

## Service standards

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 Responsible work team: **Central Operations**

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# 1 Introduction

1.1 Service standards have been designed as a means to set, measure and evaluate the Brigade's performance for individuals, teams and departments within the organisation. The Brigade has developed 11 service standards which are based on the expected level of performance, resources and demand on the service, that is, 'normal business' and they are important in a number of ways. They:

- Clarify the expectations of the level of service required within London.
- Assist staff to drive service improvement.
- Reinforce accountability by making performance transparent.
- Are integral in meeting the organisation's aims and objectives and effectively managing performance.
- Identify areas for improvement in individuals, teams and the wider organisation.
- Identify areas where expected performance is observed and provides opportunities for the sharing of best and/or exceptional practice.

1.2 Each of the service standards align themselves to one of three organisational areas; Service Delivery, Human Resources and Training and Corporate.

These are as follows:

Human resources and training	Service delivery	Corporate
1. Human resources	5. Operations	9. Health and safety
2. Fairness and dignity	6. Operational readiness	10. Financial management
3. Training	7. Operational contingency planning	11. Customer satisfaction
4. Development	8. Community safety and engagement	

## 2 Service standards

2.1 Each of the 11 service standards comprises three constituent parts:

### The service standard

2.2 Each service standard covers a particular topic and provides clear requirements and guidance on how to deliver and achieve these standards.

### The outcomes

2.3 These are the key requirements of the standards, which when achieved, contribute to the overall standard being met.

### Tasks and activities

2.4 In order to meet the required outcomes, a series of tasks and activities must be achieved. These tasks and activities support each outcome and standard.

**Note:** If all the outcomes, tasks and activities are not met then the individual or team has not fully met the standard.

## **Relationship between the service standards**

- 2.5 The service standards provide a detailed description of the level of service a fire station is expected to provide. The standards themselves should not be treated in isolation, as each contributes towards the total delivery of the service.

## **3 The aims of service standards**

- 3.1 The aims of service standards is to:
- Ensure that the service is delivered to a specified standard and that when those standards are not met, the cause is identified and remedial action is taken at the appropriate level to improve and maintain the delivery of the service.
  - Recognise that action to improve the delivery of the service can be made at individual, team and organisational level.
  - Ensure that all staff are aware of the expected level of service and understand their role, responsibilities and contribution.
  - Be able to provide evidence which indicates whether the level of service is being met across a particular location and the wider Brigade.
  - Implement the agreed action and monitor performance after action has been taken to make sure that the level of service has been improved and maintained.
  - Identify best and/or exceptional practices and share these across the Brigade to improve standards.
  - Provide direction to staff of acceptable standards of performance

## **4 Service standard desktop icon and Hotwire**

- 4.1 A desk top icon and Hotwire page is available to all personnel via their thin clients and has been developed to provide staff with three things:
- It states the standard, outcomes, tasks and activities within each service standard and provides the supporting guidance notes and documentation.
  - It contains the quality and performance assurance review documents, which provides staff with the criteria for all the QA reviews in a clear and transparent way.
  - It provides an interactive learning platform for staff to educate themselves in all aspects of service standards, making them better informed and prepared for the QA reviews.
- 4.2 The service standards page can be located on Hotwire by following the path below.  
Home>Guides and policies >Service standards.

## **5 Responsibilities**

- All staff are responsible for achieving and maintaining the required standards across the three organisational areas.
- Service Standard Support Officers (SSSOs) are responsible for carrying out structured and pre planned quality assurance(QA) by the way of reviews and providing advice to station staff and local management.
- Station managers/borough commanders are responsible for monitoring and measuring the delivery of the service in accordance with this policy against the prescribed service standards. They are also responsible for carrying out QA reviews at their own stations in support of the SSSOs.



- Central Operations will periodically review this policy and service standards documentation. They will also provide central guidance and direction to the 16 SSSOs and organise and chair the quarterly service standard forums.
- Service Standard Governance Board (SSGB) will be responsible for the overview of the QA process and the service standard change process.

