**NFCC Middle Leadership Programme – request for market engagement**

We would like to engage with external suppliers who would be interested to shape the development of a national middle leadership programme (MLP) for the UK fire and rescue service. This work is being managed and developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

This activity is not part of the formal procurement process.

**Background**

Middle leadership can be seen as one of the most demanding and challenging leadership roles within the fire sector. The leap between supervisory and middle leadership is vast, with the role requiring a variety of additional new skills.

Currently, middle leadership development is approached very differently in each fire and rescue service (FRS). Differences include:

* The criteria required to access development opportunities.
* Full, limited or no development pathways.
* Programmes vary in length, content and quality.
* The provision of awards, accreditations and qualifications.
* The completion of self-assessments, 360 feedback and psychometric tools.

**FRS survey findings**

In February 2023, the NFCC MLP Project Board issued a survey across the sector to gather information, views and opinions to help shape a national middle leadership programme. The survey was open to all fire and rescue services and partners.

Summary key findings

* There are consistent challenges and issues facing middle leaders, with the most common being:
  + Leadership skills gaps
  + Behavioural / cultural challenges
* A blended\* approach towards a development programme is favoured, with national guidance provided for either a regional or service led delivery model for the interactive / face to face elements, supported by online learning modules
* A qualification or accreditation would add gravitas and incentive to the programme, along with professionalising the sector
* The largest audience for MLP will be operational and non-operational colleagues who are new and aspiring middle leaders

\* Combination of delivery methods, such as online, face to face and some interactive online via Teams etc? It can be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous.

**Aim** (for more details, see table below)

The MLP aims to deliver a blended development programme, providing equal access to standardised leadership development for all aspiring, new and existing middle leaders. It will align with:

* [NFCC Leadership Framework](https://ukfrs-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-10/NFCC_Leadership_Framework_Final.pdf?VersionId=RLOUvhV8fnyPhrr3wI1SjMu.yBQMa_64)
* Knowledge, skills and behaviours of the [Level 5 Operations or Departmental Manager Apprenticeship](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/operations-and-departmental-manager/)
* [NFCC Core Learning Pathways](https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/CPO/People%20programme/726905_NFCC_core_Learning_Pathways_for_Leadership_June_2020.pdf)
* [Core Code of Ethics and Guidance](https://www.ukfrs.com/core-code-ethics)

It will seek to address the question ***‘what skills do we need our middle leaders to learn to enable their thinking as strategic and ethical leaders?’***

It will potentially contain several component parts which include:

1. Introduction of a national middle leadership standard
2. Online learning modules
3. Blended learning programme with national guidance provided for either a regional or Service led delivery model
4. 360-degree feedback tool, linked to the[NFCC Leadership Framework](https://ukfrs-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-10/NFCC_Leadership_Framework_Final.pdf?VersionId=RLOUvhV8fnyPhrr3wI1SjMu.yBQMa_64)
5. Standardised psychometric tool(s)
6. Evaluation data, metrics and feedback

**Request for market engagement**

We have broken the predicted activity into 5 key areas and provided more detail on each in the table below. We would anticipate, that approximately 80% of the content of the programme would be standard leadership content with perhaps 20% being sector specific.

**We would love to hear from any external suppliers who have expertise in 1 or more of these areas.**

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| 1. **Introduction of a national middle leadership standard** |
| The national standard is likely to be aligned to:   * [NFCC Leadership Framework](https://ukfrs-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-10/NFCC_Leadership_Framework_Final.pdf?VersionId=RLOUvhV8fnyPhrr3wI1SjMu.yBQMa_64) * Knowledge, skills and behaviours of the [Level 5 Operations or Departmental Manager Apprenticeship](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/operations-and-departmental-manager/) * [NFCC Core Learning Pathways](https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/CPO/People%20programme/726905_NFCC_core_Learning_Pathways_for_Leadership_June_2020.pdf) * [Core Code of Ethics](https://www.ukfrs.com/core-code-ethics) |
| **How you can help**   * Examples and ideas on ways to design, launch and embed a national standard across multiple organisations. * Suggestions on how a national standard could carry or align with an award, accreditation or qualification. |
| 1. **Online Learning Portal** |
| Providing a large variety of learning content, in various formats, to address the ***knowledge*** required to meet the national middle leadership standard (as detailed in 1 above).  Consider the development of on-line self-directed learning modules to increase accessibility. |
| **How you can help**   * Examples of online learning portals. * Examples on bespoke, self-directed learning modules. |
| 1. **Introduction of a blended learning programme** |
| Covering the ***knowledge, skills*** and ***behaviours*** to embed the national middle leadership standard (as detailed in 1 above).  In addition, our recent survey showed a need for additional and strong content on:   * The ethical behaviours of a leader and integrity linking to [Core Code of Ethics](https://www.ukfrs.com/core-code-ethics) * A focus on EDI integrated into usual business practice   The aim would be for the blended learning to bring to life, put into action and embed the knowledge provided through the learning content completed through the online learning portal (as detailed in 2 above).  Examples of blended learning could include:   * Local workshops * Virtual, interactive masterclasses * Communities of practice (social learning) * Coaching and mentoring * Action Learning Sets * Online / self-directed * Small cohort work * Podcasts * VR or Metaverse |
| **How you can help**   * Examples and ideas on ways to design, launch and embed a blended learning programme across multiple organisations, without central delivery resource. * Creative methods of blended learning. * Ways to embed EDI throughout the programme. * Innovative ways for development to positively impact culture change. |
| 1. **360-feedback tool** |
| Provision of a national 360-feedback tool, aligned with [NFCC Leadership Framework](https://ukfrs-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-10/NFCC_Leadership_Framework_Final.pdf?VersionId=RLOUvhV8fnyPhrr3wI1SjMu.yBQMa_64) and [Core Code of Ethics](https://www.ukfrs.com/core-code-ethics).  Considerations:   * ***Developing*** a bespoke process aligned to [NFCC Leadership Framework](https://ukfrs-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-10/NFCC_Leadership_Framework_Final.pdf?VersionId=RLOUvhV8fnyPhrr3wI1SjMu.yBQMa_64) and [Core Code of Ethics](https://www.ukfrs.com/core-code-ethics) * Management of the ***process*** (communications, gathering of data, production of reports (internally, locally, outsourced) * Facilitation of ***feedback*** (outsourced, delivered internally through central coaches, delivered locally) |
| **How you can help**   * Examples of bespoke 360 tools you have developed and used successfully. * Suggestions and alternative approaches to managing the process. * Suggestions and alternative approaches on how feedback can be provided in the most constructive way. * Examples of linking 360 feedback with ongoing coaching / performance appraisal / development plans. * Examples where 360 feedback has had a positive impact on the individual and the culture of an organisation. |
| 1. **Psychometric tools** |
| Provision of national psychometric tool(s) for ***development*** purposes, considering:   * Personality profiles * Reasoning tests * Motivation questionnaires * Ability assessments |
| **How you can help**   * Examples of psychometric tools you have used, for ***development*** purposes. * Pros and cons of different tools. * Suggestions and alternative approaches to managing the process. * Suggestions and alternative approaches on how feedback can be provided in the most constructive way. * Examples where using psychometrics has had a positive impact on the individual and the culture of an organisation. |
| 1. **Evaluation, data, metrics and feedback** |
| As we improve leadership capability, we would expect to see a positive impact in the following people metrics across all participating FRSs, including:   * Employee engagement * Employee retention * Leadership capability * Improved performance * Reduction in: * Disciplinaries * Grievances and bullying and harassment cases * Sickness absences and attrition   Using the [Kirkpatrick Model](https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/the-kirkpatrick-model/), we would expect an increase in learning (knowledge, skills, attitude and confidence), changes in behaviours and improved performance. |
| **How you can help**   * Suggestions and ways to gather base line data from multiple organisations. * Which metrics to realistically include. * Examples of ways of gathering evaluation data from multiple organisations. * Suggestions and examples on ways to carry out learning evaluation across multiple organisations. * Examples of external benchmarking data. |

**Timescales**

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| Procurement process | 29 May 2023 |
| Contract award | August 2023? |
| Design of programme | August 2023 |
| Pilot | November 2023 |
| NFCC Governance Sign-off | March 2024 |
| Delivery of first programme | April 2024 |