



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Performance &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Agenda no.</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>31 March 2022</b>		
<b>Report Authors:</b>	<b>Head of Protection</b>		
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Director of Operations</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Progress against the Protection Strategy</b>		
<b>Type of Report:</b>	<b>Information</b>		
<b>Action Point No.</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>For Publication</b>	<b>Yes</b>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Performance & Resources (P&R) Board to note the progress being made against the implementation of the Protection Strategy
2. To note that a Protection Strategy Deep Dive is scheduled for 6 June 2022

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been developed to provide P&R with a progress update against the implementation of the Protection Strategy and achievements made since the launch of the strategy in 2020.

## BACKGROUND

Since the implementation of the ECFRS Protection Strategy 2020-24 a full review of the structure to support the strategy has been completed, shown in Appendix A.

The Protection team continues to fulfil the intention of the strategy and work to maximise the team's full potential.

## OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

This report identifies the key achievements and progress, made against the implementation of the Prevention Strategy 2020-2024.

## STRATEGY LAUNCH

Launching the Protection Strategy focused on both internal and external stakeholders, ensuring clear, concise messaging, and importantly outlining the direction of travel for the lifetime of the Strategy.

## **GOVERNANCE**

As part of the Prevention Strategy a Quarterly Prevention & Protection Governance Board was launched in Spring 2021 (chaired by AM Prevention & Protection) to provide oversight and scrutiny to both functions.

The remit of the board is to bring Protection & Prevention together, to provide an oversight to:

- Performance Monitoring
- Workforce planning
- Budgets
- Risk Registers
- Fire Standards
- Updates to Key projects
- Decision Making
- Monitoring of the department's activity and delivery plans.

## **PROTECTION ACTIVITIES AND REVIEW JUNE 2021 – MARCH 2022**

### **BUILDING RISK REVIEW (BRR)**

Protection completed the review before the target date of 31 December 2021. This included all submissions to NFCC. A wash-up period included continued reporting to NFCC on premises with interim measures and enforcements in relation to premises inspected as part of the BRR.

1.2 FTE posts were aligned to wash-up period of the project funding and allocated within parameters of BRR funding spend and forecasted accordingly to NFCC. Bespoke spreadsheets were designed in conjunction with finance to monitor and detail the spend, ensuring that reporting lines were separated from the Uplift Fund. Once the BRR wash-up was completed the remaining amounts in the BRR fund will be moved across to the uplift funding.

### **ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Enforcement procedures continue in relation to several properties, most identified through the BRR. Protection staff are encouraged to work with wider stakeholders and business partners with enforcement activities as a 'last option' if fire safety matters cannot be resolved. In line with the FSO, enforcement activities must be in the public interest. We have now appointed an Enforcement Co-ordinator/Officer to ensure greater consistency in our approach to enforcement and provide additional support to responsible persons.

### **RISK BASED INSPECTION PROGRAMME (RBIP) REFRESH**

The RBIP refresh is in two parts. The first being to review the RBIP in relation to the risk scoring and coding utilised to ascertain the level of risk. This, at the time, was based on ABP codes, which could not be split into the more detailed FSEC codes. This has resulted in the existing RBIP not accurately reflecting building risk, for example, we show less buildings over ten floors than we currently have. Protection is working with our 'new' CFRMIS support person and CFRMIS lead to formulate and apply coding which will accurately reflect our risk. Some of this can be completed 'In House' by our CFRMIS team and some needs to be completed by the system developer. CFRMIS support has been funded from Uplift Funding.

The second part of the RBIP refresh is to review and identify whether the current targets for audit numbers are still relevant. These have been reviewed and a trial period for the new figures will commence in April 2022. Protection is seeking feedback after the three-month trial and engaged in discussions with UNISON in relation to the numbers, the rationale, and the balance of workloads. The figure of 0.75 audits per day per Inspecting Officer will enable 15 audits per month, calculated on a 100% attendance basis over a 20 day/4-week average. The reality is expected to be 60%, which allows for leave and sickness over an average month. The figures for Office Managers have been set as a trial of 0.22 per day.

## **DAY DUTY OFFICER RIDING (DDOR)**

Currently on hold pending strategic discussion, however, Protection will be looking at the allocation of staff to support the DDOR project and the impact that this support has on delivering against our RBIP targets and delivering our statutory duties.

## **FIRE INVESTIGATION**

There are two Fire Investigation business cases in development:

1. to demonstrate the benefits and costings for adopting the ISO accreditation and NFCC Fire Standard.
2. a stand-alone business model and dedicated F.I team in ECFRS.

