



Description

The Fire Standards Board oversees the identification, organisation, development, and maintenance of professional Standards for fire and rescue services in England. Each approved fire standard is underpinned by various requirements ('desirable outcomes').

This procedure describes the Fire Standards framework that Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service use to identify, prioritise, manage, and maintain professional standards.

It outlines roles and responsibilities for certain individuals, staff groups and governance mechanisms emphasising the principles of engagement and assurance. It also signposts our staff to the Fire Standards Coms site, which will keep them informed – including when new Fire Standards are published by the Fire Standards Board.

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Adoption of the standard

Consultation

When a new standard is being developed, HIWFRS take a proactive approach by engaging with the consultation process and pre-consultation engagement sessions. This gives us an early opportunity to influence and review the proposed standards, as well as begin to assess our own

organisation to identify any gaps. Once the standard has been approved, we are then able to take appropriate actions to ensure that we have assurance that we are compliant against the standard.

The following elements play a critical part in the consultation and adoption of the standard:

The consultation process: Invitations to take part in consultations are posted on the Fire Standards Board website [Fire Standards Board](#), our Governance team regularly review the site for the purpose of identifying upcoming consultations, once a consultation has been acknowledged the team will notify colleagues within the organisation requesting a service lead be agreed. Other pre-engagement sessions are also communicated for the Fire Standards Board and NFCC channels.

Consultation lead: The Governance team, working with Organisational Assurance and the Chief Officer's Group will identify colleagues to contribute with respect to the consultation (or pre-consultation engagement) and coordinate responses across the service, including sending a copy of final responses to our Governance team or notifying them that the response has been sent to the Fire Standards Board. To allow time to bring together responses across the service internal deadlines will be agreed by the consultation lead.

Consultation pack: is a collection of support material created by the fire standards board designed to aid the consultation process, typically this will include details of the proposed standard, survey questions, supporting information including guidance on engaging job roles within the service. It is the role of the consultation lead to ensure all colleagues engaged in the consultation process take every opportunity to input, and are sighted on, the consultation pack.

Introduction of the standard

Each approved fire standard is introduced into the Service in a systematic and consistent way by the Organisational Assurance team promoting a culture of learning and improving.

The process consists of 3 phases detailed below: set-up, review, and assess.

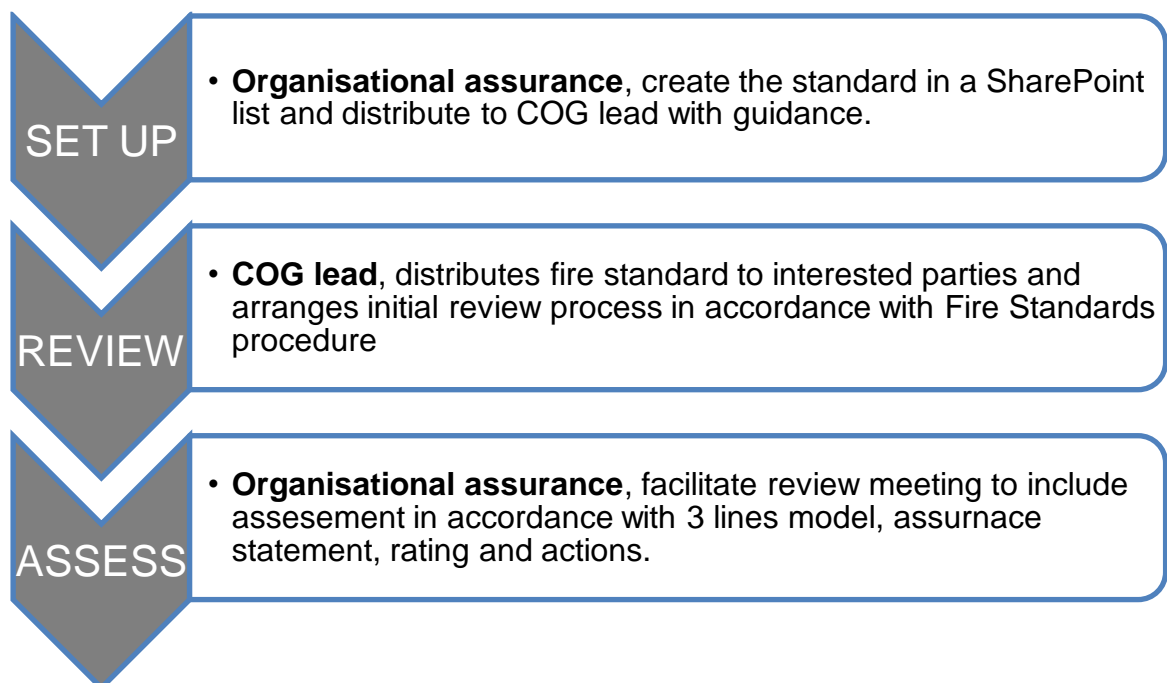
Set up: so that we can report and monitor the compliance of all fire standards, Organisational Assurance run and maintain a fire standards SharePoint list. The list contains details of the standard, owners, 3 lines of

