

LGA and NFCC Fire & Rescue Peer Support Framework

The challenges facing fire & rescue are significant but sector-led improvement, including OpA & Fire Peer Challenge, has proven to be a success in supporting improvement.

Given the ongoing challenges and the introduction of the HMICFRS inspection for fire & rescue services, the LGA and NFCC have taken the opportunity to revise the sector-led improvement offer in order to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the sector going forward.

There is a range of practical support available under a new 'Peer Support Framework', on a free of charge and/or subsidised basis, to enable the sector to drive continued improvement.

Our refreshed offer provides different tiers of support depending on the type and intensity of the challenges being faced locally. The range of tools and support available have been shaped by what the sector has told us it needs and what would be most valuable to them.

In addition, we continue to maintain an overview of performance in the sector so that we are able to offer support on a proactive basis, helping those seeking to improve their performance or facing the most severe challenges.

Our Offer of Support

The Peer Support Framework comprises a flexible and tailored set of products to meet the changing and different needs across the sector and has been developed to work for the Sector now that Inspections are in place.

Peer Challenge

Peer Challenge remains at the core of our offer. This is more varied than the approach to Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge but still retains the core principles:

- Of a team of peers acting as 'critical friends'
- The provision of constructive challenge informed by engaging with the service and authority plus a wide range of stakeholders
- The focus being on helping the service/authority to improve

Under the Peer Support Framework, peer challenge will be flexible and complement any inspection activity. For example, a peer team could visit before or after an inspection, they could look at broad areas (such as efficiency, effectiveness and leadership) or more narrowly defined ones (such as emergency response standards or fire fighter competency). The size and make-up of the team would be tailored to the objectives and the amount of time they spend with a Service will also vary.

The peer team will provide verbal and written feedback. Openness and transparency around the outputs and outcomes will be maintained with all FRS/FRAs publishing the relevant materials as an improvement aid for all.

Leadership & Governance Peer Support

With changes in governance arrangements in some places, the LGA is well placed to provide support through its elected member peers.

The LGA also offers a 'Fire & Rescue - Leadership Essentials' programme aimed at elected members with leading roles on FRAs.

In addition, support is available to senior leadership teams through a top team development offer. The support would be multi-faceted and dependent on the needs of the FRS/FRA.

Targeted Peer Support

Overseen by the LGA Principal Advisers based in the region, and working closely with NFCC, targeted peer support would entail a team of sector peers working alongside an FRS/FRA to address areas of under-performance identified as part of an inspection. This approach demonstrates that the sector is collectively responsible and has the capacity to address its own improvement.

How to access our sector-led improvement offer

Support is accessed through the LGA's regionally based Principal Advisers or the NFCC leads. They are the focal point for discussions with FRS/As about their improvement needs and the support we can make available.

LGA Principal Advisers Contact

East of England

Rachel Litherland – Email: rachel.litherland@local.gov.uk Phone: 07795 076834

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South East

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West Midlands

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NFCC Contacts

Geoff Howsego (Chair of Sector Improvement and Assurance CC) – Email: Geoff.Howsego@hantsfire.gov.uk Phone 023 8214 0142

The National Lead for Peer Support will be changing shortly. Once the appointment is made, we will ensure their contact details are shared