Protection staff have visited FRS partners in Surrey and West Mids. to evaluate and discuss the functionality of their stand-alone teams. A paper is currently being produced to move to a dedicated F.I. team. The Protection department is working in collaboration with other FRS partners to be able to deliver an accredited F.I. service which could be offered to local FRS and regional partners.

Protection has a staff member undertaking their Fire Investigation master's degree who has been realigned into a Fire Investigation dedicated role to provide support for both Police and Coroner. They will facilitate large-scale exercises and support inquests by providing 'Expert Witness' evidence through our F.I. attendance in court alongside carrying out the day-to-day activities of F.I. at Operational Incidents.

We are currently able to train our staff in the basics of F.I. and are looking to enhance our ability to deliver higher level, accredited courses both externally and internally. The Virtual Learning Experience will assist with this aspiration.

## **BRR AND UPLIFT FUNDING**

The Protection department have worked with finance to enable:

1. Production of reporting spreadsheets to identify funds spent and remaining funding
2. Planning/Forecasting future spend
3. Identification of issues with the amalgamation of the funds
4. Liaison and reporting to NFCC and Home Office in relation to BRR and Uplift fund – (Quarterly reports and face to face meetings are also scheduled)

## **REDUCTION IN UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS (UWFS)**

The Protection team are looking to review and improve our UWFS strategy with the aim of reducing attendance to UWFS. The Protection department are currently undertaking a root and branch review of the UWFS issue within ECFRS.

Initial findings have highlighted inconsistencies with the way that data on the number, and attendance to UWFS is captured and are in the process of introducing a revised system to accurately capture this. The team are aware of the triggers for acting against UWFS and recognise the need for a proportionate approach to addressing UWFS in relation to the number attended v detector heads in a premises size and use of premises considered.

The Protection team are also looking at the call challenge within Control to ascertain whether this is consistently utilised and, if not, what the barriers may be. Once accurate data is available suggestions for a refresh of the UWFS policy and weight of attendance at incidents would be a recommended next step.

Additionally, the new Business Safety team are looking at ways of working with premises/ Responsible Persons and business owners to reduce UWFS activation.

## **REALIGNMENT OF PROTECTION DEPARTMENT**

Protection is establishing new roles and re-filling posts to ensure all lines of responsibility are managed and reported on effectively. This requires a continual review of the department structure to identify delivery within Area Teams and the function at Service Headquarters, and additionally a realignment of the administration structure. Succession planning and the expansion of team continues to be a priority.

## **ALIGNING ALL ROLES IN PROTECTION TO GREY AND GREEN BOOK CONDITIONS**

Protection teams have worked professionally to ensure that all roles can be filled by personnel on either scheme and are now advertising vacant and newly established roles for either grey or green book staff. A recent process to appoint a Training and Policy Manager attracted external staff from both grey and green book schemes.

Protection is looking to introduce a Crew Manager role into the Delivery side of the department, which will enable lateral transfer of Operational Grey book staff who have expressed an interest to join the Protection team. This is currently a work in progress and the Head of Protection and Human Resources are engaging with the representative bodies to establish this position.

The aspiration is to enable progression pathways for both grey and green book staff throughout the department which are interchangeable across Operational and Protection Staff and other departments.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF A BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

Protection has established a business engagement team within the Protection department and recruited to an existing Station Manager Post. The team continue to update our external facing Internet with available information on Fire Safety guidance for the public. The team are reaching out to businesses and are looking to form relationships with external partners, formulating our stakeholder wheel. We are attending a business event in April and are looking to create additional bespoke business engagement sessions to enable closer working with external partners.

## **POLICY OF BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

Currently recruiting into the vacant role of Policy Officer to refresh all Protection policies

## **TRAINING OFFICER APPOINTMENT**

Protection appointed a Watch Manager into the vacant Training Officer post. Amongst other projects, the training officer has been tasked with establishing a bespoke in-house training programme for new applicants and staff who are in acquisition of their Fire Safety qualifications. Currently staff are not collectively trained and have no structured training plan, so this is a priority for Protection to rectify and design a more efficient method of training delivery. The current system has impacted on the ability to deliver against the RBIP as trained existing staff have had to provide mentoring and training for new staff, thus reducing their capacity to carry out statutory work and audits by around 50%.

## **UPSKILLING OF OPERATIONAL STAFF**

A tender has been agreed for accredited Fire Safety Training to be delivered to all substantive Crew and Watch Manager roles, both Wholetime and On-Call. This is an investment of £250K, utilising the Uplift funding to better skill our people to deliver the strategy and address observations made by HMICFRS. This will be embedded into the training programme with a predicted training delivery period of eighteen to twenty-four months.

