



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

The professional voice of the UK Fire & Rescue Service

National Fire Chiefs Council

Operating Principles and Arrangements

Effective: 1 April 2019

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1. Introduction

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

The NFCC drives improvement and development throughout the UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) and supports strong leadership of the UK FRS including the devolved administrations.

The NFCC has a representative Council which enables locally accountable Chief Fire Officers (CFO), Chief Officers, Chief Executives¹ or their representatives to coordinate the work of the UK FRS to protect the public and improve community safety.

The Council replaced the CFOA Fire and Rescue Service Council and all other CFOA professional structures.

The NFCC is represented by the NFCC Chair who also chairs the Council.

2. Purpose of this document

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

2.1. 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. It is also an expectation of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England that FRS in England will engage with the NFCC.

FRS 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.

2.2. Terminology

A glossary of terms is provided at [Appendix A1](#).

2.3. Effective date

The first edition of the NFCC Operating Principles applied from 1 April 2017; this second edition came into effect on 1 April 2019.

2.4. 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 again by 31 March 2021.

¹ References to Chief Fire Officers will always include equivalents including Chief Officers, Chief Executives or any other term used to describe the senior leading officer of any given service.

3. NFCC Arrangements

3.1. 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 will uphold CFOA's charitable objects at all times.

3.2. Membership of the NFCC

Each FRS in the UK is entitled to be represented on the Council with equal voting rights and take part in NFCC activities and structures. Attendance at Council and involvement in other NFCC activity is subject to payment of the Professional Partnership fee recommended by Council and determined by CFOA Trustees each year.

The representative at Council will normally be the Chief Fire Officer or equivalent. Each Chief Fire Officer is expected to nominate a representative if they are unable to attend a NFCC meeting.

It is expected that the Chief Fire Officer or their representatives will have the authority to represent the views of their organisation.

3.3. Other people attending the NFCC meeting

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

3.4. Frequency

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

3.5. Voting

In the event of a vote at Council, each FRS represented 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.

3.6. Quorum

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

3.7. NFCC meeting arrangements

The NFCC Chair will chair the Council. 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 the NFCC support hubs.

The location of the Council meetings has regard to the principle that the NFCC works on behalf of the UK FRS. The four annual meetings are held at West Midlands Fire Service but invitations from other services to host meetings are encouraged. Venues with good transport links will be preferable.

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

Meeting papers will be circulated 10 days prior to the meeting date. Late papers will not normally be accepted unless approved by the NFCC Chair by exception.

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

3.8. Communication, branding and logo

The NFCC has established itself as the professional voice speaking on behalf of the UK FRS on operational, protection, prevention, safety, professional workforce and leadership matters.

NFCC communications are managed through the NFCC Support Hub to maintain consistency.

The Chair, Vice-Chairs, Committee Chairs and NFCC Leads are empowered to speak on behalf of the NFCC in relation to those aspects of the NFCC's work for which they have responsibility.

Should a member receive an invitation to speak at either a commercial event or on-commercial event on behalf of the NFCC, they should firstly liaise with the NFCC Support Hub. This is to ensure consistency of message and to allow appropriate coordination of publicity activity.

For commercial events, the NFCC Support hub will explore the potential of speaker fees as a donation to the charity. Any fees or donations agreed, will be collected through CFOA Services Limited (CSL), the CFOA Group's trading arm.

The NFCC has its own brand (including a logo) with supporting brand guidelines which should be followed at all times. Use of the brand demonstrates the range of NFCC activity to its member authorities and partners.

To protect the brand, specific agreement by the Chair (or in the absence of the Chair the Vice Chairs) is required before the NFCC logo / brand can be used on any joint marketing materials, joint contracts, memorandums of understanding or any other documents or publications.

All NFCC activity related presentations must use the NFCC brand. Templates are available for PowerPoint presentations, reports, letters and more. These should always be used to maintain brand integrity and to maintain the professional image of the NFCC.

The NFCC brand can be associated with conferences, seminars and partner activity if agreed by the Chair (or in the absence of the Chair the Vice Chairs).

The CFOA brand is only for charity related activity.

Advice on the use of the brands is available from the NFCC Support Hub.

