

CFOA National Fire Chiefs Council

Arrangements and Operating Principles

Effective: 1 April 2017

Introduction

Under its Articles of Association, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) has established a National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

The NFCC drives improvement and development throughout the UK FRS and supports strong leadership of the UK FRS including the devolved administrations. The NFCC enables locally accountable Chief Fire Officers or their representatives to coordinate the work of the UK FRS to protect the public and improve community safety.

The NFCC replaced the CFOA Fire and Rescue Service Council.

The NFCC is chaired by the NFCC Chair, who is elected by CFOA's Individual members.

Purpose of this document

To set out the arrangements and operating principles which underpin the NFCC and determine how it operates.

Status of this document

All UK FRS are entitled, encouraged and expected to be members of the NFCC and each is entitled to be represented at formal meetings of the NFCC.

FRSs who are signatories to this document and who participate in the work of the NFCC are expected to follow the arrangements and operating principles set out in this document.

Terminology

A glossary of terms is provided at Appendix A1.

Effective date

The arrangements set out in this document progressively came into force during 2016-17 in accordance with the transition plan established by the CFOA Board and apply in full from 1 April 2017.

Review of the agreement

The arrangements set out in this document will be kept under review and adapted as necessary by agreement with the NFCC and CFOA. In any case, the arrangements will be reviewed by 31 March 2019.

NFCC ARRANGEMENTS

NFCC terms of reference

The terms of reference agreed by the NFCC are set out in Appendix A2 and will be kept under review.

The NFCC works on behalf of the UK FRS.

The NFCC, as part of CFOA, should uphold CFOA's charitable objects at all times.

Membership of the NFCC

Each FRS in the UK is entitled to be represented on the NFCC. Membership is subject to payment of the Professional Partners fee determined by CFOA each year.

The representative will normally be the CFO / CO / CEO (or equivalent). It is expected that FRS representatives will have the authority to represent the views of their organisation.

Each CFO is expected to nominate a representative if they are unable to attend a NFCC meeting.

Other people attending the NFCC meeting

The NFCC may agree to invite other people to attend NFCC meetings as observers or presenters. These individuals will not have any voting rights.

Frequency

The NFCC will ordinarily meet quarterly. Other meetings may be held as required.

Voting

In the event of a vote at an NFCC meeting, each FRS represented on the NFCC will have one vote. The NFCC Chair will not have a vote at this stage.

The attendee representing each FRS must have a clear mandate to commit that FRS to a course of action.

In the event of a tied vote, the NFCC Chair will have the casting vote.

Quorate

It is expected that all FRS will be represented at NFCC meetings. Quorate for decision making will be 50% of the FRS entitled to attend.

NFCC meetings arrangements

The NFCC Chair will chair the NFCC meetings. If she / he is not able to chair a meeting one of the Vice-Chairs will undertake the role. If neither Vice-Chair is able to carry out this role then the NFCC will elect a person to act as chair of the meeting.

Secretariat and administrative support for NFCC meetings is provided by CFOA.

The location of the NFCC meetings has regard to the principle that the NFCC works on behalf of the UK FRS. The four annual meetings will be held throughout the UK. This will be subject to ongoing review. As far as possible, easily accessible venues will be selected.

Agenda items will normally be supported by a written report using the agreed NFCC template.

Meeting papers will be circulated 14 days prior to the meeting date to allow appropriate consideration and consultation where local decisions are required. Some items may need longer than 14 days and would therefore have to be considered at the following meeting. Late papers will not normally be accepted.

Agenda and papers will be made available on the NFCC website unless they are marked as not for wider circulation.

Communication, branding and logo

The NFCC will establish itself with a distinct image and as the key group to speak on behalf of the UK FRS on operational, safety and professional leadership matters.

The NFCC Chair, NFCC Vice-Chairs, Coordination Committees and subject matter experts are empowered to speak on behalf of the NFCC in relation to those aspects of the NFCC's work for which they have responsibility. Communication is managed by the NFCC communication function to ensure consistent messaging.

The NFCC has its own brand (including a logo) with supporting brand guidelines which should be followed at all times. Advice on the use of the brand is available from CFOA. The CFOA brand continues to be used but only for charity related activity.

Templates are available for PowerPoint presentations, reports, letters, etc. These should be used at all times – to achieve the professional image of the NFCC and demonstrate the range of NFCC activity to its member authorities.

