

Fire authority members guide

Foreword

Dear fire authority member,

As Chair of the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Services Management Committee, it is my pleasure to welcome you to your new role on your fire authority. For some of you this will be your first time on a fire authority, or in fact as an elected official; if so, your new role will give you a fresh perspective on the diverse range of activities which your fire service is involved with in your local community.

As you will be aware, local government is facing unprecedented challenges across the board and as a part of the local authority family, fire authorities are no different. It is true that public services are working in an increasingly constrained financial context, while demand for services continues to rise. Fire authorities have an added challenge that, whilst instances of fire have generally decreased, they must continue to resource services commensurate with the level of risk present in their area.

Major incidents like the Manchester bombings and the 2018 summer wildfires highlight another challenge for Fire Authorities: national resilience in the context of environmental change, shrinking budgets and reduced staffing. Alongside these historic challenges, the Grenfell Tower fire shed light on the role of fire services in ensuring building safety, and the subsequent Hackitt Review created a range of new responsibilities which will fall to fire authorities in the future.

The LGA represents the fire sector in England and Wales and, through the Fire Services Management Committee, continues to work hard to make the case to central government that fire authorities must have the necessary budget and resources to continue to deliver the best possible services for local communities.

The LGA is also a resource to help you carry out your role to the best of your ability. Our support offer ranges from individual peer support to peer challenge for the whole authority, and is bespoke to the needs of the authority. Further details of our current offer can be found below. In particular, new members should consider our Leadership Essentials programme.

With fire authorities in LGA membership from across England, the LGA provides a vast network for sharing best practice and to help support you in your work.

I wish you the best of luck in your term in office and hope to see you soon.



Councillor Ian Stephens

Chair of the LGA Fire Services Management Committee

Fire authority members support and opportunities

Leadership Essentials

The Leadership Essentials programme is designed to provide themed opportunities for elected members to develop their skills in a specific area. The Fire Leadership Essentials is free to all members and happens twice a year. We are continuously adapting our programme to ensure it remains fit for purpose and provides members with the best possible support.

We encourage all fire members to attend a fire programme as an induction to the fire sector and an opportunity to network with other fire members. You can find out more and the dates of our current programmes at www.local.gov.uk/councillor-development or by emailing grace.collins@local.gov.uk.

LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition

The LGA runs a two-day conference in March every year for fire and rescue authorities. The conference attracts over 200 delegates, speakers, presenters and exhibitors every year. Conference includes a comprehensive two-day programme covering all of the most up-to-date issues affecting the fire sector, while looking ahead to the future challenges and opportunities for the sector. Speakers for the most recent conference included senior Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government officials, key National Fire Chiefs Council leads, and industry and housing experts.

The 2020 conference will take place in Blackpool and presents a perfect opportunity to network with other fire authority members and officers as they share best practice from across the country. You can find out more or book your place via the events page on the LGA website www.local.gov.uk/events

LGA Fire Bulletin

Fire authority members are encouraged to sign up for our Fire Bulletin, through which the LGA sends out relevant news, developments and updates on our support offer. You can sign up to our Fire Bulletin and any other bulletins of interest at www.local.gov.uk/e-bulletins

Firefighters' Pension Scheme Manager support and training

According to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014, fire authorities are responsible for fire fighters pensions scheme and are defined as the 'Scheme Manager' under rules 3 and 4 of the regulations. The scheme manager is responsible for managing and administering the scheme and any statutory pension scheme that is connected with it. This responsibility also applies where the responsibility for fire has been transferred to the mayor's office or to a police and crime commissioner.

For more information please see this LGA factsheet www.fpsregs.org/images/admin/Schememanagerv1.pdf

To find out more about the free scheme manager training offered by the LGA please email bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk.

Other training/resources

This year we intend to build on last year's successful regional masterclasses and training sessions by putting on further masterclasses on culture, diversity and inclusion, and on scrutiny. To accompany these masterclasses we also intend to produce a series of mini-videos to support member development on these key themes and others.

In response to this year's inspection regime, the LGA has commissioned a Scrutiny Toolkit to provide practical assistance to fire authority members wishing to respond robustly to the results of inspection.

More information on these resources will be available through our Fire Bulletin and our fire and rescue webpage as and when available: www.local.gov.uk/topics/fire-and-rescue

Roles and responsibilities of fire and rescue authorities

There are four key responsibilities for fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, which FRAs must make provision for, including:

- extinguishing fires in their area
- protecting life and property in the event of fires in their area
- rescuing and protecting people in the event of a road traffic collision
- rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies.

FRAs also need to collect information to assess the risk in their areas, as well as protect the health and safety of their workers.

The Act gives the Government responsibility for producing the Fire and Rescue National Framework, which outlines the Government's high-level priorities and objectives for FRAs in England. The framework was refreshed in May 2018: www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england--2

Current priorities in the framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:

- make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and for response to fire and rescue related incidents
- identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face
- collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the services they provide be accountable to communities for the services they provide

- develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

The Government is required to report every two years on FRAs' compliance with the framework; you can find previous reports at www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 sets out the responsibility of FRAs to react to emergencies as a 'category 1' responder.

