

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee

Item 8

10 February 2015

Competency framework for Business Fire Safety Regulators

Report by Chief Officer

Contact: Tim Gates - Telephone: 07584 704511

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) have produced a Competency framework for Business Fire Safety Regulators, with a view to improving the consistency of training, qualifications and application of fire safety regulations.
- 1.2 It has been agreed by all English and Welsh Chief Officers that the framework should be adopted as the standard for developing and training Fire Safety Regulators.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee support the adoption of the competency framework as the standard for fire safety regulators within Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 With the advent of the Fire Safety Order in 2005, the focus of fire safety regulation became risk assessment based rather than prescriptive and this significant change has had a substantial impact on the required training and development of fire safety regulators.
- 3.2 Businesses no longer rely on the fire service to provide them with fire certificates to detail the standards they must meet, but rather assess their own needs and these are then evaluated by fire safety regulators for adequacy.
- 3.3 There has been an amount of dissatisfaction amongst businesses generally with regard to inconsistencies amongst different fire services, which led CFOA to agreeing a number of steps to address these concerns. One of these steps was to produce a competence framework for fire safety regulators, with a view to addressing these concerns and providing a nationwide standard of training and competence for individuals responsible for the enforcement of the Fire Safety Order.
- 3.4 The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) has also developed a set of 'Core Competencies' for regulators, which are designed to ensure that businesses receive a consistent level of service from any regulatory body in the UK.

These core competencies have also been adopted within the framework.

- 3.5 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service were instrumental in the development of the National Occupational Standards, qualifications and subsequently the competence framework for fire safety regulators.

4 Qualification standards for fire safety regulators

- 4.1 There are three levels of fire safety qualifications that have been developed in conjunction with Skills for Fire and Rescue, the Sector Skills Council for the Fire Service in England and Wales.
- 4.2 These qualifications are the level 3 Certificate, the level 4 Certificate and the level 4 Diploma.
- 4.3 The level 3 Certificate is the basic, entry level qualification and is relevant to simple premises that do not involve sleeping or any licensed activity e.g. pubs and restaurants.
- 4.4 The level 4 Certificate relates to complex buildings that have sleeping, such as hotels, care homes and houses of multiple occupation and also licensed premises.
- 4.5 The level 4 Diploma includes consultation activities, such as building regulations and also the drafting and serving of legal notices.
- 4.6 The level 4 Diploma is the standard that has been recommended for those individuals carrying out fire safety regulatory duties, which within HFRS are the Fire Safety Inspectors.
- 4.7 The level 4 Certificate has been deemed appropriate for Business Support Officers. The level 3 Certificate is the entry level qualification for staff within the Business Fire Safety department.

5 Progress within Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

- 5.1 Due to HFRS involvement in developing the qualifications, it has been possible to progress staff development prior to the formal launch of the framework.
- 5.2 All current fire safety staff are registered with S for J awards, which is the preferred awarding body for the fire safety qualifications.
- 5.3 For a new starter within the Business Fire Safety (BFS) department, they will be trained and qualified based upon their role. All staff will start with the level 3 Certificate and progress from there.
- 5.4 It is estimated staff requiring the highest qualification will achieve the level 4 Certificate within 12 months and the Diploma after a further 6 months.
- 5.5 It is the intention of the BFS department, to provide the required training and development to achieve the fire safety qualifications internally thereby reducing overall costs and also creating a potential revenue stream.

6 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives

- 6.1 It is HFRS policy to support businesses to comply with fire safety regulations in a consistent and proportionate manner. The framework will help to ensure that all BFS staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding to fulfil this policy.
- 6.2 It is also HFRS policy to train and develop staff appropriately for their role. The framework has been produced to provide specific guidance and detail on how to achieve this within the fire safety regulatory environment.

7 Risk analysis

- 7.1 As the framework has been developed by CFOA and is supported by DCLG and BIS, it is likely that it will be seen by the English courts as the standard qualification for Fire Safety Regulators. Any Fire Authority not adopting the framework may be asked to justify this departure from

8 People Impact Assessment

- 8.1 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the equality and human rights legislation.

9 Resource implications

9.1 Human Resources

Currently the level 3 Certificate is provided 'in-house' with the higher level training being sourced externally. When the entire framework is delivered by HFRS staff, there will be a requirement for the trainers to maintain competence and to design and deliver the necessary training.

9.2 Physical Resources

None over and above what is already provided by the training centre.

9.3 Information and Communications Technology Resources

As above.

9.4 Financial Implications

The qualifications are currently being provided within the existing training budget.

10 Consultation

- 10.1 All English and Welsh fire and rescue services, DCLG, BIS, the Fire Sector Federation, the IFE, the British Retail Consortium and other business groups have been consulted.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 The adoption of the competency framework for Business Fire Safety Regulators will

benefit business, HFRS staff and the Fire Authority by ensuring that fire safety regulators, acting on behalf of the Fire Authority, have the necessary skills knowledge and understanding to undertake their role effectively, consistently and proportionately.

12 Background papers

12.1 The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

- Competency framework for business fire safety regulators. 2013. CFOA.
- Business Perceptions Survey. 2012. Conducted by IFF Research on behalf of the National Audit Office and the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO)
- The Regulators' Code. 2014. Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO)
- Focus on enforcement review: Enforcement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- <http://rdna-tool.lbro.org.uk/> (free registration required to view)