



Protection and Business Safety – April 2018

Contents

Grenfell Update.....	1
Competence	2
Apprenticeships	2
Sprinklers.....	3
AFA/UwFS Reduction	3
Specialised Housing Guide	4
Fire Investigation Strategic Steering Group (FISSG).....	5
Event Safety Group.....	5
NFCC Protection and Business Safety Appointments	6

Grenfell Update

Fire safety audits and cladding

It is essential that fire and rescue services continue to monitor buildings with confirmed ACM cladding, until the building has been remediated. This is to ensure that any necessary interim measures remain appropriate and in place.

The Protection and Business Safety (PBS) Committee has been carrying out a review of the interim measures guidance (including waking watch, common fire alarms and evacuation strategies) which is anticipated to be released soon once agreed through the Government's Expert Panel. The main change is for the responsible person to consider the risk of external fire spread regardless of the height of the building.

Peer Reviews

The Committee continues to receive fire safety questions from local FRS, including where support is requested in respect of buildings installed with ACM cladding systems. If you have any local cases you would like peer review assistance with, please email nfccwmfshighrisecoordinationgroup@wmfs.net

Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety

Dame Judith Hackitt's six working groups finalised their draft recommendations at the end of March. The FRS sector was well represented in the groups with the NFCC involved in all six of the working groups. Through the committee we coordinated lead representatives and deputies from six FRS and set up mechanisms for internal support and feedback for leads to consult with and gather wider views to establish a broad NFCC consensus.

These internal groups included staff across 34 FRS, and I was really pleased to receive feedback from group leads that members all contributed actively and provided invaluable support to ensure that NFCC input was representative of the wider Fire and Rescue Service. I know that all members of the teams have worked very hard over the last few months to ensure our views have been heard, and I want to record my sincere thanks to all who have supported this effort.

We will continue to engage actively with Dame Judith and her team as they now take away the recommendations to consider as they finalise the final Independent Report, expected by the end of May.

Public Inquiry

The Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick held a second procedural hearing on 21 March. The Chair has currently granted core participant status to 532 individuals and organisations. NFCC application for core participant status was declined.

The Inquiry is likely to start hearing evidence from the bereaved, survivors and residents from 21 May 2018, beginning with a period of memorialisation of those who lost their lives. It is expected that evidence from firefighters will follow, which may begin in early June.

The NFCC continues to stand ready to assist with the response to the Grenfell Tower in whatever way we can. Most recently this has included support from the Committee in coordinating wider FRS peer review and technical advice to the Government's Expert Advisory Panel on issues discovered with a fire door installed at Grenfell Tower.

Staying up to date

You can continue to stay up to date with the progress of:

- the Public Inquiry via its public website, where you can find previous hearings, including transcripts and videos: <https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/>
- the Government's Building Safety Programme via its website on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-safety-programme> including by registering to receive the MHCLG's regular Building Safety Programme newsletter.

The Committee are continuing productive engagement with Government through embedded officers at the Home Office and the MHCLG.

Competence

The Competence Framework for Business Safety Regulators is now over four years old. Whilst it is encouraging to see that over 75% of FRS have adopted the framework there does appear to be some disparity in how it is being applied.

To support FRS to adopt a consistent approach, we're undertaking a review of the framework this year. The review will look to consider cross-referencing previous qualifications attained prior to 2013 to assist FRS in demonstrating the competence of existing staff whilst continuing to embed the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of new starters.

We will also look to ensure the framework is flexible enough to allow for variances in role, for example where there are differences in FRS's utilising specific roles for building regulations consultations. The aim of the review will be to ensure the framework can be adopted in full by all FRS, providing a platform to assure the competence of all inspecting officers which will no doubt link in to the findings of the Independent Review by Dame Judith Hackitt.

Apprenticeships

Recent months has seen significant progress on the Protection apprenticeships.

Level 3 Business Fire Safety Advisor

This apprenticeship standard has now been approved for delivery. The funding cap is £2,500 for a 24-month programme.

Level 4 Business Fire Safety Inspector

The application form for this standard has been submitted to the Institute for Apprenticeships and a response is due in April. The first meeting for development of the standard is planned for 12th May with an anticipated completion date of November 2019. Please contact Neil Guyett (neil.guyett@london-fire.gov.uk) for further information.

Level 6 Fire Engineer

This meeting is to identify a project lead who will participate in the Group and to develop the application form to be submitted to the Institute for Apprenticeships. The anticipated completion date is April 2020. Please contact Adreena Parkin-Coates (adreena.parkin-coates@london-fire.gov.uk) for further information.

Sprinklers

March saw the 2018 NFCC Sprinkler Week with the main attraction being a Sprinkler Seminar at Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service for Developers, Architects (including architectural students), Building Designers, Building Control Officers, Approved Inspectors, Health Officials and Councillors. The seminar saw presentations and question and answer sessions around NFCC priority areas of High Rise, Education buildings, Specialised Housing and Warehousing.

The seminar also saw the launch and publication of the updated and comprehensive NFCC position statement and additional information on sprinklers. These documents are available on <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Sprinklers>

The key messages are:

- Sprinklers are the most effective way to ensure that fires are suppressed or even extinguished before the fire service can arrive
- They save lives and reduce injuries, protect firefighters who attend incidents and reduce the amount of damage to both property and the environment from fire
- NFCC and the National Fire Sprinkler Network (NFSN) have worked together to investigate the effectiveness and reliability of sprinkler systems
- Evidence produced indicates that sprinkler systems operate on 94% of occasions demonstrating very high reliability. Furthermore, it is evident that when they do operate they extinguish or contain the fire on 99% of occasions and are thus very effective
- The research also found that in both converted and purpose-built flats that sprinklers are 100% effective in controlling fires
- NFCC recognise that sprinklers are an effective part of an overall fire safety solution and can be used efficiently to improve fire safety in a range of new and existing buildings
- NFCC support the concept of risk assessed retro fitting of sprinklers in existing buildings and would also welcome the prioritisation of a review of the Building Regulations (Approved Document B) to ensure fire safety requirements keep pace with new building developments

AFA/UwFS Reduction

There continues to be much interest in Automatic Fire False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals, politically and within both the FRS and wider fire industry.

One of the areas of focus has been the inconsistent relationships between FRS and Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisations (FAMO). The requirements for a FAMO are covered through existing British Standards and the 'NFCC Code of Practice for FAMOs'. To assist FRS with ensuring a professional relationship with their FAMOs, with the intention of reducing the unwanted fire signals, the Group has recently circulated a template Connection Agreement. This is designed to be flexible to meet local

circumstances, but at the same time demonstrates FRS support for FAMOs to operate to the required standards and CoP and will lead to an enhanced professional service.

Linked to the FAMO Agreement, approval was given at NFCC for the Group to develop a Connection Standard. This references the current relevant British Standards, our support for the use of third party accreditation within the fire industry and the 'NFCC Guidance for the Reduction of False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals' across the whole process of system design, installation, maintenance, management and FAMO call handling. A trial system will be installed in a couple of identified poorly performing premises. Reports from this trial will be presented back to the NFCC, with the overall aim to support a system that demonstrates that it engineers out false signals, and therefore improves the confidence of FRS to respond if a signal from this system was received by a FRS Control Room.

We have been working with the Home Office who are keen to have a joint approach with NFCC to examine the relationship between FRS initiatives and response models and any subsequent reduction in their fire false alarms and unwanted fire signals. The first stage of this work will be a joint and brief questionnaire to FRS in the coming months.

Finally, we are currently advertising for a new lead for this workstream to take over from Neil when he retires from service later this year.

Please contact Neil Boustred for further information nboustred@bucksfire.gov.uk

Specialised Housing Guide

The Specialised Housing Fire Safety Guide received unanimous support from all Chief Fire Officers when it was presented at NFCC in April last year. This decision was important to ensure the key principles of the guide would become embedded in fire safety standards and policies throughout the FRS.

The guide was officially launched in May 2017 by NFCC Chair Roy Wilsher alongside presentations on key aspects of the Guide on fire suppression, telecare, partnership and primary authority, and compartmentation. Like the Guide, the event was well supported by partners from the health and housing sectors.

Marketing of the Guide has been essential and supporting numerous events and press releases has been a comprehensive NFCC webpage:
<https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Higher-Risk-Accommodation>

This resource is designed to provide access to the Guide and other relevant literature and material that will assist identifying a suitable fire safety solution for vulnerable people through a person-centred approach. Resources also include a link to an e-learning module 'Fire Safety in the Home'.

Training on the Guide has been the other key aspect of the work this past year with regional seminars in the North East back in October last year, South East in January 2017 and a North West event planned for May.

An important part of the engagement was the commitment to continuous review and a workshop is therefore planned for the 19 April to review comments and contributions from across the sectors to ensure the Guide remains consistent with developments in fire safety, health and housing.

To ensure a sustained approach it is proposed that fire safety in Specialised Housing remains a key objective for the Protection and Business Safety Committee. This will ensure the fire safety standards for

the some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, who live in specialised housing, will be improved and the risk and impact of fire in these premises will be reduced.

Fire Investigation

There has been a continued focus on collaborative work with discussions including streamlining reports for the criminal justice system, regional fire investigation and the efficiencies that different models can offer. With that said, the group seek to highlight the need for effective fire investigation in order to contribute to Prevention and Protection activities with accurate, detailed data. The impending implementation of ISO 17020 in 2020 by the Forensic Regulator, will affect how all potentially deliberate fires are investigated by fire services. The Fire Investigation Strategic Steering Group (FISSG) are exploring a range of options to meet this challenge.

Work is underway to create an online area to share resources and expertise (initially focusing on white goods), including redacted fire investigation laboratory reports, case studies and an Excel database on how to identify white goods post fire. This should further improve efficiency and effectiveness within the sector. A group will be established on 'Workplace' and further details will be shared shortly.

The importance of electrical fires, ranging from fixed wiring to white goods has been further highlighted since the Grenfell fire. The FISSG has provided a response (via Prevention lead CFO Stewart Edgar) to the current MHCLG consultation of 'Mandatory (electrical) testing in the private rented sector'. This followed on from a year spent on the CLG working group, providing evidence to support a proportionate, mandatory testing regime.

The Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) recently announce the formation of the new Office for Product Safety & Standards, with aims that included the creation of a central product recall database to be fully implemented by the end of 2019. This follows NFCC's ongoing work with BEIS's Product Recall & Safety Working Group.

Event Safety Group

For any outdoor event, festival, mass gathering etc. to run safely it is essential that there is suitable and sufficient pre-planning on behalf of all stakeholders involved. Our Event Safety Group has developed a suite of best guidance documentation to enable a consistent approach to information giving, gathering, planning and recording.

These documents are intended to supplement, and be incorporated into, the event organiser's Event Management Plan (EMP).

Event Organiser's Checklist- This document has been produced to provide valuable and consistent information and guidance for new or inexperienced event organisers when planning for small to medium sized events and festivals.

Fire Risk Assessment Template- The existing CFOA Food Concessions and Traders and Market Stalls fire risk assessment templates have been reformatted to include a comment box for each question and hyperlinks to where relevant fire safety information can be found. The NFCC Temporary Structures fire risk assessment is a new document following the same format.

Event Assessment Matrix- has been developed to provide Fire and Rescue Services with a consistent way to calculate the *initial* risk from any event, the outcome of which dictates any further planning required by the Fire and Rescue Service.

Temporary Tactical Response Plan- has been developed to provide a consistent approach for the recording and provision of information required for operational personnel when attending incidents at events.

The Event Organiser's Checklist and Fire Risk Assessments are available on the NFCC website Guidance page - <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Guidance/publications>

The Event Assessment Matrix, Temporary Tactical Response Plan, and Event Specific letters will be available to all FRS once the log on facility has been added to the NFCC site.

A new document about 'Fire Safety in Semi-Permanent Tented Structures' is due for release soon.

NFCC Protection and Business Safety Appointments

There is an increasing appetite for other organisations to have NFCC representation on their groups. In recent months the following appointments have been made or advertised:

Internal NFCC appointments:

- NFCC Fire Engineering and Technical Standards Group – Chair [Bob Birtles](#) GMFRS, Vice Chair Gareth Steele LFB.
- NFCC Lead on AFA/UWFS – Vacancy currently advertised.

NFCC appointments on external groups:

- Fire Protection Association – Board Member - [Adreena Parkin Coates](#) LFB.
- Building Regulations Advisory Committee – Observer - [Ben Ansell](#) D&WFRS. This appointment is expected to be formalised in the coming months
- FM Global International Fire Service Advisory Group – Vacancy currently advertised.