## **CREATION OF NEW NATIONAL PROTECTION TEAM**

As more and more engagement is needed at both a regional and national level, the Protection department submitted a request for additional staffing to enable creation of this team. The team will liaise with our FRS partners, collaboratively engaging through the facilitation of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). This will ensure that we remain aware of national development both within Fire Protection and regarding legislation and changes to legislation. They postholder will attend national and local NFCC and Fire Protection events and will horizon scan and be able to anticipate the wider changes in Fire Safety which will impact on both legislation and the function of the department, allowing the Service to remain aware and proactive ahead of such proposals and changes.

The team will be responsible for co-ordinating the gap analysis and implementation of the National Standard. And will work across internal departments to ensure that this is embedded throughout the Service. The team will be responsible for activities and requirements such as (but not limited to):

- BRR finalisation reporting – Internal and External
- Interim Measures reporting - Internal and External
- National standards and Service alignment
- National consultations, co-ordination, and response (such as PEEPS and British Standards)
- National Auditors register
- Third Party accreditation through the NFCC/IFE
- Regional FRS partner collaboration in line with NFCC structure
- Liaison and collaboration with NFCC
- National and regional NFCC working groups
- Analysis and awareness of the impact of the impending Building Safety Bill
- Developments in national guidance around interim measures and evacuation strategy
- Embedding the changes and clarification of the uplift of the FSO
- Sharing case studies and learning with the NFCC
- Attendance at fortnightly NFCC Protection Forums and monthly regional forums
- Amendments to the Planning process: ADB/Gateways/ FRS statutory consultee etc
- Grenfell Actions

## **VIRTUAL REALITY EQUIPMENT / TRAINING AND UPSKILLING OF STAFF**

Protection have embraced technology through Virtual Reality Training to support the HMICFRS recommendation that Operational staff should receive additional training in Fire Protection. Protection teams we will be able to conduct a walk-through of a virtual audit, thus giving opportunity to learn how to identify fire safety issues within buildings. Protection is also looking to use this technology to train our Fire Safety staff in operational matters such as a greater understanding of the impact of unrestricted access and availability of water supplies, to include risers. We will be able to deliver a virtual walk through/talk through of a riser, with identification of defects and operational requirements.

The possibilities are multi-fold with this equipment, and we also hope to utilise this to share across Control, Prevention, Protection, Response, and department training, thus also enabling closer working across other departments. We are also utilising the virtual learning experience to enable wider sharing with our FRS and external partners and have access to a repository/training suite of material.

## **TOWERS TEAM**

Protection is looking to progress a joint team who will be responsible for High Rise, from Protection and Prevention visits to Operational attendance and risk. The team would have oversight of all High-Rise Residential Building (HRRBs) and would be able to provide information in relation to the buildings as well as enhancing the interaction with residents and the proposed Building Safety Managers.

## JOINT VISITS

Work in progress with Operations, Prevention and Protection to pilot combining visits to a premises, recognising the impact of several visits to a premises by different members of the Service. Confusing for both Responsible Persons, Business owners and residents.

## FIRE ENGINEERING PROVISION AND UPSKILLING

Protection have staff who are currently undertaking their degrees in Fire Engineering. The aim is to increase Fire Engineers by enrolling staff on master's Degrees. Also, to have Protection staff members undertaking their Fire Investigation Master's Degree. Protection continues to provide Fire engineering Services to our Regional FRS Partners via an (MOU). Protection is exploring updating our Computer Fire Modelling equipment to enhance our service both externally and internally.

## GRENFELL ACTIONS

Protection is working with the Grenfell Project board and progressing sixteen actions. The Grenfell project is reported to P&R outside of this update.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly linked to this update report.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly linked to this update report.

## STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

None

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Is this decision anticipated to have an impact on any of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

Race	N	Religion or belief	N
Sex	N	Gender reassignment	N
Age	N	Pregnancy & maternity	N
Disability	N	Marriage and Civil Partnership	N
Sexual orientation	N		

The Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard has been fully considered and incorporated into the proposals outlined in this paper.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

## CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

None

## FUTURE PLANS

1. Assess compliance against the NFCC Protection Fire Standard by 20 May 2022
2. Provide a detailed update at the deep dive with the PFCC on 6 June 2022

## BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix A: Protection Team structure  
[Protection-Strategy-2020-24.pdf \(essex-fire.gov.uk\)](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/Protection-Strategy-2020-24.pdf)