defence (please see the Assurance Procedure, Pro 11/06) [Assurance Procedure](#) for recording evidence as well as, assurance rating and assurance statement. It is the responsibility of Organisational Assurance to set up all new fire standards on the SharePoint list as well as making changes to statements and ratings.

Review: once a Fire Standard has been set up on SharePoint a link will be sent out to the COG lead and department leads to complete a gap analysis and initial assessment of assurance ratings in line with our 3 lines model.

Assess: after the initial assessment has been completed by the functional area, Organisational Assurance will facilitate a review meeting which will include an assessment of the standard against our 3 lines model, help support with any action planning and conclude with a statement of assurance and assurance rating. After the initial assessment, ongoing assessment is the responsibility of the relevant COG lead/s and department/s.

- Organisational Assurance will provide assurance reporting into the Integrated Performance and Assurance Group, Executive Group and HIWFRA. Part of the internal reporting will involve identifying when there has not been recent or regular review of standards and our ongoing assurance against them.



Roles and responsibilities

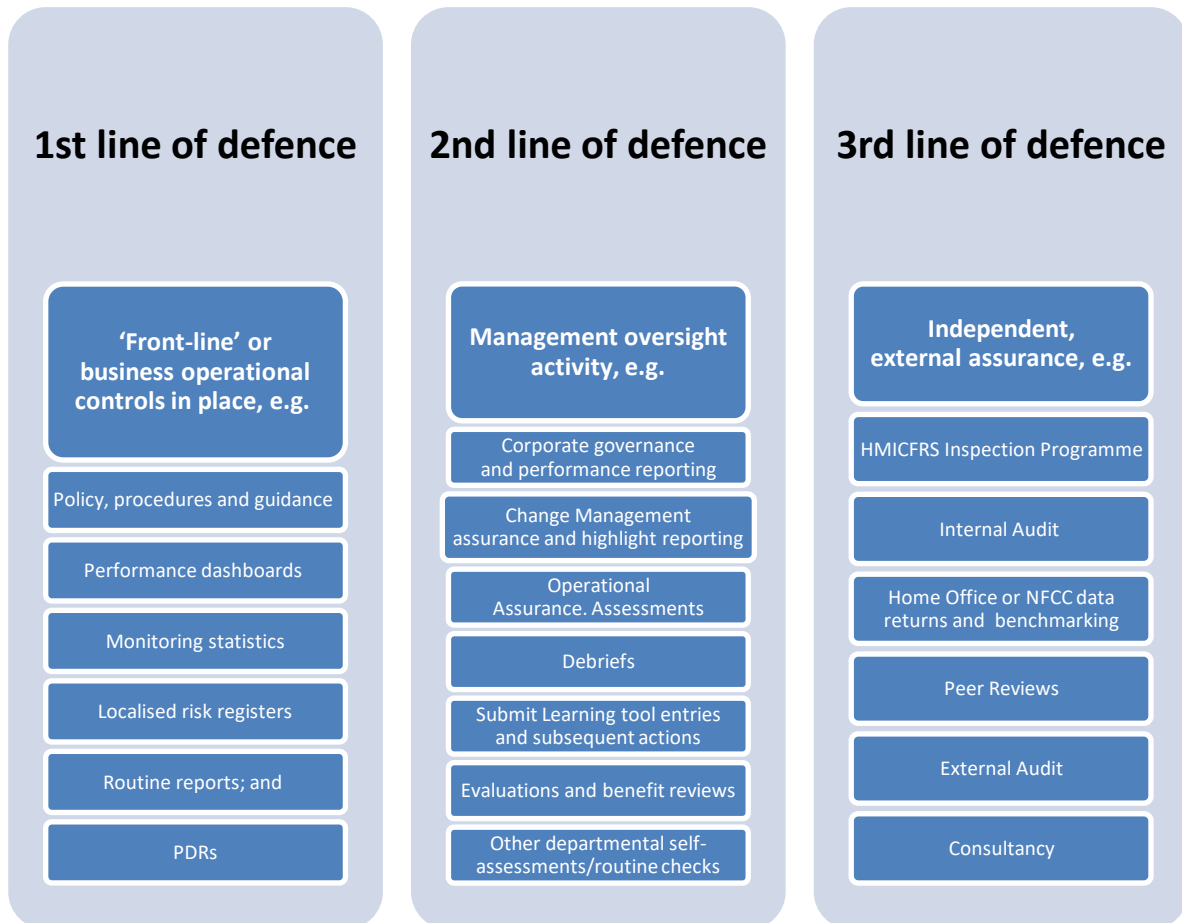
The below table outlines the various responsibilities of different groups and responsibilities across the Service

Group	Responsibility
Fire Standards Board	Oversees the identification, organisation, development, and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England
HMIC	Will be aware of, and inspect us against compliance with the fire standards as part of a much wider inspection framework and methodology
HIWFRA	6 monthly scrutiny of our position via reporting into the Authority's Standards & Governance Committee.
Executive Group	Regular oversight, and strategic accountability through EG sponsors, of our assurance against the fire standards.
Chief Officer's Group	Regular oversight, and strategic accountability through COG leads. COG leads will regularly review assurance assessments, working with their teams, to ensure the assessments (and any required actions) are still accurate. Engage, where relevant, in Fire Standards Board workshop, pre-consultation engagement and consultation exercises.
Integrated Performance and Assurance Group (IPAG)	IPAG will oversee, report upon, and review the performance and assurance of Fire Standards supporting the organisation to develop effective improvement planning and benefit realisation. IPAG will also provide visibility of Fire Standards to Executive Group including any performance issues.
Directorate Boards	Will provide regular directorate level assurance and scrutiny to the fire standards relevant to their areas.
Department managers for areas relevant to fire standards	Routine monitoring of the standards. Inform Organisational Assurance of any improvements and regression of fire standard compliance.

	<p>Progress fire standard actions.</p>
<p>Organisational Assurance Team</p>	<p>Create the standard in a SharePoint list and distribute to COG lead with guidance.</p> <p>Facilitate the initial review meeting to include assessment in accordance with 3 lines model, assurance statement, rating, and actions.</p> <p>Periodically and systematically ensure that the evidence supplied to meet the fire standard is appropriate.</p> <p>Provide ongoing assurance reporting, including on the levels of ongoing engagement and assurance activity on each standard – to the Chief Officer’s Group, Executive Group, Integrated Performance and Assurance Group, and HIWFRA Standards & Governance Committee.</p> <p>Own and maintain a Fire Standards coms site Fire Standards for approved professional standards and standards in development.</p>
<p>All staff</p>	<p>Awareness of Fire Standards, and how they contribute to the continual improvement of professional standards within the service.</p> <p>Where relevant, supporting their teams and/or managers in the ongoing assurance and improvement activity associated with standards,</p>

Assuring the standard

The growing use of Fire Standards emphasises the importance of assurance and compliance with the standard. The methodology for assurance assessment is a 3 lines approach, examples detailed below: [Assurance Procedure](#)



*Not all outcomes will be able to meet 3 lines, in these instances there will be no impact the assurance rating applied

Assurance description

The assurance description is a statement of confidence produced after reviewing the evidence submitted for each of the 3 lines of defence, if applicable. The description will outline areas of strengths, gaps in our measures and work in progress.

