: • Competent operational and fire control employees • Appropriate resources, including people, vehicles, equipment and systems • Comprehensive operational policies, procedures, tailored guidance and training Operational preparedness includes being able to safely and effectively respond to emergencies in a timely manner, whether: • As a single service • Working with other local or regional fire and rescue services

	• Working with the National Resilience capabilities • Working in a multi-agency structure
In order to prepare for and provide an operational response, fire and rescue services **must** be able to evidence consideration of and actions taken in relation to these key activities: 1. Legislative responsibilities 2. Data management 3. Risk management 4. Health and safety management 5. Site-Specific Risk Information 6. Emergency response plans 7. Operational assurance 8. Competence and training, including validation and revalidation 9. Operational learning 10. Participation in legal proceedings relating to operational training or activity To achieve this Fire Standard, a fire and rescue service **must**: 11. Undertake all appropriate risk assessments, as required under legislation, to prepare for an operational response 12. Review existing cover models, resources, equipment and training against all appropriate risk assessments 13. Carry out capabilities-based planning to support emergency preparedness and response from a national to a local level	To achieve this Fire Standard, a fire and rescue service must: 1. Have an operational strategy that is based on a thorough assessment of risk to the community 2. Be able to evidence consideration of and actions taken in relation to the below key activities, when preparing and providing an operational response: a) Legislative responsibilities b) Data management c) Risk management d) Health and safety management e) Site-Specific Risk Information f) Emergency response plans g) Operational assurance h) Competence and training, including validation and revalidation i) Organisational learning, including Operational learning j) Participation in legal proceedings 3. Undertake all appropriate risk assessments, as required under legislation, to prepare for an operational response 4. Review existing cover models, resources, equipment and training against all appropriate risk assessments

14. Determine their responsibilities for operational response and be fully prepared to deliver them 15. Have a health and safety policy for the operational environment that clearly outlines the responsible parties and their obligations 16. Undertake a review of how the organisation is structured and functions, to confirm its ability to support operational preparedness; if there are any gaps identified there should be a clear plan for making appropriate changes 17. Develop and embed operational policies, procedures and tailored guidance based on the National Operational Guidance, unless by evidenced exception its content is not relevant to the service 18. Deliver the strategic actions provided in the suite of National Operational Guidance, unless by evidenced exception a strategic action is not relevant to the service; the strategic gap analysis tool may be used to support this process 19. Train its operational and fire control personnel to use the hazard and control measure approach provided in the National Operational Guidance, applying risk assessment, decision-making and risk management skills 20. Align relevant policies, procedures and tailored guidance in preparation for working with other fire and rescue services or responder agencies	5. Carry out capabilities-based planning to support emergency preparedness and response from a national, regional or local level 6. Determine its responsibilities for operational response and be fully prepared to deliver them 7. Have a health and safety policy for the operational and fire control environment that clearly outlines the responsible parties and their obligations 8. Undertake a review of how the organisation is structured and functions, to confirm its ability to support operational preparedness; if there are any gaps identified there should be a clear plan for making appropriate changes 9. Develop and embed operational policies, procedures and tailored guidance based on the NFCC Operational Guidance, unless by evidenced exception its content is not relevant to the service 10. Deliver the strategic actions provided in the suite of NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance frameworks, unless by evidenced exception a strategic action is not relevant to the service; the strategic gap analysis tool may be used to support this process 11. Train its operational and fire control employees to carry out operational activities safely and effectively; this includes the ability to recognise hazards and use control measures to reduce the risks arising from those hazards

	12. Align relevant policies, procedures and tailored guidance in preparation for working with other fire and rescue services, National Resilience, other Category 1 and Category 2 responders and Local Resilience Forums, to improve its operational response to multi-agency incidents To meet this Fire Standard, a fire and rescue service may: 13. Use the Training Specifications to inform its training needs analysis 14. Work within regional, national or thematic groups to develop and improve its policies, procedures, tailored guidance and training for operational response
Expected benefits of achieving the Fire Standard	
1. Comprehensive and accurate risk management processes to protect fire and rescue service employees and the community, backed by national expertise 2. Simpler processes for the development of policies, procedures and tailored guidance by aligning methods for the identification of local hazards and control measures with the National Operational Guidance 3. The ability for those outside the service, including coroners or those responsible for matters such as public inquiries, to recognise and acknowledge that the service has a sound body of intelligence and good practice on which its activities are based	1. Comprehensive and accurate risk management processes to protect fire and rescue service employees and the community, backed by national expertise 2. Simpler processes for the development of policies, procedures and tailored guidance, by aligning methods for the identification of local hazards and control measures with NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance 3. The ability for those outside the service, including coroners or those responsible for matters such as public inquiries, to recognise and acknowledge that the service has a sound body of intelligence and good practice on which its activities are based

