

Progress to date

The Project Board have met during the summer and considered the initial research undertaken. They have requested further analysis and research work on the operating models and agreed an extension of the project end date in order for this work to be completed and a full consultation to take place either later in the year or early 2018.

Workstreams

The project team have made progress against the three agreed work streams listed below; an update of each is included within this briefing note.

1. Establishing the current **standards landscape**, identifying the standards and qualifications in use now against the business functions of an FRS;
2. Options for a **standard-setting process** which includes scrutiny and approval; and,
3. Options for **operating models** for the proposed body - including options for funding and staffing.

1. Standards Landscape

What is a standard?

What has become clear is that there are many interpretations of what a **standard** is. For example, some consider an individual qualification to represent a standard; others consider national guidance to be a standard.

To help clarify, the following definitions have been agreed in the context of the project and the standards body:

Standard

A mark of achievement or quality

Setting Standards

The process to establish the requirements for reaching the desired level of achievement or quality

Providing a standardised approach to delivery

Providing supporting information & tools to help staff achieve desired outcomes in a common way

The project is considering standards both from an organisational perspective (what does the organisation need to attain and maintain adherence to) and an individual standard (what does an individual need to attain and maintain adherence to).

This collective of both organisational and individual standards will form a new **standards framework**. It is proposed, that this framework will act as a baseline for what a good organisation looks like; across all areas of its business - once the body is established.

The project team are liaising with the HMICFRS inspection team as their arrangements develop. This will ensure cohesion and alignment of both projects and ensure that the standards framework which is developed will be utilised within the inspection arrangements.

Standards Landscape Survey

- The standards landscape survey was concluded in May 2017
- There were 17 individual surveys aligned to typical business functions
- 92% of services responded to the survey
- 14 services provided a return against all 17 surveys
- All Devolved Administrations took part in the survey

With the help of London Fire Brigade the survey data has been transferred into a database. This has allowed the team to start analysing the results - with a view to extracting various reports.

For the purposes of the survey, we categorised the business functions into two distinct areas:

- those that represent the **sector owned standards** for a fire & rescue service or “*the profession*” - prevention, protection and operations
- those that represent the **non-sector owned standards** for a fire & rescue service which enable services to deliver their core business

The categories of business functions used for the surveys can be found in **Annex A** for information.

From the initial analysis of survey responses, it is apparent that whilst some areas of the “**sector owned standards**” appear to be well catered for with a variety of standards and qualifications, this may not be the case in all areas.

In comparison, the “**non-sector owned standards**” appears to be well catered for. Many services cited numerous industry-recognised standards for a large proportion of the business areas such as leadership, human resources, finance, procurement, IT and data management.

The team are currently collating reports by service from the data received. They will be liaising with the identified Single Points of Contact (SPoCs) in each service to verify the data. Once this is complete, the team will produce a number of reports to share with the sector and with HMICFRS to aid with the preparation of the inspection framework.

In the future this database will be a valuable asset for the sector, and will form the starting point for the standards framework which will be the responsibility of the body, once it is established. It is acknowledged that the establishment of a standards framework will have an impact on services, especially those with limited capacity and budget. This will be taken into consideration as part of both the implementation arrangements and for business-as-usual arrangements.

2. Standards Setting Process

A key function for the new body will be the review and management of the sector-owned standards used within the sector (both organisational and individual as outlined above). The team have conducted extensive research into how other sectors undertake this work and the resources required.

The majority of organisations that set standards follow the British Standards Institute (BSi) 'standard for setting standards' – yes there is one! Whichever sector you operate in, the process is fairly generic and is based around a number of fundamental “stages”, our interpretation of the process appropriate for fire and rescue is shown in the diagram below:

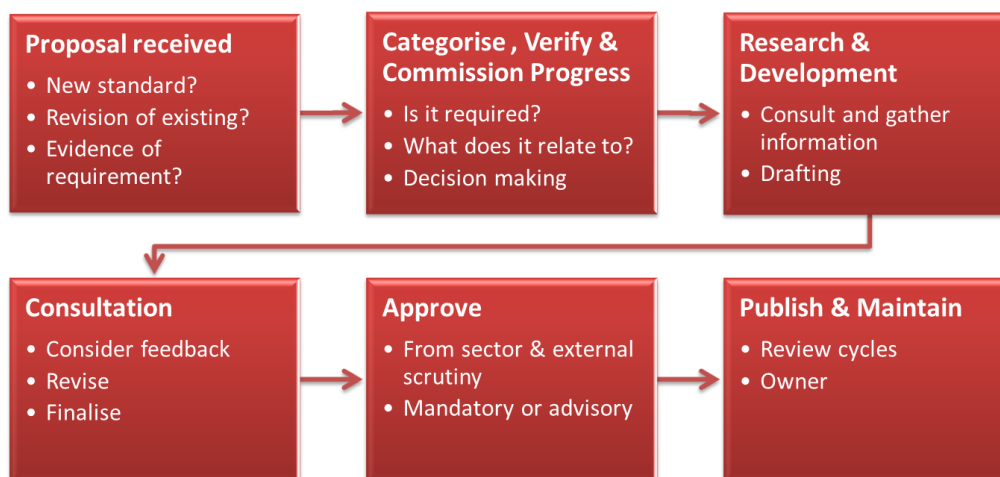


Figure 1 - Based on BS 0-2016 - Stages of standard development, publication and maintenance

