

# Terms of Reference

## 1. Role & Purpose

The role of the Fire Standards Board (FSB or Board) is to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England.

The Board will have responsibility for agreeing priorities and the workplan; oversight of standards in development; approval of final professional standards produced; and consider over time the status of standards produced and whether they remain current.

The Board will consider work of other standards bodies and organisations and reference or use equivalent existing standards wherever appropriate.

The Board will monitor the effectiveness of professional standards within the sector in a way that supports continuous improvement, including any learning from HMICFRS on how standards have been implemented. The NFCC's Central Programme Office (CPO) will facilitate all development work.

The Board will engage with key stakeholders, as and when appropriate. As part of the standards development work, the CPO will ensure wider stakeholder groups have the opportunity to contribute to, and be consulted on, professional standards through various engagement channels including the NFCC Strategic Engagement Forum, its sub-forums and other engagement and consultation activities.

## 2. Membership and Quorum

The Board will have an independent Chair and Vice Chair selected from outside the fire and rescue service. Their roles will be to lead the Board in ensuring that professional standards created and used by fire and rescue services support professionalism of the sector and the highest quality delivery of services to the public.

Other Board members will represent key stakeholder organisations. Their role on the Board is to represent the interests of their organisation in discussions, but to take decisions collectively in the interests of fire and rescue services as a whole. One representative will be put forward by each key stakeholder organisation. In the interests of continuity, this should normally be the same representative at all meetings. If a Board member is unable to attend a meeting, they may nominate an appropriate alternate representative who will have the same authority to take decisions.

The Board will have the following members:

- Independent Chair
- Independent Vice Chair
- Home Office representative
- National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) representative
- Local Government Association (LGA) representative
- Police, Fire & Crime Commissioners representative (via the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners - APCC)

The Board will be supported by:

- NFCC Central Programme Office representatives who will act as secretariat to the Board.
- Specialist specific subject matter experts and HMICFRS (as required)

The Chair will approve the agenda and chair Board meetings. If the Chair is absent, their role is taken by the Vice Chair. For the Board to be able to take decisions, the Chair or Vice Chair and at least three other Board members or their alternative representative must be present.

The initial term for the Board is five years, in line with the programme of work to develop professional standards. This term may be varied in line with the funding available. The Government has agreed in principle to match fund for the first five years.

An annual review of these terms of reference will be undertaken by the Board and a revision carried out, if agreed necessary.

### **3. Accountability / Delegated Authority**

The Board is responsible for approving standards and the approach to their development. They will set the priorities for standards development work. They will commission work based on proposals presented to them, monitor progress with ongoing work and approve completed work.

They will seek to ensure that any standards presented to them 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.

### **4. Development of Standards**

How the Board and CPO will operate to develop standards is detailed below.

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 for work to be completed 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.
- 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 will be 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.
- Monitoring benefits realisation and periodic reporting to the Board.

## 5. Board Member Behaviours

Members of the Board will be expected to operate in line with the principles set out in the [Cabinet Office Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#).

The Code sets out, clearly and openly, the standards expected from those who serve on the boards within the UK public sector.

## 6. Collective Responsibility

Board Members are free to express their own views within the context of the meeting discussion. Once a decision is reached, all Board members must abide by it.

## 7. Meetings and Secretariat

The Board shall meet as frequently as circumstances require but no less than four times per year.

Meetings of the Board may be held in person or via remote communication. The venue for meetings will be provided to Board members in advance of each meeting.

The Chair and Vice-chair may be required to meet with members of the CPO as and when needed to discuss outcomes from previous Board meetings, matters arising in between meetings and in advance of future Board meetings.

The CPO will provide secretariat support to the Chair, Vice Chair and the Board, which includes:

- Organisation of meeting dates, venues and inviting Board members.
- The preparation of meeting agendas, papers and minutes in liaison with the Chair.

The meeting agenda will be prepared by the CPO in agreement with the Chair. Board members will be invited to raise any items for the agenda, and meeting papers will be distributed one week in advance of each meeting.

The CPO will be responsible for preparing the meeting minutes after each meeting and agreeing their content with the Chair before distributing them for comment to the Board.

On occasion, there may be the requirement for additional non-members to be invited to attend all or part of specific meetings. This is likely to be in relation to specific pieces of work or agenda items. If this is the case, the CPO will inform all Board members in advance.