

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY & PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	4 SEPTEMBER 2025	REPORT NO:	CFO/14/2526
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE, DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	IRMP OFFICER, JACKIE SUTTON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	NATIONAL FIRE STANDARDS ANNUAL UPDATE APRIL 2025		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	IMPLEMENTATION TOOL UPDATE 2025
	APPENDIX B:	FIRE STANDARDS UPDATE APRIL 2025
	APPENDIX C:	FIRE STANDARDS BOARD REVIEW

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of progress towards compliance with the National Fire Standards during 2024/25.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the progress against achieving compliance with the National Fire Standards (Appendix A and B) 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

3. 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

4. To help categorise the areas requiring Fire Standards and the guidance that is likely to underpin them, an Activity Framework has been developed. This enables

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).

5. 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 so 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

6. The National Fire Chiefs Council, through its Central Programme Office (CPO) provides administrative and policy support to the Fire Standards Board.
7. 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;
- 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

8. To date the Fire Standards Board have written, consulted on and published the following Standards:

- Code of Ethics
- Communication, Engagement and Consultation
- Community Risk Management Planning
- Data Management
- Digital and Cyber
- Emergency Preparedness and Resilience
- Emergency Response Driving
- Fire Control
- Fire Investigation
- Internal Governance and Assurance
- Leading and Developing People
- Leading the Fire Service
- Operational Competence
- Operational Learning
- Operational Preparedness
- Prevention
- Procurement and Commercial
- Protection
- Safeguarding

The Fire Standards Board are currently reviewing all Fire Standards that have been published for 3 or more years; we are currently in the process of completing reviews on the following standards:

1. Prevention (expected to be published this month with minor amendments)
2. Protection (consultation expected in Autumn)
3. Code of Ethics (consultation expected within the next month)
4. Emergency Response Driver (re-publication following consultation expected in September 2025)
5. Community Risk Management Planning (re-publication following consultation expected in September 2025)
6. Fire Investigation (review expected to complete by end of 2025)
7. Operational Preparedness and Operational Competence (re-publication following consultation expected in September 2025)
8. Leading and Developing People (consultation expected within the next month)
9. Leading the Service (consultation expected within the next month)

There are also a number of reviews expected to start over the next few months:

1. Safeguarding (review expected to commence in September 2025, completion date anticipated early 2026)

2. Emergency Preparedness and Resilience (review expected to commence in November 2025, completion date anticipated early spring 2026)
3. Data Management (review expected to commence in November 2025, completion date anticipated early spring 2026)
4. Operational Learning (a review is expected to commence in Autumn 2025 with a view to complete this by spring 2026)

At the time of writing further Fire Standards have been through planned periodic review including consultation and are expected to be published soon:

- Emergency Response Driving
- Community Risk Management Planning
- Operational Competence and Operational Preparedness

9. The latest Fire Standards Board Review is attached at Appendix C for more information about the work of the Board.

The MFRS process

10. When a new Fire Standard or a consultation on a new or existing Standard is released for consultation it is added to the dedicated Portal page and relevant officers are alerted.
11. Officers are encouraged to comment on the consultation document by the deadline.
12. Responsibility is allocated to relevant functions to complete the NFCC gap analysis toolkit on the Portal and regularly update it for each Standard. Actions arising from the implementation of Standards should be incorporated into existing plans or managed as business as usual, whichever is most appropriate and managed through the Board structure.
13. This full progress report will be submitted to the Authority annually.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. 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

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

Legal Implications

16. 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.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

- 17. The National Fire Standards should provide the same or an improved level of service for the same or a reduced cost.
- 18. Actions required to ensure compliance that have cost implications should be maintained within existing budgets.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

- 19. Consideration of Health and Safety and successful risk management is paramount in complying with the National Fire Standards.

Environmental Implications

- 20. Consideration of the environment is part of complying with 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.*

- 21. 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/25/24 National Fire Standards Annual Update April 2024

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service