

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 APRIL 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/002/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	JACKIE SUTTON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	NATIONAL FIRE STANDARDS UPDATE 2022/23		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	IMPLEMENTATION TOOL DASHBOARD
	APPENDIX B:	NATIONAL FIRE STANDARDS CRITERIA

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the progress made towards compliance with the National Fire Standards

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the progress against achieving compliance with the National Fire Standards and the work being undertaken within Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) to implement and ensure compliance with the National Fire Standards

Introduction and Background

The role of the Fire Standards Board

3. The role of the Fire Standards Board is to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional Standards for fire and rescue services in England.
4. The Board is responsible for approving Standards and the approach to their development. It sets the priorities for Standards development work. It will commission work based on proposals from third parties, monitor progress with ongoing work and approve completed work.
5. It will seek to ensure that any Standards presented for approval have:
 - been developed in line with the agreed development process;
 - undergone appropriate consultation with subject matter experts and relevant stakeholders; and,
 - undergone an independent quality assurance process.

Scope of Standards

6. To help categorise the areas requiring Fire Standards and the guidance that is likely to underpin them, an Activity Framework has been developed. This enabled the Board to capture all the activities performed by fire and rescue services irrespective of their governance model, budget or location and who provides those functions (for example, services that are part of a local authority).
7. The principles of this approach are founded on the experience gained through the National Operational Guidance Programme (NOGP). The Activity Framework is intended to:
 - provide a complete road map it is clear where the NFCC and FSB are going;
 - help avoid duplication and overlap which may result in conflicting guidance if developed in isolation; and,
 - be easy to navigate for all audiences.

Standards Development

8. The National Fire Chiefs Council, through its Central Programme Office (CPO) provides administrative and policy support to the Fire Standards Board.
9. The Board and CPO work together to develop the suite of professional Standards. They will follow a commonly recognised process originating from the British Standards Institute and used in many other sectors.

In this process the Board is responsible for:

- creating and maintaining a framework of professional Standards that are applicable to, or in use within, fire and rescue services in England;
- considering the existing fire and rescue landscape through findings of existing research, the fire reform programme, operational or organisational learning from past incidents and from HMICFRS inspection outputs;
- identifying gaps within the framework and identifying priorities for new or revised professional Standards;
- working with the NFCC to plan and align Standards development work with the strategic commitments and their existing programmes;
- reviewing proposals and commissioning work;
- ensuring published Standards remain current and fit for purpose through both benefits realisation and periodic review;
- commissioning work to review and revise published Standards as and when required; and,
- building and maintaining relationships with partners across fire and rescue services, including those in the Devolved Administrations to inform the work they commission and approve.

The CPO are responsible for:

- preparing proposals for Standards development work;
 - facilitating development work when commissioned;
 - managing the periodic review cycles of approved Standards;
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- monitoring and informing the Board where a Standard may need revision outside of agreed cycles; and,
- monitoring benefits realisation and periodic reporting to the Board.

Approved Fire Standards

10. To date the Fire Standards Board have written, consulted on and published the following Standards on various dates throughout the last two years:

- Code of Ethics
- Community Risk Management Planning
- Data Management
- Emergency Preparedness and Resilience
- Emergency Response Driving
- Fire Investigation
- Leading and Developing People
- Leading the Fire Service
- Operational Competence
- Operational Learning
- Operational Preparedness
- Prevention
- Protection
- Safeguarding

At time of writing two further Fire Standards have been through consultation and are expected to be published soon:

- Fire Control
- Communications, Engagement and Consultation

Implementation Tools

11. Following on from feedback received from rescue services the Board has developed an Implementation Tool for each Fire Standard.
 12. Each tool has been created to assist fire and rescue services in planning, delivering and reporting on their implementation of Fire Standards. They could also be used to provide useful evidence for HMICFRS inspections.
 13. The tools help services to record actions needed to be taken to move towards achieving the Fire Standard. When completed, they provide a benchmark from which progress over time can be measured.
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MFRS Implementation of the National Fire Standards

14. When a new Standard is released for consultation it is added to an intranet Portal page with a link to the live consultation and deadlines for responding. The Area Manager or Senior Manager with responsibility for the Standard is advised to review and respond to the consultation. Where appropriate, the response is quality assured or sent on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer.
15. When a new Standard is published, to ensure compliance, the Implementation Toolkit is used as a form of gap analysis to identify where MRFS are meeting the Standard, or areas for improvement.
16. The Toolkit tracker is then presented, by the responsible officer, at the appropriate Strategic Board meeting to illustrate compliance, or areas for improvement with the Standard. The individual Boards should show progress in achieving the Standard. Highlights of the individual Standards will be presented annually to Strategy and Performance Board.
17. A summary of progress towards achieving the Standards will be presented to the Authority annually. See Appendix A and B for the latest RAG rated update. Members will note that the Protection Standard is entirely complete and signed off. Good progress is being made against the other Standards, with some areas of green, some of amber and a small number of red. Some aspects of the Standards are time bound so will take longer than others to implement. An example of this is the Community Risk Management Planning Standard (CRMP). Responsible officers are aware of areas for improvement and are working towards them, but the three-year cycle of the CRMP (formerly IRMP) means that some intended improvements will not be fully delivered until the production of the new CRMP in 2024. The Service is committed to implementing the standards fully and all responsible officers are working towards that objective.
18. Implementation toolkits will be kept on the Portal and reviewed regularly. Information about the Standards Board and the Standards is also available on the Portal, providing information for all staff.

Equality and Diversity Implications

19. Equality and Diversity actions form part of the work of the National Fire Standards Board and the work undertaken to implement each Standard is equally impact assessed as appropriate.

Staff Implications

20. There are no direct staffing implications contained within this report.

Legal Implications

21. The Standards allow greater scrutiny and alignment across the sector mitigating the risk to the Authority when carrying out its activities and service to the community. as it its compliance of standards

Financial Implications & Value for Money

22. The National Fire Standards should provide the same or an improved level of service for the same or a reduced cost.

23. Actions required to ensure compliance that have cost implications should be maintained within existing budgets.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

24. Consideration of Health and Safety, the environment and successful risk management is paramount in complying the National Fire Standards.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

25. Compliance with the National Fire Standards will assure the Authority and the people we serve on Merseyside that we are providing the best possible service.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/111/11 If this report follows on from another, list the previous report(s)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS