



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

HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee

Purpose: Noted

Date: **28 September 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 provide the latest update on the alignment of our Service against the published standards.

BACKGROUND

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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. The Her 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.

HIWFRS FIRE STANDARDS APPROACH

5. HIWFRS officers contribute to the development of fire standards at every stage of the process. We have also been directly involved in the drafting of some Standards, including, but not limited to, Prevention, Protection, Safeguarding, Fire Investigation and Emergency Preparedness and Resilience.
6. Once a Standard has been developed, it then enters a period of public consultation with HIWFRS ensuring our response is led by an internal Subject Matter Lead. Following consultation, the Standards are then published along with the implementation tools and supporting guidance. At this point, our Organisational Assurance Team engage with the relevant responsible department within the Service to complete an initial assessment of where HIWFRS is against the requirements of the Standard.
7. This initial assessment consists of a gap analysis followed by an assessment of our levels of assurance using the three lines of defence assurance model from our Assurance Procedure (Appendix A).
8. Using this information, we will then mark each individual requirement with an initial assurance rating:
 - (a) **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.
 - (b) **Limited** – there are few to no controls in place to adequately demonstrate compliance.
 - (c) **Reasonable** – there are several controls in place with a few changes required to adequately demonstrate compliance.
 - (d) **Substantial** – there many controls in place to adequately demonstrate compliance.
9. The detailed self-assessment undertaken is done for three main purposes: to track and assure ourselves of progress internally against all Fire Standards requirements, to support external assurance and scrutiny of the Fire Standards (including by HIWFRA), and to ensure we take action where needed by identifying areas for improvement.

10. The Organisational Assurance team then update the Service’s intranet page with links to evidence that demonstrate compliance with the requirements. As the Standards continue to be published, the Organisational Assurance team are developing an ongoing assurance programme for continual review with a more detailed assessment of our compliance. This will involve consideration of the outcomes and benefits detailed in each Standard.

FIRE STANDARDS – OUR CURRENT POSITION

11. As of the 9 September 2022, there were a total of 12 approved Fire Standards. 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
Operational Competence	16/02/2021	Substantial
Operational Learning	16/02/2021	Reasonable
Operational Preparedness	16/02/2021	Reasonable
Emergency Response Driving	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 and Resilience	31/05/2022	Reasonable
Data Management	02/08/2022	Reasonable

12. There are a total of 155 individual requirements (‘desirable outcomes’) across 12 Standards that we have assessed ourselves against. We have reasonable or substantial assurance on vast majority of the requirements, with one requirement not applicable to HIWFRS.
13. It is important to note that the work required to meet certain requirements varies significantly owing to their differing size, complexity, and resourcing implications. For example, one requirement of the Operational Competency fire standard is to: “Deliver the strategic actions provided in the suite of National Operational Guidance (NOG), unless by evidenced exception a strategic action is not relevant to the service...”. NOG alone has some 1,600 actions, which will require Service investment to ensure we are compliant. There are also ongoing resource requirements to provide assurance on our progress for embedding the fire standards, and there may also be future resource requirements for additional roles providing assurance in other critical areas.

14. For the 9 requirements with limited assurance, various activity has been prioritised to develop our compliance. These relate primarily to:
- planned enhancements in our approach to Operational Learning, including reviewing the resources required in this area to deliver the fire standard, and embedding a revised process that has assurance and improvement for our people and communities at its heart.
 - 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.
 - As part of the Data Management Standard, exploring ongoing opportunities to enhance our technical data capability by using advanced analytical techniques, as well as ensuring there is a competency framework in place for those staff analysing data and undertaking evaluations and research.

FIRE STANDARDS FORWARD LOOK

15. Subsequent Fire Standards progress reports will provide a more detailed breakdown of those individual requirements where we have limited assurance and outline the activity and/or improvements underway in those specific areas. It is also worth noting that two significant Standards – Leading the Service, and Leading and Developing People – are set to be published by the end of 2022. Currently, the consulted on versions of these Standards, which we are providing HIWFRS views on, have a total of around 40 requirements.

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’s 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 managed by the Organisational Assurance Team, with 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 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 48 actions.

RISK ANALYSIS

25. 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.
26. 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

27. 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 Standards Board's website.

CONCLUSION

28. The Fire Standards Board is relatively new, but 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.
29. 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 12 Fire Standards published, with various others being produced, including two leadership standards later this year. We are in a strong position currently with 94% 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

30. That the Standards and Governance Committee notes the progress made towards compliance of HIWFRS's with the Fire Standards.
31. To note that: future funding will be required to ensure we are compliant with National Operational Guidance; that there are ongoing resource requirements to provide assurance on our progress for embedding the fire standards; and there may also be future resource requirements for additional roles providing assurance in other critical areas.

APPENDICES:

32. Appendix A - HIWFRS Assurance Procedure

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

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