



## NFCC PPE/Clothing Committee

### Minutes

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

11:30- 13:30hrs

Hybrid Meeting – West Midlands Headquarters and via Teams

<b>In attendance:</b>	Steve Topham – Chair, Brett Egan-Briers Vice Chair, Tina Butler Sarah Walsh, Clive Robinson, Jayne Moore, Kirk Kelleher, Mark Lloyd, , Simon Anderson, Liz Davies, Clive Robinson Jonathan Reid Elizabeth Noble
<b>Apologies</b>	Caroline Anderson, Mandy Beasley, Peggy Male and Jim Holden
<b><u>(Item 1)</u></b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>1.1 Welcome, introductions, apologies</b>  Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
<b><u>(Item 2)</u></b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>2.1 Minutes and matters from previous meeting</b>  Minutes from September meeting accepted as an accurate reflection of the meeting
<b><u>(Item 3)</u></b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>3.1 Action Log Review</b>  Following items agreed to close on Action Log - Item A30 – Email regarding commercial group - Item A32 – Standards Licence - Item A33 – Circulation of Specifications
<b><u>(Item 4)</u></b>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>4.1 Update from Commercial Sub Committee</b>  Sarah Walsh (SW) provided an update on the Commercial sub committee. The group now has representation from across the regions and SW the first commercial group meeting was held at the start of February. At the subcommittee meeting the specialist PPE documentation was shared with the group for review and comment.

The commercial group are in the process of double checking the list of contract end dates for structural PPE to ensure this is all aligned with the current information.

**(Item 5)**

**5. 5.1 Update from Specialist PPE Sub Committee**

BEB provided an update on the Specialist PPE project.

Lot 7- Wildfire has been awarded to FlamePro details will be circulated on the head to toe ensemble

Lot 6 DVI coverall – re-ran the wearer trials with two companies in the process, the award of this lot should happen within the next few weeks.

DPS Project – this has been extended to ensure the DPS covers the appropriate areas as the DPS covers 20 lots. There is a significant amount of background work being completed

Water Rescue –There has been a very positive response to collaboration around water rescue and the recommendation is to use the new YPO framework which should be available mid-June. The old YPO framework expires in July however there are some improvements to the new framework offering and would advise services to wait until the new YPO framework is in place.

SW clarified that there are currently 17 Fire and rescue authorities who have expressed an interest in collaborating and three police services.

**(Item 6)**

**6. 6.1 Update from Workwear Sub Committee**

Mark Lloyd provided an update on the workwear subcommittee.

The first workwear subcommittee meeting has been held there are still a few regions not represented on the subcommittee North West, East Midlands and Wales. There is also a question over the South East representation.

The subcommittee agreed that they need a clear direction from the main committee in order to move further forward.

The National identity paper has been ratified by the subcommittee and as a subcommittee they would like a timeframe around that work.

In terms of workwear standard the sub group agreed to defer to Brett and the standards committee around ISO21942.

As a subcommittee there is a recognition for the need of R&D and the subcommittee would like to have involvement in the scoping and purpose of any R&D undertaken in relation to workwear.

**National Identity Paper**

ML spoke through the National Identity paper which had been agreed by the sub group.

Three options looking at National identity

- 1- Do nothing
- 2- All services would have the same uniform
- 3- National wardrobe option – allowing FRS's to choose from a set wardrobe

**ML Suggestion that the next contract could be for a longer length of time e.g. A ten year contract to allow for current contracts to expire naturally and allow FRSS to consider and adopt a national contract without feeling restricted by timeframes.**

**The National Identity Paper considers Branding and Logos – How badges are used and how the use of badges has the potential to load costs into a garment. Adaptability of garments is another consideration within the paper this refers to the tasks that we do but also to broader society and cultural sensitivity.**

**Chair supported the wardrobe proposal, this helps a national fire identity. However the Chair stated that the committee is not in a position to mandate a wardrobe but it would strongly encourage services to join. The wardrobe solution would Provide a workable framework and give a national identity, like Police and Ambulance already have and that ministers are keen to see within the fire sector.**

**BEB Supported the wardrobe approach whilst acknowledging that there are still some questions around branding and colour. There is an opportunity to link in with the home office research, they can provide a survey of not only the fire sector but also the public. BEB has met with NFCC research and development and together they have submitted a proposal to the Home Office. To which they are currently waiting on a response to. This would be a joint funded proposal.**

**Jonathan Reid, also supported the proposal, currently London are revising their policies around uniform and although LFB are going through a period of change Jonathan offered support from London in any ongoing projects.**

**TB also offered support of the proposal. TB Highlighted the importance of the research which will also help towards greater inclusivity and move away from male/female fit. This will also help move towards a National Police/Fire uniform.**

**Chair outlined the next steps for workwear subcommittee, to consider specifications and the make up of the wardrobe.**

**ML agreed that the subcommittee would be able to consider what garments would need to be included within the wardrobe however whilst the subcommittee will be able to generate ideas around specifications the specifications would be closely linked to the work with the R&D hub so that would be a longer term objective.**

**ML went on to say that consideration needs to be given to the changes in body shape which have happened over the years and this would move away from Male/Female approach. The outcome of the research would help to underpin what a national identity looks like within the fire sector.**

**BEB picked up on the Sizing issue as being something that crosses all sub committees and therefore there is an opportunity for the committee to create our own sizing charts. Also looking at ways of sizing people remotely which will then enable the sector to produce a sizing matrix which could be given to suppliers and enable us to move away from accepting the supplier sizing which is based on outdated methods/models.**

**(Item 7)**

**7. 7.1 Update from Disposable Sub Committee**

	<p><b>Dave Lofthouse now has 5 representatives on the Disposable PPE subcommittee. Some regions are not represented on the committee, however the first meeting will be held March/April with the 5 representatives and any additional representatives will be welcomed at a later stage.</b></p> <p><b>TB suggested linking in with Blue Light Commercial – TB to provide the details to DL</b></p>
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**(Item 8)**

<b>8.</b>	<p><b>8.1 Update from Structural PPE Committee</b></p> <p>Met 2<sup>ND</sup> Time Last week. Currently drawing together requirements and understanding who is using the current collaborative PPE framework and when those contracts end.</p> <p>There is a sharing of information between the risk assessment and the structural PPE group and once the risk assessment has been finalised the structural PPE subcommittee will be in a position to move forward.</p>
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**(Item 9)**

<b>9.</b>	<p><b>9.1 Update from Risk Assessment Group</b></p> <p>Meeting tomorrow to review the document. Starting an in depth review, looking to complete the review in April and should be ready for next Committee meeting in June.</p>
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**(Item 10)**

<b>10.</b>	<p><b>10.1 Specifications</b></p> <p>Currently no specifications to be shared</p>
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**(Item 11)**

<b>11</b>	<p><b>11.1 NFCTP (Procurement Hub)</b></p> <p>As part of Tina Butler's update, Mary Dawson joined the meeting via teams to demonstrate the new Procurement Hub website.</p> <p>Please see below the link to the new procurement hub website.</p> <p><a href="https://nfcc-procurementhub.org.uk">The NFCC Procurement Hub   NFCC Fire Programme (nfcc-procurementhub.org.uk)</a></p> <p>TB wants the website to remove the procurement speak and be clearer and easier to navigate and find useful relevant resources.</p> <p>Jayne Moore voiced her appreciation of the comprehensive website which she believed would have something to offer all colleagues not just those in a commercial capacity.</p>
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**(Item 12)**

<b>12</b>	<p><b>12.1 Inclusion</b></p>
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	Following conversation at the structural PPE subcommittee the Equality Impact Assessment has been update to include Rastafarian requirements and updated to reflect the conversations around sizing – two small amendments have been made to the document.
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**(Item 13)**

13	<p><b>13.1 BS EN and ISO Standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current Revision Programme of relevant PPE Standards</li> <li>• EN-469 Designation</li> <li>• ISO SC13 WG2 &amp; CEN TC 162 WG2</li> </ul> <p>As BEB has mentioned as part of both the structural and risk sub committees there are approximately 6-10 standards relevant to structural PPE which are currently under revision, as and when these are available for comment BEB will bring them to the committee.</p> <p>One standard of note which is being revised in Europe is PH1 Footwear for firefighters BEB has put 3 comments forward on behalf of NFCC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Puncture resistance include hot nail test</li> <li>2- Delamination from sole to upper</li> <li>3- Electrical shock requirements</li> </ol> <p><b>EN469</b></p> <p>BEB had a meeting with Andy Nicholson (Technical Lead) and Harsha Patel (Senior Technical Policy Advisor) from the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) at the Department of Business and Industry Strategy (BEIS). This is where responsibility for the designation of standards sits.</p> <p>They were keen to hear our views on whether EN 469 ‘Protective Clothing for Firefighters’ should be designated here in the UK and are sympathetic to our concerns around designation. Just to recap there are three main elements of concern to this particular standard:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The minimum performance levels contained within the standard fall well below the performance requirements currently utilised by firefighters across the UK.</li> <li>2. The base assumptions on the levels of protection are dated (based on 1950’s research) and the document has seen little if no improvement/modification since its first publication in 1995.</li> <li>3. Some of the test methods are now being brought into question, particularly the evaporative resistance (RET) test method (the measure for breathability), that is now seeing inconsistency in results across and within test laboratories.</li> </ol> <p>Whilst no firm decision was agreed, as further consultation both within OPSS and externally (BSi) is required, one avenue that seems reasonable, at this time, is that the document is ‘designated with restrictions’ the restriction being that in addition to the commentary already included in the National Foreword:</p> <p><i>“The UK committee is of the opinion that the minimum performance requirements recommendations for Level 2 given in EN 469:2020 are lower than those required for extreme conditions of heat and flame encountered when fighting fires and</i></p>
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*undertaking rescues from fires within structures. The UK committee advises UK users to carefully consider whether the performance requirements as set out in this new edition of EN 469 are adequate. When considering the performance that may be needed in the UK, the UK committee recommends an increase in the minimum levels of protection against heat transfer (flame) and heat transfer (radiant heat), which should be balanced with increased breathability (water vapour resistance). Increases in tensile strength, residual tensile strength, tear strength and water penetration resistance may also be considered necessary to meet individual fire and rescue service risk assessments. The breathability (water vapour resistance) test set out in EN 469 is determined on the core layers of a garment. The introduction of high-visibility markings, additional padding and pockets may have an overall detrimental effect on the breathability of garments and should therefore be carefully considered. The UK committee emphasizes the importance of robust wearer evaluations so as to ensure that garments meet the expected performance”.*

... that reference is made to an agreed NFCC guidance document (specification).

This is the work currently being undertaken by NFCC PPE and Clothing and its sub committees; to revise and agree a National PPE risk assessment document and use this to create the minimum requirements (specification) that should be used when sourcing firefighting PPE. These pieces of work can easily be pulled into a guidance document which can be ratified by the wider NFCC and perhaps even published by NOG.

This course also future proofs any future research developments that may result from our proposals for joint funded research with Home Office (HO) /DSTL and the potential that this leads to a specific HO published specification such as which Police utilise. By just changing the reference to differing guidance documents keeps the standard relevant as we move forward with our research and development of future needs.

### **Other Standards**

PH38 EN659 Gloves, there is a move to include two more levels for rescue and wildland, when documents relating to this are available BEB will circulate with the committee.

PH63 No movement on the helmet committee however expecting some movement on this soon as the standard has not been revised in a number of years.

PH14 Whole revision of the iso standard for structural clothing 11999 all water rescue kit and a revision of the cleaning and maintenance standard.

ISO Committee TC94SC14 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> August meeting being held in Kent Meeting is specific to firefighters PPE.

Clive Robinson asked about a flood rescue glove, BEB confirmed that there isn't a specific standard relating to gloves specific to flooding.

Was suggested that this could be included under the DPS if required.

<b><u>(Item 14)</u></b>	
14	<b>14.1 Items for further Consideration/Regional Updates (risks, emerging issues &amp; successes)</b>  <b>No items raised</b>
<b><u>(Item 15)</u></b>	
15	<b>15.1 Next Meeting</b>  Next meeting scheduled for 06/06/2022 will be a hybrid meeting held via Teams and face to face at West Mids.