Typically, the assurance description will be drafted in conjunction with Organisational Assurance and reviewed as part of the fire standard review meeting

Assurance rating

All Fire Standards will receive an assurance opinion, this is created once the standard has been fully reviewed with Organisational Assurance. Typically, one of 3 ratings can be applied; substantial, reasonable, or limited and indicate the overall level of evidence and confidence in meeting the standard. It is possible to change the assurance rating during the year, this can be done by submitting new evidence to the Organisational Assurance Manager

Assurance Opinion	Description of assurance
Substantial	A sound system of assurance evidenced across all 3 lines of defence (if applicable), good front line procedures and quality assurance. Regular management scrutiny with evidence of completed improvement actions. Evidence of independent scrutiny at the equivalent of at least a reasonable rating or above.
Reasonable	There is a generally sound system of assurance, across all lines of defence (if applicable) Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement have been identified.
Limited	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required.
Not applicable	In exceptional cases certain requirements of a Fire Standard may not be applicable to HIWFRS and the way we operate. The only current example of this is within the Protection Standard where Petroleum or Explosives regulation is not the responsibility of HIWFRS

Fire standards assurance programme

Fire standard reviews will be carried out by Organisational Assurance as part of our annual assurance programme to periodically and systematically ensure that the evidence supplied to meet the fire standard is appropriate.

The assurance programme will be risk based, with consideration given to the likelihood of non-compliance and alternative lines of assurance for example external audits and assurance reviews which will in turn determine the amount of assurance required.

A schedule for carrying out the reviews will be drawn up by Organisational Assurance as part of the assurance programme planning, and in consultation with other teams, where required.

The review will:

- Ensure that the system and process of documenting fire standards is achieving the required results
- Reveal and defects or irregularities in fire standard evidence
- Indicate any necessary improvements and/or corrective actions
- Identify any high-risk areas
- Verify improvements or corrective actions
- Recommend a change to assurance ratings and opinion

Fire standards assurance programme - scoring matrix

Results of the assurance assessment will be reported internally and externally. The following principals apply:

- Selected fire standard or outcomes will be assessed using a matrix. A percentage rating with a corresponding descriptor will help the Organisational Assurance team gauge the quality of the evidence, for example a score of 25% you might expect some evidence of soundly based processes across a quarter of relevant activities.
- The score is then translated into an assurance opinion to avoid any confusion with differing assurance definitions.
- Assurance commentary will be given in the reporting along with any improvements, sighting any known best practice across the service where appropriate.

For the first, second and third line of defence the assessor may choose one of the four levels 0%,25%,50%,75%+ timeliness factor in aging of evidence, peer review process partnership.

Approach	Score	Assurance Opinion	First, second and third line of defence
Anecdotal or no evidence	0%	No assurance	Little effective evidence
Some evidence of soundly based processes or systems	25%	Limited	Implemented in about a quarter of all relevant areas and activities

Evidence of soundly based systematic approaches, processes, or systems	50%	Reasonable	Implemented in about half of the relevant areas and activities
Clear evidence of integration of approach into normal operations and planning, can be used as a role model for other areas	75%+	Substantial	Applied to at least three quarters of all activities with clear evidence of integration and improved business effectiveness through review cycles

For all assurance reporting, the Organisational Assurance Team and Head of Performance are the arbiters of assurance opinions, with any requests to change assurance opinions having to be approved by them. Any issues flagged through the assurance reporting, or disagreements on compliance ratings will, if necessary, be escalated into the Integrated Performance and Assurance Group and/or Executive Group.

Updates

Section	What's been updated and why	Date updated	Who updated
New procedure	New procedure required to outline the ongoing and growing significance of Fire Standards, and roles and responsibilities around them	20/10/2022	Organisational Assurance Team Leader Full review by Organisational Assurance Manager and Head of Performance