3.9. Commercial activities

In establishing the NFCC, CFOA has separated governance and responsibility for its commercial activities from the NFCC. The NFCC will not have any independent commercial interests.

NFCC agrees to the CFOA Group's trading arm, CSL, to use its logo for commercial activity, including but not limited to conferencing and events and sponsorship.

When utilising the NFCC brand for conferencing, sponsorship and partnership arrangements, CSL will work within the brand guidelines and will always conduct their business in an appropriate and transparent manner.

Sponsorship of events is acceptable whilst working with the branding guidelines and principles outlined above and when conducted in an appropriate and transparent manner.

3.10. 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.

4. NFCC Operating Model

4.1. Background

CFOA is an association which is both a charity and limited company, it has a committee known as the Council to bring together the UK FRS to provide co-ordinated leadership to the UK FRS.

4.2. CFOA Trustees

The CFOA Trustees provide governance of the charity and are responsible for the financial management arrangements of both the charity and the NFCC. This may be provided either in-house or by buying in specific support.

Through the Performance Committee, the Trustees are also responsible for overseeing the performance management of the Chair.

The composition of the CFOA Trustees is set out in the CFOA'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.

4.3. CFOA Trading Activities

CFOA operates a trading company called CFOA Services Limited (CSL) which is separate from the NFCC. It has separate governance arrangements with oversight provided by the CFOA Trustees.

The NFCC Chair attends CSL Board as an adviser.

5. National Fire Chiefs Council

The Council is the regular meeting of CFOs of the UK FRS, it is not a legal entity in its own right. The NFCC operating model is described in section 4.

5.1. NFCC Chair

The NFCC Chair is elected by the Individual Members in accordance with the CFOA Articles of Association. The Articles give the CFOA Trustees flexibility to determine the arrangements for election and employment of the NFCC Chair.

The Chair is a paid, full-time role. The Chair's job description is set out in [Appendix A3](#). The Chair is empowered to speak on behalf of the NFCC.

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 are subject to satisfactory performance. The Chair must be a serving member at the time of the election with experience as a CFO² in a Fire and Rescue Service.

A decision on whether the Chair serves the two further years is made by the CFOA Trustees following a recommendation from the Performance Committee and agreed with Council.

This is subject to review by the CFOA Trustees in liaison with the NFCC in the light of experience.

CFOA is responsible for coordinating arrangements to employ the Chair but it may be appropriate for the Chair to be employed either by or on behalf of CFOA or a host Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA). This will be 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 an FRA and seconded to CFOA, there will be a need to ensure:

- That an appropriate relationship exists with the seconding FRA; and
- that 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 their competency expectations.

5.2. Performance Committee

The CFOA Trustees Performance Committee manage the performance of the Chair and hold the Chair to account for the delivery of the NFCC annual plan.

This committee consists of four people representing the NFCC with the possibility of an independent member. The Performance Committee report to the Trustees.

² References to Chief Fire Officers will always include equivalents including Chief Officers, Chief Executives or any other term used to describe the senior leading officer of any given service.

5.3. NFCC Vice-Chairs

The 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 Vice Chair job description for the role is set out in [Appendix A4](#). The roles are complementary to the 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 forward for consideration as Vice-Chairs. The appointment of the NFCC Vice-Chairs is made by the NFCC based on a recommendation from the 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). The Chair will discuss and confirm any extension with Council.

5.4. NFCC Committees

The NFCC has Committees to support its work and contribute to the achievement of its Annual Plan. Usually the number of Committees will be based on a recommendation from the Chair.

The NFCC will determine the establishment, terms of reference, and membership arrangements of appropriate Committees, based on recommendations from the Chairs, these will be agreed at Council and kept under review.

A list of Committees is provided at [Appendix A5](#) and on the NFCC website.

The Committees are empowered to establish appropriate project groups working to undertake specific areas of projects of work (utilising the NFCC Central Programme Office where appropriate), discuss current issues and disseminate information.

The Committees and any sub-groups must align to the NFCC Strategy and Annual Plan to help the NFCC achieve its aims and strategic commitments.

5.5. NFCC Committee Chairs

The Council will agree the Chair of each Committee.

The Chairs of the 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 NFCC Committee Chairs is made by the Council based on a recommendation from the NFCC Chair following consultation with the vice chairs.

The Committee Chair appointment is for a three-year period and appointments are confirmed by the Chair. There will be an opportunity for other members to stand as the Chair of a committee after three years.

Committee Chairs can appoint strategic leads in their area following discussion with the NFCC Chair.

5.6. NFCC Steering Group

Prior to each formal meeting of the NFCC, the Steering Group will meet to discuss current issues, assess progress against the Annual Plan and agree the Council meeting agenda. This group consists of the NFCC Chair, Vice-Chairs, Committee Chairs.

The group is responsible for monitoring the Central Programme Office's work plan. They will also be responsible for making decisions relating to the portfolio of NFCC programmes and projects therefore the Head of the Central Programme Office will also be part of this group.

5.7. 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).

5.8. 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 reviewed annually. Any new work will be managed through an annual planning process overseen by the Steering Group.

The Annual Plan may be shared with other bodies such as the LGA Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) and the LGA Fire Commission.

If any changes to the Annual Plan are required mid-year due to unforeseen circumstances, they will be subject to agreement by the Steering Group in line with the annual planning process and prioritisation criteria. Any changes and the justification of such and any financial implications would be reported by the Steering Group to Council.

NFCC Committees and other structures will have due regard to the NFCC Strategy and Annual Plan.

5.9. NFCC Funding

CFOA is responsible for the financial administration of the Charity and funding of the NFCC through the collection of subscriptions from FRS known as the Professional Partnership fees.

These fees provide CFOA with the funding to support the NFCC in delivery of its Annual Plan and the NFCC and CFOA running costs.

The Professional Partnership fees are calculated through a funding formula based on the size of community a FRS serves. The formula will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains the most fair and relevant way to calculate the professional subscriptions.

NFCC may agree to support other activities such as specific projects, research, development of guidance, secondments and other investments. Any associated funding

requirements must be identified before work begins to ensure they fall within existing budget arrangements.

Should additional funding be required the Chair will liaise with CFOA Trustees with regards budget allocation or use of CFOA reserves.

5.10. NFCC Stakeholders

The operating model emphasises the importance of the NFCC moving forward and the range of important relationships with stakeholders that 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.

5.11. NFCC Hubs

To coordinate and manage national work more efficiently and effectively, support is provided through the Chairs Office and three support hubs which include:

- NFCC Support Hub located in West Midlands Fire Service which provides support services and administration to the Council, Committees and Steering Group
- NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO) located in London Fire Brigade which provides support to NFCC Programmes and Projects including benefits realisation, maintains guidance and coordinates National Operational Learning. The CPO also provides support to the English Fire Standards Board.
- NFCC National Resilience Hub located in Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service which provides support through the National Resilience Fire Control and National Resilience Assurance team.

5.12. 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.

6. NFCC Operating Principles

The following principles are intended to ensure that:

- the NFCC is effective in providing coordinated fire and rescue leadership across the UK;
- the views of the FRS represented are appropriately considered;
- the 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.

6.1. Decision-making

The NFCC agrees guidance and policies (developed via its committees), 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 and its 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.

6.2. Communications

It is important that the NFCC communicates with the representatives that form the Council to ensure they are kept informed of current activity including changes, issues and concerns.

To ensure communication flows to and from the Council across all services, the NFCC encourages regional meetings which mirror that of the national Committee structure.

The Chair, with support from the NFCC Support Hub, will maintain a robust communications strategy to ensure that NFCC, FRS staff and partners are kept well informed about the NFCC, Committees and wider work both at and in between Council meetings.

This includes communications about the work of the Chair and other people with specific responsibilities.

Committee Chairs are also expected to provide regular communications to individual members and the NFCC, usually after committee meetings.

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.

7. Derogation

The expectation is that NFCC recommendations will have been properly researched; matters 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 any decision taken at Council will be adopted and followed by FRS 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.

It is recognised that CFOs are accountable to their FRA or Governing body and are subject to the decisions taken by them.

Subject to the nature of the issue, the differing Governance models and circumstances in services across the UK will be considered by the NFCC when it makes recommendations to Council.

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 logged with the NFCC via the Chair. This intention should ensure that the Council, including the Chair, are aware of the derogation and can act accordingly when offering advice, etc.

Should a fire and rescue service seek to derogate from a decision taken by the Council, they should write to the NFCC Chair, stating:

- The decision being derogated from;
- The reasons for the derogation; and
- The expected impact and/or benefit of the derogation to the local service.

The Chair will maintain confidentiality unless agreed otherwise. Any derogation will lead to a conversation between the Chair and CFO.

7.1. Commitments of Chief Fire Officers

CFOs, their equivalents 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, Committee Chairs and subject matter leads
- 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.

The NFCC is supported by the three support hubs and the Chair's office which are funded through CFOA. CFOs are expected to provide reasonable support to the NFCC under the provisions of this document.

8. Appendix A1 – Glossary of Terms

Annual Plan	An NFCC plan produced annually summarising the priorities and actions for the Council and its Committees
CFOA	Chief Fire Officers Association
CFOA Objects	CFOA's charitable aims as set out in its Articles of Association
CFO	Chief Fire Officer will always include equivalents including Chief Officers, Chief Executives or any other term used to describe the senior leading officer of any given service
Effective date	The date this agreement becomes effective, namely 1 April 2019
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

9. Appendix A2 - NFCC – Terms of Reference

- a) To share and promote best practice and innovation to support the delivery of excellent FRS 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
- j) To promote the FRS in line with the NFCC strategy and annual plan
- k) To provide advice to English Government in line with the English National Framework
- l) To support colleagues and FRS
- m) To demonstrate leadership behaviours in line with the NFCC Leadership Framework

10. Appendix A3 - NFCC Chair Job Description

The role of the NFCC Chair is as follows:

- a) chairing the meetings of the NFCC and other boards as agreed;
- b) manage the agreed changes to the NFCC, embedding transparent and effective governance, performance monitoring and reporting mechanisms and strengthening stakeholder engagement;
- c) be responsible for engaging and consulting with the NFCC;
- d) 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;
- e) champion the capacity of the NFCC and of CFOs 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;
- f) attending regular meetings with and providing advice to the Home Secretary, Fire Minister, Chair of NPCC, Home Office officials, regional meetings with CFOs and national fire leads, Health etc;
- g) representing the UK FRS before the Home Affairs Select Committee and where required other committees of, and groups within, Parliament;
- h) 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;
- i) in conjunction with the Operations Committee Chair and NFCC lead on Resilience, co-ordinating the strategic fire response to major incidents or events through the NFCC;
- j) 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;
- k) representing the NFCC and the UK FRS in national and international forums;
- l) establishing links with Europe and the wider international community to promote UK FRS and to facilitate the exchange of information on good fire practice;
- m) attendance at the CFOA Board, CFOA Performance Committee and other boards within the CFOA group;
- n) monitoring through the Chair's office the performance of the three hubs;
- o) lead on behalf of the UKFRS at COBR meetings providing the link between CFOs and Government at times of crisis advising on strategic issues facing the service and communicating with CFOs. Attendance at relevant exercises, as participant or

observer, and act as the UK FRSs' spokesperson to the media at national level;

- p) ceremonial duties integral to the post;
- q) providing support and pastoral care to CFOs 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;
- r) delivering excellent financial management and use of resources, ensure value for money is achieved and demonstrated publicly; and
- s) promoting the highest standards of integrity, professional conduct and equality throughout the CFOA and its membership.

11. Appendix A4 - NFCC Vice-Chairs Job Description

- a) To provide support to the NFCC Chair as required;
- b) 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;
- c) To provide advice to the NFCC Chair; and
- d) To lead on specific topics and issues as agreed with the NFCC Chair.

12. Appendix A5 - Committees of the NFCC

1. Operations

Operational performance, National Resilience assurance, National Operational Guidance maintenance, National Operational Learning (NOL), operational research and development, incident command development and JESIP

2. Prevention & Strategic Health

Education, road safety, water safety and health related work

3. Protection and Business Safety

Protection policy, training and development

4. Workforce

Fire professional framework, training and development, leadership, apprenticeships, inclusion, equality and diversity

5. Sector Improvement and Assurance

Peer review data, assurance and benchmarking, research and development, communications and technology

6. Sector Resources

Legal, information security, information technology and protective security

7. Finance

National approach to fire service funding and links to the fire finance network