4. For inspectorates, including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and the Health and Safety Executive, to be able to base their expectations of the operational preparedness of the service on: 1. adherence to the legislative requirements for operational preparedness 2. how comprehensively the National Operational Guidance has been considered and applied 5. Achievement of occupational competence, that is the ability to consistently achieve the stated outcome of workplace performance; competence and training policies should be established for the roles of all employees and, where applicable, they should be based on the National Operational Guidance 6. Constant improvement to the quality of service provided to the public	4. For inspectorates, including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and the Health and Safety Executive, to be able to base their expectations of the operational preparedness of the service on: a. Adherence to the legislative requirements for operational preparedness ○ How comprehensively the NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance has been considered and applied ~~5. Achievement of operational competence, that is the ability to consistently achieve the stated outcome of workplace performance; competence and training policies should be established for the roles of all employees and, where applicable, they should be based on the NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance and Training Specifications~~ 6. Continuous improvement of the quality of service provided to the public
Legal requirements or mandatory duties	
Fire and rescue services are responsible, under legislation and regulations, for developing policies and procedures and to provide information, instruction, training and supervision to their personnel about foreseeable hazards and the control measures used to reduce the risks arising from those hazards.	Fire and rescue services are responsible, under legislation and regulations, for developing policies and procedures and to provide information, instruction, training and supervision to their employees about foreseeable hazards and the control measures used to reduce the risks arising from those hazards. It is recognised that fire and rescue services must comply with a broad list of legislation to undertake their duties. This Fire Standard reflects only the most appropriate legislation to this topic and should not be

There are many references to relevant legislation and regulations made throughout the National Operational Guidance framework. Some of the fundamental ones are shown below.
 	
• **Fire and Rescue Services Act**
This act is the principal legislation for the fire and rescue services of England and Wales. It describes the duties and powers placed on the fire and rescue service, in particular:
  ○ To provide an operational response (sections 7, 8 and 9)
  ○ The power to respond to other types of emergency (sections 11 and 12)
 	
• **Civil Contingencies Act**
The act relates to planning for emergencies, with responsibilities to:
  ○ Assess the risk of an emergency occurring
  ○ Assess the risk of an emergency making it necessary or expedient for the person or body to perform any of their functions
  ○ Maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the person or body is able to continue to perform their functions
  ○ Maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs or is likely to occur the person or
	regarded as exhaustive. Much of the legislation that relates to this Fire Standard can be found on the webpage that describes legislation which applies to all Fire Standards.
	
	• Fire and Rescue Services Act
	• Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act
	• Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations

body is able to perform their functions so far as necessary or desirable for the purpose of: ▪ Preventing the emergency ▪ Reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects ▪ Taking other action in connection with it • **National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies** This captures the range of emergencies that might have a major impact on all, or significant parts of, the UK. It forms the basis for capabilities-based planning to support emergency preparedness and response from a national to a local level, including what responsibilities are placed on emergency responders in order to prepare for them. • **Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act** This act imposes a duty on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable: • **The health, safety and welfare at work of all of their employees (section 2)** This act imposes a duty on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable: ○ The health, safety and welfare at work of all of their employees (section 2) ○ The health and safety of others is not affected by the work carried out by their employees (section 3)	

The act also means that employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work (section 7). • **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations** Regulation 5 states that every employer has to make and record appropriate arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventive and protective measures.	
Linked qualifications, accreditations or Fire Standards	
• Code of Ethics • Operational preparedness • Operational learning	**Linked qualifications and accreditations** • Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship **Fire Standards** • Operational Preparedness • Operational Learning • Fire Control • Community Risk Management Planning
Guidance and supporting information	
National Operational Guidance (NOG), in particular: ○ The section Corporate guidance for operational activity, including the corporate actions ○ The strategic actions for each control measure throughout the suite of guidance ○ Supplementary information, in particular where information about resources or equipment are provided	• NFCC Operational Guidance and Fire Control Guidance, in particular: ○ The Strategic Gap Analysis Tool to measure progress against strategic actions ○ The tactical actions throughout the frameworks ○ The corresponding Training Specifications

• The Operational Response implementation guide • JESIP Joint Doctrine • Health and Safety Executive • Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship • Emergency Service Contact Handling Apprenticeship	• Foundation material that supports comprehension of the Operational Guidance, Fire Control Guidance and Training Specifications • JESIP

APPENDIX B

CODE OF ETHICS FIRE STANDARD REVIEW

Purpose

This report contains information on the process in which the Code of Ethics Fire Standard was reviewed, the findings and subsequent proposed amendments.

The report has been produced for the Fire Standards Board (FSB) to provide assurance and confidence in the approach taken.

Review Process

The review followed the agreed FSB Maintenance Review Process. A working group was established with help from the NFCC People, Culture and Leadership hub and two workshops which took place on 21 May and 23 June 2025.
The working group reviewed each section of the Fire Standard, considering the following:

- The currency of the content – e.g. did the standard cover the topic appropriately? As it was one of the first standards to be produced, were there lessons learnt from more recently developed standards that could be brought into this one?
- Was there any new legislation, guidance or qualifications that impacted the content within the standard?
- Were the benefits appropriate and measurable?

Working Group Members

The working group consisted of HR and People specialist leaders from across Fire and Rescue Services within England. The services represented amongst the group were:

- Humberside
- Nottinghamshire
- South Yorkshire
- Suffolk
- Surrey

This work was also supported by Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer and NFCC People, Culture and Leadership Committee Chair and Head of the NFCC People, Culture and Leadership hub, Abigail Hopewell.

Findings

The working group discussed each element of the standard in detail. They agreed that the Desired Outcome section should be adapted to better reflect the sector as it has matured since the initial publication of the standard. They agreed that this section should be written in a way that services can demonstrate they can both meet it and be held accountable against it. They proposed amending the first paragraph which referenced services

embedding the principles of the Core Code to employees respecting and following the principles.

The group agreed that organisational learning was a key factor for services in their continual improvement and should be made clear throughout the standard. The group wished to steer away from the term compliant when referring to the adoption of the Core Code, they felt that this led the sector into tick box style behaviour and should instead be striving to continuously improve.

The group discussed the importance of all employees role modelling behaviour. They said that leaders have an important role to play in this as well as being accountable for setting the culture and managing it. They said that everybody should be able to safely challenge behaviours that do not meet the principles of the Core Code.

The standard in its original format said that services must not detract from the Core Code of Ethics (Core Code). The group agreed that the sector has since matured and said that services had a clear understanding that the Core Code was to be embedded in its entirety.

Proposed Amendments to the Code of Ethics Fire Standard

Following the review, the group agreed to the following proposed amendments (amendments can be found in bold):

Desired Outcome

- Amendment: A focus from the service embedding the principles of the Core Code was amended to an outcome where employees respect and follow the principles of the Core Code.
- New theme: The focus on the Core Code being at the core of service delivery was brought to the forefront of the desired outcome.
- New theme: Leaders accountability for the culture within the organisation and their responsibility to role model positive behaviours.

To Achieve This Fire Standard

The responsibility of the fire and rescue service as an organisation:

The group largely agreed with this section, however they believed that some of the language could be simplified and be made more proactive. They said there should be a new point relating to the continuous improvement of the service through the monitoring and evaluating of employee performance and relating to culture.

- Amended point 1 "**Proactively** adopt the Core Code and be able to demonstrate that the service is fully committed **to fulfilling it**"
- Amended point 2 was simplified for clarity "**Demonstrate how the Core Code is embedded** into its decision-making, policies, procedures, processes, and associated guidance"
- Amended point 3: A minor clarification "Provide training and support to all those who work for, or on behalf of, a service to **ensure they fully understand their responsibilities** in upholding the Core Code"
- New point 5: "**Monitor and measure performance in relation to culture and the Core Code so that outcomes can be evaluated and learned from to continuously improve."**
- Amendment**:** original point 9 "**ensure strategies, policies and performance measures are in place to promote and embed a positive and inclusive culture**." which was under the role of governing bodies, was moved to new point 4, under the section which related to the role of all fire and rescue services.

