



Annual Report 2025-2026

*Shaping the
Future of Fire
through Collaboration*

Introduction

It is a privilege to present the Fire Sector Confederation's Annual report for 2025 -2026, the first as a "Confederation".

This past year has been one of significant progress — and I am pleased to report that the Confederation has moved with purpose, intent, and growing confidence as it takes its place as the principal representative, convening and governance body across the UK's fire and building safety landscape.

When the Confederation was established, our ambition was clear: to bring coherence, collaboration and a shared voice to a sector that had long been fragmented. We wanted to act as a neutral convenor — not competing with our members but amplifying their collective expertise and ensuring that the sector speaks with greater unity and authority in government departments, and across the regulatory landscape. I believe this year's work demonstrates that we are firmly on that path.

The successful completion of our transition from the Fire Sector Federation represents a milestone that simplifies our governance and removes ambiguity. We are now a single, clearly constituted CIO — well-governed, properly structured, and increasingly trusted.

I am especially proud of the Confederation's emerging parliamentary influence. The successful reset of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fire and Rescue has been an important step. Of course, Parliamentarians and APPGs guard their independence, and that is an important check and balance. But they need to have expert and objective insight to help and support them to formulate their views. The value of this was demonstrated in a productive ministerial meeting in March 2026 with the Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy. This illustrates that the fire safety system now has a credible, well-supported route into the heart of government.

There are challenges ahead and the Trustees are well aware of the need to build a more secure and recurring funding base. However, the partnerships now being agreed with leading organisations in the sector and the many constructive conversations underway give us real confidence that the funding model will evolve to reflect the value the Confederation delivers. In addition, we are also looking to expand and broaden the base of trustees.

In this respect and on behalf of all the Trustees, I thank all our members, partners, and stakeholders for their confidence in the Confederation. The fire sector is facing a period of sustained and complex change. The Confederation exists to help navigate it — together.



JOHN SPENCER
Chair
Fire Sector Confederation

Executive Director's Report

The last year has been a period of sustained and, in many respects, accelerating activity — as the Confederation has moved from the foundational work of establishing a new charity into the more demanding task of delivering real value, building genuine influence and securing its long-term future.

The overall picture is positive. The Confederation is now a recognised and increasingly influential body across the fire and building safety landscape. It has developed credible relationships with key sector organisations, government departments, and parliamentarians. Its Consultations Network remains one of its most distinctive and valued assets. And through the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fire and Rescue, it now has a genuine pathway into the heart of government.



PROF STEVE MCGUIRK
Executive Director
Fire Sector Confederation

Governance, Structure and Legacy Arrangements

The transition from the Fire Sector Federation to the Fire Sector Confederation has now been substantially completed. Following a formal written resolution process and consultation with members, the required majority was secured. The Fire Sector Confederation CIO is now the sole member of the Fire Sector Federation, which has moved into a dormant, non-operational position. This has resolved the previous duplication and ambiguity and established the Confederation clearly as the principal sector body.

Charity banking arrangements are fully embedded and operating effectively. HMRC have been notified of all respective arrangements and a submission has been made for recognition as an organisation for which professional fees should be tax deductible. The Confederation's website is increasingly acting as the primary external face of the organisation.

Work continues on Phase 2 digital functionality, particularly around knowledge networks, consultation tracking, APPG activity, and dynamic sector engagement. A governance officer is expected to be appointed during the course of this year, to strengthen compliance and administrative capacity.

Financial Position and Sustainability

The Confederation remains in a relatively stable short-term position of 18 months to two years, though long-term sustainability remains the major strategic challenge. Membership and grant income have allowed continued safe operation, and the organisation is now in a stronger position than at the point of transition. The final grant from the Fire Research and Training Trust has now been received.

The overarching aim is to establish a secure annual funding position targeting a range of £250,000 to £300,000 per year. Achieving this would also enable a more sustainable footing for contracted personnel.

Good progress has been made on strategic partnership discussions. Several partnership agreements for the coming year have been secured, and discussions are ongoing with potential new partners across the sector.

Knowledge Networks, Digital Hub and Sector Mapping

The development specialist knowledge networks has continued through the year, though progress has been slower than originally hoped. This reflects the intensive focus required on strategic partnerships, governance, the APPG, and consultation activity — all against a backdrop of exceptionally high levels of government activity in the fire and building safety space.

There is now a growing recognition that the Confederation may secure substantially more members, partners and participating organisations than originally anticipated. This makes the underlying technology and access model an increasingly important strategic question and has required adaptations to original plans and structures.

