

FIRE
STANDARDS
BOARD



Memorandum of Understanding
between the
Fire Standards Board
and
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
and Fire & Rescue Services

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Fire Standards Board (FSB) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) are collectively engaged in promoting improvements in fire and rescue services in England.
- 1.2. The aim of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to describe the common understanding and intended approach of each body in relation to the other in respect of their roles and responsibilities, recognising their separate, discrete but complimentary functions and jurisdictions.
- 1.3. This MoU is not intended to, and shall not have effect so as to, create legal relations between the FSB and HMICFRS. It is approved and signed by the Chair of the FSB and HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services. It remains in place until a new document has been agreed and replaces it.

Fire Standards Board

- 1.4. The role of the FSB is to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional fire standards for fire and rescue services in England. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires all fire and rescue authorities to have due regard to the fire standards approved by the FSB.
- 1.5. The FSB is independent of government and fire and rescue services.

HMICFRS

- 1.6. HMICFRS was given responsibility to inspect the effectiveness and efficiency of fire and rescue services in England in 2017. HMICFRS's inspectors each have dual responsibility to inspect both fire and rescue services in England and police forces in England and Wales.
- 1.7. HMICFRS's current functions in relation to fire and rescue are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 which was amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017. The primary statutory responsibility is for HMICFRS to inspect and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of every fire and rescue authority in England.
- 1.8. HMICFRS is independent of government and fire and rescue services.
- 1.9. HMICFRS's inspection programme is subject to the approval of the Home Secretary in accordance with the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

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2. Working together

- 2.1. The role of the FSB is to set fire standards for fire and rescue services in England. In its role in assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and rescue services, HMICFRS will have due regard to fire standards approved by the FSB. This meets the requirement in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England which states that HMICFRS will have regard to fire standards as part of its inspections.
- 2.2. The FSB will monitor the effectiveness of its standards in supporting continuous improvement, including any learning from HMICFRS regarding the extent to which the standards have been applied and successfully implemented. The FSB will build on the evidence provided by HMICFRS to further develop and enhance its standards.
- 2.3. Where they exist, HMICFRS will use the standards produced by the FSB to develop its inspection processes and criteria and, where and to the extent appropriate, inspect against them.
- 2.4. Where HMICFRS identify key learning for the sector from their inspections, this will be given on an ongoing basis to the FSB to consider.
- 2.5. Effective points of contact at a senior level will be established between both organisations.
- 2.6. These points of contact should aim to meet every quarter to primarily share learning and evidence of effective practice gained from inspections and through standards development. This will inform the development of new standards, the review of existing standards and the evolution of inspection criteria. Formal minutes will not be taken, but a record of key decisions and/or actions will be made and shared with each organisation after each meeting.
- 2.7. Both organisations will respect the confidentiality of the information provided.
- 2.8. Both organisations will develop and keep under review the relationship between them to ensure that it remains effective.
- 2.9. Where HMICFRS considers making recommendations that would have an appreciable effect on the FSB, these should, where appropriate and practicable, be consulted on in a timely manner before publication.
- 2.10. Where HMICFRS identifies inconsistency in the application of the FSB's standards, it will inform the FSB accordingly. This will be done once the relevant report has been published. The exception is if the issue has the potential to cause a risk to the public. In such cases, this information will be shared immediately.

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3. Communication

- 3.1. HMICFRS and the FSB are committed to the principles of good public administration, including good communication and effective consultation with each other and with others throughout fire and rescue. They will ensure that, where necessary, statements make clear their respective roles and duties. They undertake to communicate and consult each other fully to appropriate timescales.
- 3.2. They will agree appropriate procedures to ensure effective working including timescales for consultation, points of contact and other liaison arrangements. Where appropriate and practicable, they will ensure that consultation exercises are co-ordinated so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort for respondents.
- 3.3. In relation to communications with the media, neither should speak on behalf of the other unless specifically agreed beforehand.

4. Review

- 4.1. This memorandum of understanding will be reviewed annually and, where appropriate, revised by agreement between FSB and HMICFRS. An earlier review can be triggered by any one of the following events:
 - (a) the appointment of a new Chief Inspector of Constabulary/Fire and Rescue;
 - (b) the appointment of a new Chair of the FSB;
 - (c) a significant change in government policy relating to the affairs of HMICFRS;
 - (d) where the FSB or HMICFRS has reason to seek a change to the concordat.
- 4.2. Any review of this concordat should be undertaken jointly by FSB and HMICFRS. The resulting document should be published to replace this version.

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5. Signatures

The memorandum of understanding is made between Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and the Fire Standards Board and signed on their behalf by:

Sir Thomas Winsor

Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Fire and
Rescue Services

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of
Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Suzanne McCarthy

Chair
Fire Standards Board

DRAFT