Those who work for a fire and rescue service:
The group said that the previous language used in this section was passive and there should be a more proactive approach in role modelling behaviours. Following the recent HMICFRS thematic report on the handling of misconduct, they suggested that mechanisms should be in place to safely challenge or raise concerns when behaviour does not align with the Core Code.

- Amendment to point 6: "Understand and respect the Core Code **and their responsibility to role model this through their behaviour**;"
- New point: Point 7 "**Actively promote the principles of the Core Code and use mechanisms to safely challenge or raise concerns about behaviours that do not meet them"**

Role of governing bodies:
The group said that they would like to see governing bodies playing a proactive role in assuring themselves that services are upholding ethical behaviours and principles set out in the Core Code. They would also like to see governing bodies providing support to leaders when they are managing behaviour that is inconsistent with the Core Code.

- Amendment: Points 7 and 9 of the published standard were merged into new point 8 (referring to governing bodies) "**Hold** the Chief Fire Officer to account by scrutinising **strategies, policies and plans and ensuring these are consistent with the Core Code"**
- Amendment to point 9: Inclusion of the provision of support to leaders when managing behavioural issues "Play a proactive role in challenging and **providing support to service leaders and each other** on any behaviour that is inconsistent with the Code."

Expected Benefits of Achieving the Fire Standard

The group were largely happy with the benefits outlined within the standard, and wished only a small number of minor amendments:

- Benefit 1: "**Improved** ethical and professional behaviour and **transparent ways of working** throughout the service"
- Benefit 2: "Generates a more **inclusive and respectful** working culture"
- Benefit 4: "Enables all those who work for, or on behalf **of the service**, to challenge inappropriate behaviour and hold others to account for their actions, **leading to a psychologically safe workplace"**

Legal Requirements (mandatory duty)

New legislation added:

- Workers Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act
- Employment Rights Act (Due to be enacted in 2026)

Linked qualifications, accreditations or Fire Standards

No proposed amendments to this section

Guidance and supporting information

New guidance added:

- NFCC Leadership Framework
- Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour toolkit
- NFCC Culture Dashboard Methodology Dashboard

Conclusion

The Board is asked to note the newly proposed additions to the Code of Ethics Fire Standard.

The working group discussed the level of changes to the Fire Standards and concluded that, although there were several amendments proposed, they didn't feel the changes were substantive and warranted a full consultation. They felt that new additions brought the standard in line with more recently published standard, and in particular the additions relating to the role of leaders and the ability for all employees to be able to safely challenge poor behaviour complemented the Leading and Developing People and Leading the Service Fire Standards.

The Fire Standards Team have carefully considered the comments from the working group; however, they are of the opinion that the proposed changes to the Code of Ethics Fire

Standard fall into the major change category and therefore recommend that the standard should go out to consultation.

The Board is asked to approve the proposal to put the Code of Ethics Fire Standard out to consultation.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE CODE OF ETHICS FIRE STANDARD

FIRE STANDARDS BOARD

Title of Standard	**Code of Ethics**
Review Date	May 2025

CURRENT FIRE STANDARD	**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CODE OF ETHICS FIRE STANDARD**
Desired Outcome	
A fire and rescue service which has embedded and is committed to the ethical principles and professional behaviours contained in the Core Code of Ethics (Core Code) and in so doing generates a more positive working culture and continuously improves the quality of service to the public. This is evidenced by the attitudes and conduct of those who lead and all who work for, or on behalf of, the service and that the service operates according to corporate ethical business practices.	A fire and rescue service where its members respect and follow the five principles of the Core Code of Ethics (Core Code). This is demonstrated in their service delivery to the public and builds community trust and confidence. The principles of the Core Code are represented within policies and processes and are at the heart of day-to-day activity. Leaders are accountable for the culture within their service and strive to continuously learn about, monitor and improve this. They display and promote good behaviours and challenge conduct that is inconsistent with the Core Code. This is evidenced by the attitude and conduct of those who lead and all who work for, or on behalf of, the service. All those who lead and work on behalf of a service display and promote good behaviours.
What is required to meet the Fire Standard	