To protect the brand, specific agreement by the NFCC Chair or NFCC is required before the NFCC logo / brand can be used in any joint marketing, joint contracts, memorandums of understanding, etc.

Commercial activities

In establishing the NFCC, CFOA has separated its commercial activities from the NFCC.

The NFCC will not have any commercial interests. The consequences of this include (but are not limited to):

- not working exclusively with one supplier or a group of suppliers; and
- not appearing to favour one or more supplier for financial reasons.

Conflict of interests

Representatives on the NFCC and other people supporting its work should be aware of any potential conflicts of interest in their engagement with the NFCC. Individuals are responsible for disclosing any potential conflicts of interest.

NFCC OPERATING MODEL

Background

CFOA is an Association which is both a charity and limited company. Following the changes to its Articles agreed on 12 September 2016, it has established a committee known as the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to bring together the UK FRS to provide co-ordinated leadership to the UK FRS.

CFOA Board

The CFOA Board has been reconstituted (and renamed as the CFOA Trustees) to provide governance of the Charity (the Association). It retains an oversight for the NFCC and supports its work.

The composition of the CFOA Trustees is set out in the Charity's Articles of Association.

There is a separate, independent Chair of the CFOA Trustees.

The NFCC Chair attends the CFOA Trustees meeting but is not a CFOA Trustee.

CFOA Trading Activities

The CFOA membership was in favour of retaining CFOA's trading activities. The CFOA's trading companies are under the oversight of the CFOA Trustees and are completely separate from the NFCC.

National Fire Chief Council (NFCC)

The NFCC is a committee established by CFOA. It is not a legal entity in its own right.

The NFCC arrangements are set out above.

NFCC Chair

The Chair of the NFCC is elected by CFOA individual members in accordance with the CFOA Articles of Association administered by CFOA. The Articles gives the CFOA Trustees flexibility to determine the arrangements for election and employment of the NFCC Chair.

The NFCC Chair is a paid, full-time role. The role is held for an initial two year term with the possibility of a further extension of up to two further years, both periods subject to satisfactory performance. The Chair is a serving CFOA member at the time of the election with experience as a CFO (or equivalent).

The Chair's job description is set out in Appendix A3. This is subject to review by the CFOA Trustees in liaison with the NFCC in the light of experience.

CFOA is responsible for making arrangements to employ the NFCC Chair but it may be appropriate for the NFCC Chair to be employed either by or on behalf of CFOA or a host FRA. This is determined on a case by case basis.

The Chair must maintain an independence from any particular FRA in terms of discharging the Chair role. If the Chair is employed by a FRA and seconded to CFOA, there will be a need to ensure that an appropriate relationship exists with the seconding FRA; the person will have no operational or line management responsibility within the FRA. Depending on circumstances, there may be a need to discharge specific employment responsibilities via the seconding FRA and possibly meet competency expectations of the FRA.

CFOA Performance Committee

The CFOA Trustees have established a Performance Committee to manage the performance of the NFCC Chair and to hold the NFCC Chair to account for the delivery of the NFCC annual plan. This committee consists of four people representing the NFCC plus an independent member. [To be confirmed by CFOA Trustees post-1 April 2017.]

NFCC Vice-Chairs

The NFCC Chair is supported by two Vice-Chairs. These are unpaid roles to support and advise the Chair in their work and which can also provide cover, for example, in the event of absences.

The job description for the role is set out in Appendix A4. The roles are complementary to the NFCC Chair role and, as such, the precise allocation of responsibilities may change over time depending on the individuals holding the roles.

Individuals are invited to put themselves for consideration as Vice-Chairs. The appointment of the NFCC Vice-Chairs is made by the NFCC based on a recommendation from the NFCC Chair. The expectation is that individuals would hold the position initially for two years with the possibility of a mutually agreed extension of up to a further two years (although some flexibility may be needed to avoid a situation where the end dates of more than one person coincide and there is a potential loss of continuity).

NFCC Coordination Committees

The NFCC is empowered to set up Coordination Committees to support its work and contribute to the achievement of the Annual Plan. Usually the number of committees will be based on a recommendation from the NFCC Chair. The NFCC will determine the establishment, terms of reference, and membership arrangements of appropriate Coordination Committees, based on recommendations from the Chairs and keep these under review.

A list of Coordination Committees is provided at Appendix A5.

The Coordination Committees are empowered to establish appropriate project groups to undertake specific areas of work for the committees and networking groups to discuss current issues and disseminate information.

NFCC Coordination Committees – Chairs

The NFCC will appoint the Chair of each Coordination Committee.

The Chairs of the Coordination Committees are not necessarily serving CFOs or equivalent but are recommended on the basis of their suitability for the specific requirements of each committee. Individuals are invited to put themselves forward for consideration as Chairs. The appointment of the NFCC Coordination Committee Chairs are made by the NFCC based on a recommendation from the NFCC Chair. The appointments are confirmed annually by the NFCC.

NFCC Steering Group

Prior to each formal meeting of the NFCC, a group consisting of the NFCC Chair and Vice-Chairs and the Coordination Committee Chairs meets to discuss current issues, assess progress against the Annual Plan and agree the NFCC agenda.

NFCC Subject Matter Experts

Individuals are identified by the NFCC to lead, advise and speak on its behalf in relation to specific aspects of the NFCC's work (e.g. particular technical topics or specific policy issues).

NFCC Annual Plan

The work of the NFCC is guided by the production and delivery of an agreed Annual Plan.

The Annual Plan is agreed by the NFCC and shared with other bodies such as the LGA Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) and the LGA Fire Commission.

There may be agreed changes to the Annual Plan in the light of unexpected developments during the year.

NFCC Funding

CFOA is responsible for the financial administration of the Charity including any costs arising from the NFCC Annual Plan and administrative / governance support.

The Professional Partnership fee is determined by the NFCC requirements (Annual Plan, support, etc.) and the operating costs of the Charity.

NFCC Relationships

The operating model emphasises the importance of the NFCC moving forward and the range of important relationships which need to be developed. This includes relationships with governments and devolved administrations, the wider fire sector, other emergency services, Fire and Rescue Authorities and the LGA.

NFCC and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The expectation (January 2017) is that the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England will be revised during 2017 and there will be an explicit reference to the NFCC role.

Support to the NFCC

CFOA is responsible for the governance and administrative support required by the NFCC. This may be provided either in-house or by buying in specific support.

Although there is day to day business for the committees to consider, they will support the

Annual Plan through a supported project and programme management approach.

[Support of a technical nature to the NFCC Chair and the Coordination Committees' Chairs is still to be determined.]

NFCC and Collaboration

Part of the role of the NFCC will be to encourage collaboration both across the Fire sector and more widely e.g. with other emergency services.

NFCC OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The following principles are intended to ensure that:

- the NFCC is effective in providing coordinated leadership across the UK;
- the views of the FRSs represented are appropriately considered;
- the NFCC Chair and others working on behalf of the NFCC are supported including when they are representing and providing advice on behalf of the NFCC;
- the priorities in the agreed Annual Plan are achieved;
- the advice and views expressed on behalf of the NFCC are authoritative and supported;
- decision-making and accountability at a local (FRA) level is not compromised; and
- the roles and responsibilities of elected politicians are respected.

Decision-making

The NFCC agrees guidance and policies (developed via its committees)¹; promotes best practice, provides coordinated support, provides advice for governments and other stakeholders and is the professional voice of the UK FRS.

To be most effective the NFCC needs to:

- Understand the views of UK FRS staff including CFOA members;
- Be aware of and appreciate the views of other stakeholders, particularly those in the Fire sector;
- Bring those views together via each FRSs representative at the NFCC formal meetings;
- Secure agreement on topics (e.g. guidance to be implemented, advice to be offered, Annual Plan actions);
- Have the support of FRSs; and
- Be able to rely on the support of UK FRS in taking action.

Communications

Communications are important within the NFCC so that people have and maintain a current knowledge of changes, issues and concerns.

NFCC representatives and the staff they represent within their services are actively encouraged to raise concerns, seek information and offer opinions to the people within the NFCC most able to take account of the feedback. This allows the NFCC to consider adapting its approach and maintains a culture of openness and transparency that respects the critical importance of establishing and maintaining the NFCC's reputation and supporting its actions.

The NFCC Chair will maintain, with CFOA support, a robust communications strategy to ensure that NFCC and CFOA members and kept well informed about the NFCC, Committees and wider work both at and in between the NFCC meetings. This includes communications around the work of the NFCC Chair and other people with specific

responsibilities.

Derogation

The expectation is that NFCC recommendations will have been properly researched; the matter appropriately debated and considered, with a range of different views heard; and a decision taken through an appropriate representative route. On that basis, the expectation is that the decision will be adopted and followed by FRSS' senior leaders and applied in their services.

There is strength in a united and consistent approach to improving services and public safety. There is a risk to the reputation of the NFCC if decisions agreed nationally are not applied locally.

This expectation recognises that ultimately CFOs are subject to decisions taken locally by fire authorities and accountable to their FRAs. However, if the NFCC is able to act on operational matters and avoid political / strategic policy matters, the instances of the NFCC acting contrary to local governance should be reduced. Matters decided by the NFCC will, subject to the nature of the issue, be able to be applied in a consistent manner but also reflect the different circumstances that exist across the various fire and rescue services. The development of policies for decision should take into account the different circumstances and governance that may apply in different parts of the UK.

An NFCC representative is expected, as far as reasonably practicable, to comply with the decisions of the NFCC unless a derogation with reasons has been requested from the NFCC via the Chair. This intention should ensure that the NFCC including the Chair are aware of the derogation and can act accordingly when offering advice etc.

Commitments of Chief Fire Officers and other senior leaders

Chief Fire Officers and senior leaders are expected to:

- support the arrangements for the establishment and running of the NFCC;
- apply the NFCC Operating Principles;
- support the priorities, actions and functions of the NFCC;
- support the NFCC Chair, Coordination Committee Chairs and subject matter leads who are established and appointed to;
- abide by the Association's code of ethics;
- comply with and assist with any operational requirements or responsibilities in the manner agreed by the NFCC unless a derogation has been implemented.

Support to the NFCC is provided by CFOA or other third parties. Chief Fire Officers are expected to provide such assistance to CFOA / third parties as is reasonably required under the provisions of this document.

Accountability, Direction and Control of the NFCC

Because the NFCC is formally a committee of CFOA, the CFOA Trustees maintain an oversight of the operation of the NFCC from the perspective of good and effective governance. This oversight and governance will inform their performance management of the NFCC Chair.

Accountability, Direction and Control of the NFCC Chair

The FRSS' representatives agree that the Chair shall be responsible for the matters set out in the Job description.

Specifically, the NFCC Chair is empowered to speak on behalf of the NFCC.

Support to the NFCC

Administrative and governance support required by the NFCC, NFCC Chair, NFCC Vice-Chairs and Coordination committees is provided by CFOA. The CFOA Trustees will be responsible for determining how that support is provided.

Funding

CFOA is responsible for the administration of the funding for the NFCC.

NFCC may agree to support, amongst other activities, specific projects, research, development of guidance, secondments and other investment. These activities will be part of the Annual Plan or separately agreed by the NFCC.

In agreeing the Annual Plan, the representatives also agree to meet the costs of the plan. This funding will initially and normally be through professional subscriptions. Where additional funding is required this will need to be agreed through NFCC before the related actions in the Annual Plan can be implemented.

Glossary of Terms

Annual Plan	An NFCC plan produced annually summarising the priorities and actions for the Council and its coordination committees
CFOA	Chief Fire Officers Association
CFOA Objects	CFOA's charitable aims as set out in its Articles
CFO	Chief Fire Officer or equivalent
Effective date	The date this agreement becomes effective, namely 1 April 2017
FRA	Fire and Rescue Authority
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
FRS Council	Fire and Rescue Service Council (replaced by NFCC)
FSMC	LGA Fire Service Management Committee
LGA	Local Government Association
LGA Fire Commission	LGA Fire Commission.- a meeting of representative elected members of FRA
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council
UK FRS	UK Fire and Rescue Services

NFCC – Terms of Reference (version 2016-10-21)

The NFCC terms of reference will need to be agreed at the first meeting of the NFCC and will be kept under review. Proposed terms of reference are set out below:

- a. *To share and promote best practice and innovation to support the delivery of excellent Fire and Rescue Services across the UK*
- b. *To contribute to and adopt professional standards for the UK FRS within legal requirements and subject to democratic decision making*
- c. *To support the development and adoption of operational standards and policies for the UK FRS within legal requirements and subject to democratic decision making.*
- d. *To coordinate activities, support, functions and processes, when there is widespread benefit, to maximise efficiency, effectiveness and to drive out waste*
- e. *To support the delivery of national functions and processes without compromising the statutory duties and responsibilities of governments, fire and rescue authorities and other organisations*
- f. *To engage with key partners at a national level to achieve strategic outcomes that support local services to provide an excellent service*
- g. *To support the coordination of the deployment of national resilience assets and response*
- h. *To represent the views and position of the national FRS to governments and devolved assemblies and to develop a trusted relationship that promotes two-way discussion, challenge and support leading to the provision of an excellent service*
- i. *To support the development of fire professionals across the UK*

Job description of NFCC Chair (as at 2016-09-12)

The role of the NFCC Chair is as follows:

1. *chairing the meetings of the NFCC and other boards as agreed;*
2. *manage the agreed changes to the NFCC, embedding transparent and effective governance, performance monitoring and reporting mechanisms and strengthening stakeholder engagement;*
3. *be responsible for engaging and consulting with the NFCC;*
4. *overseeing the implementation, development, monitoring and review of strategic and operational work plans that will enable the effective and efficient delivery of the strategic functions of the NFCC;*
5. *champion the capacity of the NFCC and of Chief Fire Officers working together to serve and protect the public, influencing national operational fire policy, acting as an advocate for the leadership of the UK FRS in the media and with stakeholders and promoting best practice;*
6. *attending regular meetings with and providing advice to the Home Secretary, Fire Minister, Chair of NPCC, Home Office officials, regional meetings with Chief Fire Officers and national fire leads. Health etc.;*
7. *representing the UK FRS before the Home Affairs Select Committee and where required other committees of, and groups within, Parliament;*
8. *engaging with a variety of national bodies and individuals to achieve the aims of NFCC, build and maintain relationships with key influencers and make sure the voice of the leadership is heard;*
9. *In conjunction with CFRA (or equivalent), CFOA Director Ops (or equivalent) and the CFOA lead on Resilience, co-ordinating the strategic fire response to major incidents or events through the NFCC;*
10. *representing the NFCC on the professional opinion of the senior leadership of the UK FRS, where required, on overarching issues as well as representing the service among the membership or on the boards of organisations, from international bodies to fire service related charities;*
11. *representing the NFCC and the UK FRS in national and international forums;*
12. *establishing links with Europe and the wider international community to promote UK FRS and to facilitate the exchange of information on good fire practice;*
13. *attendance at the CFOA Board, CFOA Performance Committee and other boards within the CFOA group;*
14. *leadership of CFOA organisational team covering day-to-day operations;*

15. *lead on behalf of the UKFRS at COBR meetings providing the link between Chief Officers and Government at times of crisis advising on strategic issues facing the service and communicating with Chief Officers. Attendance at relevant exercises, as participant or observer, and act as the UK FRSS' spokesperson to the media at national level;*
16. *ceremonial duties integral to the post;*
17. *providing support and pastoral care to Chief Officers including confidential advice to colleagues on critical issues in service on request; offering confidential advice and views to FRAs on request; giving welfare support to colleagues;*
18. *delivering excellent financial management and use of resources, ensure value for money is achieved and demonstrated publicly; and*
19. *promoting the highest standards of integrity, professional conduct and equality throughout the CFOA and its membership.*

NFCC Vice-Chairs – job description (as at 2016-11-01 and subject to review)

To provide support to the NFCC Chair as required;

To undertake any of the elements of the role described in the NFCC Chair job description when required, for example to cover periods of leave and other absences;

To provide advice to the NFCC Chair; and

To lead on specific topics and issues as agreed with the NFCC Chair

Coordination Committees of the NFCC (as at 2016-10-21)

1. **Operations** (*including National Resilience assurance, incident command development and JESIP*)
2. **Prevention** (*including education, road safety and work with other partners. Excludes health related activity*)
3. **Protection and Business Safety**
4. **Health**
5. **Workforce** (*including fire professional framework, training and development, leadership, equality and diversity. This could potentially be a joint approach with the police.*)
6. **Sector Improvement and Assurance** (*which would include research and development peer review data, assurance and benchmarking.*)
7. **Sector Resources** (*including procurement and technology e.g. ICT, Op Tech.*)
8. **International** (*including EU matters, Brexit, UK trade promotion.*)
9. **Finance**