To deliver the process a number of resources are required at each stage, these include:

- Overall management and governance including a strategic level commissioning and approval board
- Project Management, administration and communication to help lead and coordinate the process
- Ability to carry out subject specific research and development drawing on relevant subject matter expertise

The team held a workshop in July to share the results of our research to date and further explore the options for who could potentially help deliver the process, either in part or in full. Following this initial engagement with the sector and with the process understood, the team have been able to scope a number of potential operating models and ways in which the process could be delivered.

3. Operating Model

In the early stages of the project, the Home Office were keen to understand if there were opportunities to align to, or work with, the College of Policing in line with our duty to collaborate. The team have worked with colleagues at the College of Policing to explore those opportunities as well as considering other options for the standards body.

Based on the research carried out and following recognised business case methodology, the team scoped a number of potential operating models and presented them to the project board in August. The board considered all options and have asked the team to more fully research the potential of a body affiliated to other relevant organisations and consider utilising existing structures within the sector.

The team will be liaising with the NFCC, the coordination committee chairs and national leads on areas of work such as: the emerging Central Programme Office, the Fire Professional Framework and the NFCC support hubs.

The team will also be carrying out further engagement with the sector prior to a formal consultation on the proposed way forward.

4. Next Steps

The team will be:

- Producing the standards landscape reports during September and October to review and verify with each service via the network of SPoCs
- Extracting a number of reports to share back with the sector and other stakeholders with regards to current standards landscape (what is in use already)
- Progressing research on other organisations, sector functions and existing structures to assess the links and connections with the standards body once established
- Working alongside the HMICFRS as work on the inspection arrangements are developed and sharing the standards in use by services with them
- Liaising with the Cabinet Office as they seek to establish standards for the Local Resilience Forums.

The team will continue to attend various events and conferences during the autumn to further engage with stakeholders; raising awareness of the project and keeping stakeholders informed.

If anyone reading this has any questions or required further details, please do contact the team via the dedicated email address: PSBProject@ukfrs.com

Annex A – Categories of FRS Business Functions for Standards

Areas of Sector-Owned Standards

The body will be responsible for the following areas and associated standards:

Business Area	Suggested functions included:
Prevention - Community Safety	Prevention activities including volunteers, schools, youth engagement, cadets, home fire safety visits Casualty reduction Safeguarding
Protection - Fire Safety	Inspection officers / enforcement (Fire Safety Order) Fire investigation
Operational Response	Operational Policy Operational Effectiveness Operational Assurance New Dimensions/ National Resilience

Areas of Non Sector-Owned Standards

The body will signpost to existing industry recognised standards for the following areas:

Business Area	Suggested functions included:
Business Administration	Secretariat PAs Reception General administration
Communications & Media	Internal & External
Corporate planning and governance	Leadership Collaboration Strategic planning & organisational change Corporate risk management
Emergency Planning/LRF	Business Continuity & Contingency Planning Community risk register Emergency & crisis management, civil protection Local resilience - planning and preparedness
Estate and asset management	Buildings & Estates Asset Management Catering Services Environmental Management - Sustainability

Business Area	Suggested functions included:
Finance department & services	Internal and external finance Payroll Audit Procurement Contract management
Fleet Management	Fleet/workshops and equipment Maintenance & transport
Health and Safety	Organisation Risk assessment
Human Resources	Employee relations Contracts and employment Recruitment Occupational Health Equality and Diversity
Information & Communication Technology	Business continuity Infrastructure & assets Service support / help desk Operational (Radios / Airwave/ ESMCP)
Learning and Development, Training	Leadership and management (career pathways) Basic and core training (operational) Specialisms for example rope rescue, MTFA, USAR Control Room
Legal Services	Legal departments Internal Lawyers / Barristers Democratic services
Performance and Data	Business intelligence IRMP Information Management & FOI Project Management
Technical Services	Research, development & testing Water - Hydrants, mapping

Note: The above categorises aim to be fairly generic, it is acknowledged that exact department names and grouping of functions may differ from service to service.