Fire and rescue authority governance models

There are six principal types of fire and rescue authority (FRA), as listed below.

County/unitary FRA: where fire and rescue services share a boundary with a single upper-tier or unitary council, the council itself is the fire authority. The fire services in this instance are integrated into the council and all members of the council are responsible fire authority members, although one member may hold the fire services portfolio.

Combined FRA: in non-metropolitan areas where the fire and rescue service's boundary incorporates more than one upper-tier council, a stand-alone fire authority is established. Elected members appointed by the leaders of the constituent councils make up this authority. Combined FRAs vary in size, as the number of members is based on relative population size and must also be political balanced.

Metropolitan FRA: in metropolitan areas (with the exception of London and Manchester), arrangements are similar to those of combined FRAs. Members are appointed to the authority by the leaders of the constituent metropolitan councils.

London: London previously had a governance system called the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. However, this was abolished under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and the London Fire Commissioner was created in its place. The Commissioner is a functional body of the Greater London Authority and is scrutinised by the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee. The Mayor of London sets its budget, approves the London Safety Plan and can direct its activity. There is also a Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience.

Mayor-led: the mayor-led system is similar to the London governance system. Responsibility for the fire service sits with the elected mayor, but may be delegated to a deputy mayor. For example, in Greater Manchester the overall responsibility for safer communities (police and fire) falls to the mayor, including overall governance and strategic and financial management of the service. However, the mayor is supported by a deputy mayor for policing, crime, criminal justice and fire, who is responsible for making the police and fire services accountable to local people, and for consultation. Unlike the London model there is no particular committee or group to provide scrutiny.

Police, fire and crime commissioner (PFCC): the Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a legal duty on all emergency services in England to collaborate. Under this legislation, police and crime commissioners (PCCs) can be appointed to a relevant committee or sub-committee of the existing fire authority as a full voting member; they may also take on full responsibility for fire and rescue services in their area where there is a 'Local Case for Change'. PCCs must demonstrate a Local Case for Change through a compelling business case, which is submitted to the Home Office. This is often done following a public consultation and in some instances with local agreement.

LGA membership structures

Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC)

The FSMC is the committee within the LGA which represents the views and concerns of the fire community and ensures that local circumstances are reflected in the national context. The FSMC's aim is to take the lead on key fire concerns, including the future direction of the fire and rescue service, improvement within the sector, and on all matters affecting fire authorities.

Committee objectives:

- advise and assist fire and rescue authorities around increasing accountability and transparency in the governance of the fire and rescue service, including helping them prepare for the new inspection regime and influencing the development of a new standards body
- support the continuing development of the fire and rescue service by helping authorities to increase the flexibility and diversity of the workforce and make the best use of on-call roles
- contribute to the LGA's work to improve fire safety following the fire at Grenfell Tower

- work to transform service delivery, including greater collaboration across blue-light services, and support the National Fire Chiefs Council programme to improve procurement practices
- make the case for risk-based funding of the fire and rescue service.

You can find more information on the committee, its membership, meeting dates and historic and ongoing committee papers at <http://lga.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=161>

Fire Commission

The Fire Commission provides a forum to discuss matters of common interest and concern to fire authorities. It is open to all combined fire and rescue authorities and principal authorities with a fire and rescue service.

All fire authorities in full or corporate membership of the LGA have the right to representation and voting on the Fire Commission. You can find out more on the commission, its membership, meeting dates and historic and ongoing committee papers at <http://lga.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=171>

National Fire Chiefs Council

The National Fire Chiefs Councils (NFCC) is the professional voice of the UK fire and rescue service. It drives improvement and development through a series of directed programmes and supports leadership development. The NFCC is a key partner for the Fire Services Management Committee and works closely with LGA officers on FSMC policy.

The NFCC Chair, Roy Wilsher, provides a single point of contact for the Home Office, fire professionals and other partners, including the LGA and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

NFCC's main aims include:

- strengthening the professional and operational leadership of the fire and rescue service
- improving national coordination
- reducing duplication and increasing efficiency
- supporting local service delivery
- providing increased influence for fire and rescue authorities and their services.

The NFCC has a series of committees covering a range of areas:

www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Committees

Relevant resources

Websites:

LGA fire and rescue webpage
www.local.gov.uk/topics/fire-and-rescue

LGA Fire Peer Challenge webpage
www.local.gov.uk/our-support/peer-challenges/peer-challenges-we-offer/fire-peer-challenge

LGA Leadership Essentials webpage
www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/leadership-essentials

LGA principal advisers contact details
www.local.gov.uk/our-support/lga-principal-advisers

Government resources:

Fire and Rescue National Framework 2014
www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england--2

Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21

Civil Contingencies Act 2004
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/introduction

Policing and Crime Act 2017
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/introduction/enacted

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/introduction/made

Our publications:

Beyond Hackitt: protecting the vulnerable in the years ahead
www.local.gov.uk/beyond-hackitt-protecting-vulnerable-years-ahead

Fire Vision 2024
www.local.gov.uk/fire-vision-2024

An inclusive fire service – recruitment and inclusion
www.local.gov.uk/inclusive-fire-service-recruitment-and-inclusion



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