



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Community Safety Committee

# **FIRE PROTECTION UPDATE**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 08 October 2021

**Purpose of Report:**

To update members on recent developments within Fire Protection

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the content of the report

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In February 2020, the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) published the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators. The purpose of this framework is to support changes which are arising from the Grenfell Inquiry and the subsequent publication of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety – Building a Safer Future.
- 1.2 The revised competency framework takes into consideration the Dame Judith Hackitt inquiry comments on competency and includes benchmark standards for Fire Safety Regulators regulating Higher Risk Residential Buildings (HRRBs) under the proposed legislative framework.
- 1.3 A new, more detailed, fire safety audit process for High Rise Residential Buildings has also been implemented by the Service.
- 1.4 The NFCC has recently published a new service delivery standard for Fire Protection. This new standard will be overseen by the Fire Standards Board and will form part of the inspection of the Service by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
- 1.5 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is also engaged in a partnership approach with Nottingham City Council to inspect multi occupancy residential buildings in the City through the Joint Audit and Inspection Team (JAIT).
- 1.6 Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, NFRS is the Regulating Body within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire for fire safety in non-domestic premises that do not fall under the remit of the Health and Safety Executive, Defence, Crown or Local Authority responsibilities.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 NFRS has adopted the guidance published by the NFCC for the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators. The guidance has been designed to support the Fire and Rescue Service to deliver the improvements required of the sector which have arisen from the Hackitt inquiry and the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.
- 2.2 All Fire Safety Regulators, who are responsible for the regulation of higher risk premises (HRPs), are to be independently assessed by and registered with a professional body. NFRS has been in discussion with the Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) who is working on a framework to meet this requirement.
- 2.3 The NFCC Competency Framework and IFE Accreditation Scheme will ensure the Service's Fire Safety Inspector's (FSI) are competent in their role and will maintain their professional development to a nationally recognised

standard. It will, however, involve an increased commitment in training, development, and quality assurance of the work that they undertake.

- 2.4 NFRS is also required under the code to have sufficiently trained Fire Safety Enforcement Officer's available out of hours. At present NFRS have four 'Flexi Duty Officers' who are part of the operational command rota to undertake this role, with a further one in training. The Service can also 'recall' Fire Safety Inspectors out of hours, if required.
- 2.5 The code also sets out standards for Fire Safety Advisors (Level 3) and Fire Safety Inspectors (Level 4) who carry out the audits in business premises.
- 2.6 Fire Safety Advisors holding a Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety can offer advice, educate responsible persons and undertake simple low risk audits. The Service delivered training to all operational Crew and Watch Managers to the Level 3 standard.
- 2.7 Fire Safety Inspectors holding a Level 4 Diploma in Fire Safety can complete audits of all regulated premises and undertake enforcement action. All NFRS Fire Safety Inspectors hold a Level 4 Diploma in Fire Safety or are in the process of obtaining the qualification.
- 2.8 The NFCC has introduced a new service delivery standard for Fire Protection. This will be the latest standard to be produced by the Fire Standards Board. NFRS are currently assessing the standard to assess any areas where improvements may be required.
- 2.9 NFRS has been working in partnership with Nottingham City Council to inspect multi occupancy residential buildings in the City. The Service has two dedicated Fire Safety Inspectors on the team which have identified 503 buildings which require inspecting.
- 2.10 At present the team have jointly inspected 122 building (24%). A total of 75 of these buildings are over 18 metres and have been inspected, with a further 60 high rise buildings remaining.
- 2.11 Of the total buildings currently inspected only two have been rated at the lowest category of 'broadly compliant', the remaining buildings require remedial works to be carried out. In terms of enforcement action, a total of eight buildings have required an Improvement Notice, two with a Prohibition Order (non-fire) and one with an Enforcement Notice.
- 2.12 It is worth noting that 70 buildings (8,467 Flats) have been identified as having unsatisfactory fire stopping in the fabric of the building, with five (416 flats) being deemed 'critical' due to the absence of any fire stopping.
- 2.13 Fire protection reform, particularly in high rise residential buildings, remains a priority for the sector. The reforms have placed increased demands on the Service's Fire Protection department. The Service is currently evaluating the resources it commits to fire protection to ensure it remains efficient and effective in the delivery of statutory functions.

- 2.14 Future demands on the regulation of the built environment and the wider delivery of public services will be central to the next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this update report. Expenditure to train and develop personnel is met from the Fire Protection training budget.

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Level 3 Fire Safety training has now been delivered to operational Crew and Watch Managers by the Fire Protection Team. These individuals are now completing their development portfolios so that they can be awarded the qualification.
- 4.2 A fixed term Fire Safety Trainer has also been employed with additional Government funding to deliver the Level 3 Fire Safety training.
- 4.3 Two Fire Safety Inspectors have been attached to the JAIT to undertake the inspections in conjunction with Nottingham City Council.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because of the nature of this report.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

NFRS have statutory obligations under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 to provide advice, audits, and enforcement action in non-domestic premises.

### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The NFCC Competency Framework and the Protection Standard will mitigate corporate risk of legal challenge during enforcement action by NFRS.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Service is engaged regionally and nationally in relation to Fire Safety activities, through the NFCC.
- 9.2 The Service is a signatory of the Regional MOU for Fire Engineering and currently receives support in relation to fire engineering queries through this mechanism.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the content of the report.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**