



**Hampshire
& Isle of Wight**
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee

Purpose: Noted

Date: **22 MARCH 2022**

Title: **FIRE STANDARDS PROGRESS REPORT**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide awareness of the national Fire Standards and to give members the latest update on the alignment of our service against the current approved standards.
2. This is the second Fire Standards Progress Report into the Committee, following an update on 28 September 2022 ([available here](#)). We will continue to provide subsequent updates into the Committee every six months

BACKGROUND

3. As part of the reforms for fire and rescue services in England and the 2018 Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, a duty was placed on all fire authorities to implement professional standards and for the inspectorate to have regards to those standards as part of their inspections. The Fire Standards Board was created in 2019 to develop and introduce new standards to the fire sector, thus improving professionalism and driving sector improvement, with the first four standards publishing in February 2021.
4. The role of the Fire Standards Board is to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of Fire Standards for fire and rescue services in England. The intention being to help identify what good looks like and drive continual improvement across the services for the benefit of the profession, the services and the communities served by them.
5. Following consultation, Standards are then published on the Fire Standards Board website accompanied by an implementation tool and supporting guidance, for fire and rescue services to assess their respective compliance. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and

Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection programme will also increasingly give due regard to our compliance with the standards.

FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE GOVERNANCE

6. The Fire Standards are a critical part of setting out how fire and rescue services operate. They are designed to bring consistency to the sector to support the delivery of our legislative requirements. The fire standard include statements of what is required within each standard ('desirable outcomes'), which are then further supported by more detailed guidance from sector related bodies and the National Fire Chiefs Council.
7. Therefore, significant work is underway to ensure our policies and plans are underpinned by the relevant guidance in alignment with the national Fire Standards.

FIRE STANDARDS – OUR CURRENT POSITION

8. The Service's Fire Standards assurance approach was outlined in the September 2022 Fire Standards progress report and following that report the Service has also now published a new internal Fire Standards procedure (Appendix A) to make clear to staff what their responsibilities are regarding Fire Standards, and to outline how the Service undertakes assurance in this area.
9. As of January 2023, there were a total of 14 approved Fire Standards, of which we had completed our own initial gap analysis on 12, with the latest standards, 'Leading the Service' and 'Leading and Developing People', having only recently been published (in late December).
10. The table below shows our overall assurance rating for each Fire Standard based on the cumulative ratings for each requirement:

Standard	Date Published	Assurance Rating
Emergency Response Driving	16/02/2021	Substantial
Operational Competence	16/02/2021	Substantial
Operational Learning	16/02/2021	Reasonable
Operational Preparedness	16/02/2021	Substantial
Code of Ethics	18/05/2021	Substantial
Community Risk Management Planning	18/05/2021	Substantial
Prevention	30/07/2021	Substantial
Protection	03/09/2021	Substantial
Safeguarding	31/01/2022	Substantial
Fire Investigation	31/03/2022	Reasonable
Emergency Preparedness & Resilience	31/05/2022	Reasonable
Data Management	02/08/2022	Reasonable

Leading the Service	21/12/2022	Gap analysis assessment ongoing
Leading and Developing People	21/12/2022	Gap analysis assessment ongoing

11. There are a total of 155 individual requirements ('desirable outcomes') for the 12 HIWFRS assessed Standards. We have reasonable or substantial assurance on the vast majority the requirements. This position is very similar to that as at September 2022, however, there has been movements in some assurance ratings. For example, in September 2022 we had 9 requirements with limited assurance; and this how now improved to 7.
12. For the 7 requirements with limited assurance, various activity has been prioritised to develop our compliance. These activities, which are being delivered within existing budgets, relate primarily to:
 - (a) Ongoing enhancements in our approach to Service Learning, including revising the resources required in this area to deliver the fire standard, and embedding revised processes that have assurance and improvement for our people and communities at their core.
 - (b) Ongoing work and investment towards ISO accreditation for Fire Investigation, which is required to ensure we can continue to deliver fire investigation effectively, including for partners, in the future.
13. It is important to note that the two leadership standards that published in late December (Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People) are two of the largest, with around 40 requirements ('desirable outcomes') between them. They are also more cross-cutting (impacting, and relevant to, a wider range of teams across the Service's directorates) than previous standards. Owing to their breadth and the standards only publishing in late December our rigorous gap analysis against them is yet to be completed.

FIRE STANDARD FORWARD LOOK

14. The Fire Standards Board's aim is to release a total of approximately 22 standards by September 2023. Once these have been published, there is unlikely to be any additional standards introduced to the sector. Instead, their strategy is to enter a continuous improvement cycle, gathering learning from across the sector and using this to reflect and review the detail of the standards.
15. The following standards are currently being developed and have the following proposed publication dates:
 - (a) Fire Control – March 2023.
 - (b) Communications, Engagement and Consultation – March 2023.

- (c) Commercial and Procurement – September 2023.
- (d) Finance and Assurance – September 2023.
- (e) Asset Management – September 2023.

SUPPORTING OUR SAFETY PLAN AND PRIORITIES

16. This activity is a Year 3 Safety Plan deliverable under the Learning and Improving Safety Plan priority.
 - (a) “Providing ongoing integration and assurance of (approved and new) Fire Standards. Providing ongoing integration and assurance of (approved and new) Fire Standards.”
 - (b) “To ensure HIWFRS delivers against national best practice and identifies any risks that need to be resourced to; and to support the Service in embedding this activity into the core activity of all our Directorates.”
17. Compliance against, and focus on, Fire Standards also supports Our Communities by, for example, ensuring we have effective Community Risk Management Planning, prepared and competent operational personnel, and deliver robust and effective prevention, protection and safeguarding activity for the benefit of the communities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Furthermore, adopting the Fire Standards also ensures we are effectively supporting our people – their health, safety, wellbeing, and operational competence – with a focus, for example, also on the national Code of Ethics that is aligned with HIWFRS Values and Behaviours.
18. Adhering to the Fire Standards will also ensure that we are delivering high performance by ensuring our diverse teams are skilled and feel equipped to deliver a leading fire and rescue service.

COLLABORATION

19. Collaboration takes place with the Fire Standards Board, the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Local Government Association and various other fire and rescue services, including HIWFRS, in the development and implementation of new Standards across the Fire Sector.
20. Internally, various teams collaborate to ensure we have accurately assessed our assurance against each Fire Standard, and to monitor this on an ongoing basis, including with the Service’s Integrated Performance and Assurance Group, Chief Officer’s Group and Executive Group.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

21. The volume of Fire Standards approved and planned and incorporation into HMICFRS inspection means the assurance activity has ongoing resource requirements. Fire Standard assurance is overseen by the Organisational

Assurance Team but completed by input from the relevant teams and specialists across HIWFRS. Each Fire Standard also has an Executive Group sponsor.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

22. Impact assessments have not been required for this report as the production of the report will not result in the implementation a new change activity, and/or introducing, or amending, a Service Policy or Procedure.
23. However, individual actions required to meet the requirements of each Standard will be subject to conformity with the Service's Change Management and Impact Assessment procedures, and therefore may require unique impact assessments for those changes.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

24. Fire Standard implementation is a requirement of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in England.
25. Fire Standards are subject to scrutiny from the HMICFRS inspection, who in the latest inspection, provided an overview of our approach to Fire Standards assurance. They were particularly interested in actions and enhancements we had taken in response to this assurance activity, which at the time of the inspection totalled around 60 actions.

RISK ANALYSIS

26. Failure to comply with Fire Standards, in some areas, would mean that we are not meeting our statutory and legal responsibilities, including, but not limited to, community risk management, emergency response driving and complying with health and safety legislation when delivering operational response. The latter, as an example, could also have potential financial impacts were we found to be breaching health and safety legislation.
27. Failure to comply with the Fire Standards may also lead to reputational damage and missed opportunities to identify and embed learning and improvement, a priority of the Safety Plan. This will be subject to review by the HMICFRS who publish their findings nationally following an inspection.

EVALUATION

28. The Service's Organisational Assurance Team has developed a programme of quality assurance that will look to review each standard by their 'Requirements', 'Desired Outcomes' and their 'Benefits' as prescribed on the Fire Standard Boards website.

CONCLUSION

29. Fire Standards are of crucial importance to the sector and HIWFRA and HMICFRS will hold us to account against them. Therefore, we recognise the importance of HIWFRS influencing and shaping the Standards through our early and ongoing involvement, including in drafting them.
30. We have robust mechanisms for reporting on Fire Standard compliance to provide internal and external assurance, and this includes Executive Group reporting. To date, there are 14 Fire Standards published, with various others being produced. We are in a strong position currently with the vast majority reasonable or substantial assurance and have actions in train on the more limited areas. However, we must keep the organisational focus on Fire Standards, and will continue to provide members with assurance via regular updates.

RECOMMENDATION

31. That the Standards and Governance Committee notes the progress made towards compliance of HIWFRS with the Fire Standards.

APPENDIX ATTACHED:

32. Appendix A: HIWFRS Fire Standards Procedure.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

33. <https://www.firestandards.org/>
34. <https://www.firestandards.org/approved-standards/>

Contact:

Alex Quick, Head of Performance, alex.quick@hantsfire.gov.uk, 07918 888146