## 6 Service standard support officers (SSSOs)

- 6.1 Across the four command areas (NE, NW, SE and SW) there are 16 SSSOs who report directly to the four area deputy assistant commissioners. Their role within the organisational is to carry out planned and structured Quality Assurance (QA) reviews to ascertain the level of performance being delivered at each location.
- 6.2 During these reviews the SSSOs use a prepared document called a Quality Assurance Review document. This document captures all the required outcomes of the service standards and allows the SSSOs to quality assure each service standard and score the outcomes, tasks and activities appropriately using the red, amber and green (RAG) system.
- 6.3 SSSOs will provide consistent, structured advice and guidance during the QA review and help to identify solutions to improve deficits. A key part of this is identifying best practice that can be recorded and communicated across the Brigade to further drive improvements in service delivery.
- 6.4 SSSOs will carry out structured feedback with the station and borough commanders so that the outcomes of the review are discussed and the action plans are implemented fully to achieve the required improvements.

## 7 Quality assurance reviews

- 7.1 To ensure the reviews achieve optimum results the service standards have been combined to capture all elements within the individual standards, allowing the SSSOs to quality assure the optimum range of tasks and activities during a single visit.
- 7.2 To enable this 9 of the 11 service standards have been divided into four quality assurance reviews, they are:

Quality Assurance review	Service standards
Quality assurance 1	2, 9 and 10 Fairness, H&S, Finance
Quality assurance 2	6 and 7 Operational readiness and ops planning
Quality assurance 3	5 and 8 Operations and CFS
Quality assurance 4	3 and 4 Training and Development

**Note:** Service standard 1 - Human resources and service standard 11 - Customer satisfaction, are not quality assured through this process.

## **8 Service standard governance board (SSGB)**

- 8.1 The role of the SSGB is to ensure that the trends and best practices identified by the SSSOs during the QA reviews are recorded and discussed to generate improvements across the organisation. Along with identifying these trends the SSGB is responsible for the change process for all service standards and QA reviews. This governance framework supports the continued improvement of standards and reports directly to the Director of Operations.
- 8.2 All changes identified by the SSSOs will be reviewed at the SSGB and following their approval, incorporated into the existing documents. Further information on the SSGB can be found in the service standard governance board terms of reference.

## **9 Gap analysis**

- 9.1 If during a QA review an organisational gap in procedure and/or policy is identified the SSSOs will record this and report back to the local station/borough manager. In most cases a local solution through the use of an review action input form would normally resolve the identified gap, with the SSSOs being able to provide advice and guidance to ensure this happens.
- 9.2 Where gaps in policy are identified or if the gap cannot be resolved locally it will then be recorded on the gap analysis template and discussed at the service standard governance board, and if necessary forwarded to the appropriate department for further action.
- 9.3 These gaps will be reviewed and monitored by the SSGB on a quarterly basis.

## **10 Database**

- 10.1 The service standard database will record all the results of QA reviews completed by the SSSOs and local station managers and will have the following functions:
- Hold all the quality and performance assurance information for the Brigade.
  - Provide a platform to generate reports to identify trends and improvements to individuals, teams and the wider organisation.
  - Store a range of action plans which can be used to deliver improvements following QA reviews.
  - Assist SM/BC and DACs to monitor performance across their respective stations, boroughs and areas.
- 10.2 The service standard database is located on the service standards hotwire page. Home>Guides and policies>Service standards>Quality assurance.

## Document history

### Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	28/10/2015	SDIA	15/10/2012	HSWIA		RA	
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### Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Page 5	'Subjects list' table - template updated.	05/12/2014
Throughout	Minor changes made throughout, due to the TMR	14/10/2015
Throughout	Terminology amended and references to the SSSOs, database and hotwire site added to this policy. Reviewed as current.	05/01/2016

### Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Service standards	

### Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification