

From the Chief Executive
Mark Lloyd

Dan Stephens
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February 2018

Dear Dan

LGA Membership 2018/2019

As we move through 2018, the challenges facing public services continue, with Fire and Rescue Authorities under continuing financial pressures, including around rewarding fire employees to reflect the positive impact that the broader work of fire and rescue services, in collaborating with health and other partners, could have.

As your membership association we have worked hard over the past 12 months to be your national voice and to call for the resources and powers needed to place you in the best position possible to serve your communities. There is no doubt that we are stronger when we speak with one voice.

Whilst the Autumn Budget and the Local Government Finance Settlement offered little to ease those challenges, there have nevertheless been some wins over the course of the year and we will, of course, be lobbying hard throughout the coming year.

We will not know the full implications for fire safety of the tragedy at Grenfell Tower until the conclusion of the police investigation and the public inquiry led by Sir Martin Moore-Bick. In the immediate aftermath of the fire we worked closely with the then Department of Communities and Local Government and the National Fire Chiefs Council to identify those social housing tower blocks with aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding.

As the extent of use of ACM on a range of public and private buildings became clear we lobbied for a review of building and fire safety regulations. After Dame Judith Hackitt was appointed to lead the review we submitted evidence that highlighted the need for fundamental reform of the building safety regulatory system. Many of the points we made in that submission have been reflected in the review's interim report. Improving building safety will continue to be an important strand of the LGA's work in the next year.

Over the last year we have shaped the development of the new fire and rescue service inspection framework through our participation in HMICFRS's stakeholder group. We have been keen to ensure that inspections do not prove overly burdensome to Fire and Rescue Authorities while providing a fair assessment of services' performance. As we approach the pilots of the inspection process we believe HMICFRS has developed a framework that delivers these objectives.

Improving the inclusiveness and diversity of the service is an important strand of the Home Office's fire reform agenda. Our conference publication on the inclusive fire service set out how Fire and Rescue Authorities could improve inclusion and diversity within their services, while the Inclusive Fire Service Group established by the National Joint Council published improvement strategies to help services with the recruitment and progression of female, BME and LGBTQ employees as well cultural issues such as bullying and harassment in general. This work was supported by an inclusion and diversity masterclass for Authority members and the memorandum of understanding we signed with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and a range of unions and equalities organisations on equalities, diversity, behaviours and organisational culture.

We have continued to collectively represent Fire and Rescue Authorities' interests in the legal challenge being brought against the transitional arrangements introduced as part of the changes to the pension scheme

In addition we have been involved in the development of the new national framework for the fire and rescue service, which is currently out for consultation. Alongside the NFCC we have stressed the need for all fire and rescue authorities irrespective of their governance model to produce integrated risk management plans. We have also been involved in the development of the new professional standards body, and have heavily lobbied the Home Office to make the assessment of police and crime commissioner's (PCC) business cases to take on fire governance as independent as possible. More recently we have been supporting the Fire and Rescue Authorities where the transfer of governance to PCCs has been opposed.

In October we returned to our Westminster headquarters where - like fire authorities - we are making the space work much harder. Three floors will be let commercially to generate income to support our work for members. Likewise, Layden House in Farringdon, is now being refurbished ahead of being let entirely on commercial terms.

We know very well the pressures facing Fire and Rescue Authorities. For the sixth year running we have frozen subscriptions. We will again be offering a 2.5 per cent loyalty discount for those authorities committed to maintain their membership, alongside the 2.5 per cent prompt payment discount for those authorities that pay in full by 30 June 2018.

Your 2018/19 subscription, including discounts will be held at £10,460 (plus VAT). To cut down on admin burdens at both ends, it would be enormously helpful if a purchase order could be raised and sent to Andrea Gillian (andrea.gillian@local.gov.uk) in my office.

I look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming year.

Yours sincerely



Mark Lloyd
Chief Executive