A fire and rescue service must: 1. adopt and embed the Core Code to demonstrate that the service is fully committed and compliant at both an individual and corporate level. 2. Ensure the attitudes, professional behaviours and conduct described within the Core Code are reflected in its decision-making, policies, procedures, processes, and associated guidance that govern how the service manages and supports its workforce. 3. Provide training and support to all those who work for, or on behalf of, a service to achieve their understanding of the Core Code and an appreciation of their responsibilities in adhering to it. 4. Not detract from the Core Code. Those who lead services and those who work for, or on behalf of, the service **must**: 5. Understand, respect, and follow the principles of the Core Code and demonstrate this by their commitment to it and their responsibility for upholding it. 6. Conduct themselves in accordance with the Core Code. Those responsible for the governance of fire and rescue services, whilst complying with their own ethical codes **must**: 7. hold the Chief Fire Officer to account for the implementation of the Core Code at a local level;	A fire and rescue service must: 1. Proactively adopt the Core Code and be able to demonstrate that the service is fully committed to fulfilling it; 2. Demonstrate how the Core Code is embedded into its decision-making, policies, procedures, processes, and associated guidance; 3. Provide training and support to all those who work for, or on behalf of, a service to ensure they fully understand their responsibilities in upholding the Core Code; 4. ensure strategies, policies and performance measures are in place to promote and bed a positive and inclusive culture; and 5. Monitor and measure performance in relation to culture and the Core Code so that outcomes can be evaluated and learned from to continuously improve. Everyone who works for, or on behalf of, the service must: 6. Understand and respect the Core Code and their responsibility to role model this through their behaviour; and 7. Actively promote the principles of the Core Code and use mechanisms to safely challenge or raise concerns about behaviours that do not meet them Those responsible for governing fire and rescue services must:

8. play a proactive role in challenging behaviour inconsistent with the Core Code; and 9. ensure strategies, policies and performance measures are in place to promote and embed a positive and inclusive culture. A fire and rescue service **should**: 10. Designate a senior leader who is responsible for promoting the Core Code throughout the service and ensuring that all those who work for, or on behalf of, the service understand its contents and what is expected of them.	8. Hold the Chief Fire Officer to account by scrutinising strategies, policies and plans and ensuring these are consistent with the Core Code; and 9. Play a proactive role in challenging and providing support to service leaders and each other on any behaviour that is inconsistent with the Code. 10. conduct investigations and disciplinary procedures if these relate to a Principal Officer such as the Chief Fire Officer."
Expected benefits of achieving the Fire Standard	
1. Achieves greater consistency in ethical and professional behaviour throughout the service 2. Generates a more positive working culture, which embraces learning and is transparent and accountable 3. Improves trust in and reputation of the service 4. Enables all those who work for, or on behalf of, to challenge inappropriate behaviour and hold others to account for their actions 5. Improves the recruitment and retention of a workforce that is representative of the community it serves 6. Improves governance and leadership of the service	1. Improved ethical and professional behaviour and transparent ways of working throughout the service 2. Generates a more inclusive and respectful working culture 3. Improves trust in and reputation of the service 4. Enables all those who work for, or on behalf of the service, to challenge inappropriate behaviour and hold others to account for their actions, leading to a psychologically safe workplace 5. Improves the recruitment and retention of a workforce that is representative of the community it serves 6. Improves governance and leadership of the service
Legal requirements or mandatory duties	

• Equality Act
  – Public Sector Equality Duty
• Local Audit and Accountability Act
• The Accounts and Audits Regulations
	• Equality Act
	  – Public Sector Equality Duty
	  – Workers Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act
	• Local Audit and Accountability Act
	• The Accounts and Audits Regulations
	• Employment Rights Act (Due to be enacted in 2026)

Linked qualifications, accreditations or Fire Standards	
This Fire Standard and the Core Code underpin all Fire Standards. Currently there are no specific or linked qualifications and accreditations for this Fire Standard.	This Fire Standard and the Core Code underpin all Fire Standards. Currently there are no specific or linked qualifications and accreditations for this Fire Standard.
Guidance and supporting information	
• Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services • CIPFA Principles of Good Governance	• Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services • CIPFA Principles of Good Governance • NFCC Leadership Framework • Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour toolkit • NFCC Culture Dashboard Methodology Dashboard