The emerging implications of the Online Safety Act are also becoming relevant, depending on the extent to which the Confederation hosts member discussions, confidential reporting, or user-generated content.

Priority networks for the coming period include Collaborative Reporting for Safer Structures, the Consultations Network, the National Fire Sprinkler Network, and selected topic-based networks — including sports grounds, heritage buildings, and healthcare premises.

Alongside this, significant progress has been made on the proposed meetings tracker and stakeholder mapping concept. This has evolved into an ambitious tool: a dynamic map of the complex ecosystem of meetings, regulators, industry groups, standards bodies, networks, forums and government structures operating across fire, building safety and resilience.

Phase one of the new website launched in November 2025 creating a modern AI supported platform on which to complete phase two, which incorporates a new secure member area and knowledge networks. The second phase will be complete by June 2026.

Consultations and Policy Influence

The Consultations Network continues to be one of the Confederation's most distinctive assets. The network has handled a high volume of consultations and has increasingly been used to bring together joint views across multiple organisations. The Confederation's role is not to produce detailed technical responses on every issue, but rather to identify strategically important themes, convene organisations, identify areas of consensus and disagreement, and provide a route for collective influence.

Areas of focus over the period have included the Single Construction Regulator Prospectus consultation, construction products reform, Approved Document B, fire risk assessor professionalisation, UKAS accreditation and competency pathways, sprinklers in schools, lithium-ion battery risks, modern methods of construction and timber, evacuation and PEEPs, and firefighter health and cancer issues.

A substantial public consultation is now underway on fire risk assessment, competency and accreditation.



APPG for Fire Safety and Rescue

I have been appointed as the Secretary to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fire and Rescue, following the retirement of Ronnie King during the year.

The first ministerial meeting under the new structure was held on 19 March 2026 with Samantha Dixon MP, Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy. The meeting covered Grenfell implementation, Approved Document B, the Building Safety Regulator, white goods and batteries, sprinklers in schools, the Single Construction Regulator, construction products reform, and fire risk assessor professionalisation. It was widely regarded as constructive and substantive.

The relationship with the APPG is becoming one of the Confederation's most important strategic assets. Notwithstanding the independence of Parliamentarians — the APPG nevertheless provides a route into Parliament and government, and a mechanism through which sector concerns can be expressed in a more coherent, strategic and non partisan way.

Fire Futures and Emergency Risks

The proposal to recast the Advisory Council into a forward-looking Fire Futures group remains relevant. Following discussions, it has become clear that there is significant overlap with the work being developed with CROSS around emerging threats, risks, and lessons learned. Rather than create parallel structures, the Confederation has agreed to work with CROSS to combine these agendas into a single, coherent approach. A workshop is being facilitated in partnership with CROSS in May 2026.

Fire research has also emerged as an increasingly important theme. The Confederation has long highlighted the fragmented nature of fire research across the UK. Following a constructive meeting with key stakeholders in late 2025, the University of Chester will host a larger meeting in June 2026 involving around twenty stakeholders from across fire and rescue, research, regulation, academia and industry. The purpose will be to explore the potential creation of a more formal fire research alliance.

Communications and Events

Throughout the year the Confederation continued the programme of quarterly Member Forums. While there are occasions when these may be in person, the majority preference is still to hold these virtually, as reflected by the significantly increased virtual attendance.

Following the success of the first Fire Congress in 2025 the second event was held in March 2026 with over 40 attendees from across fire safety, construction and government. These events are designed to bring together leading experts in the sector, government and regulators to share information and discuss issues in a 'safe space' and have been very well received.

We have continued the cycle of regular media articles and member newsletters and our investment in technology allows us to be more agile in this area, improving the quality and effectiveness of member communications.





Looking Ahead: Priorities for 2026-2027

The next phase of the Confederation's development will focus on a targeted set of priorities that reflect both the opportunities now available and the need to manage capacity carefully:

1 **Secure stable core funding arrangements**

Progressing partnership and membership discussions with organisations across the sector bodies to achieve a recurring annual income of £250,000–£300,000.

2 **Expand strategic partnerships across the fire chain**

Formalising and developing partnership agreements with key sector bodies, building on a model whereby larger organisations wrap Confederation participation into their own membership or partnership arrangements.

3 **Develop the knowledge networks and digital hub**

Prioritising the online launch of the Collaborative Reporting for Safer Structures work, the Consultations Network, and the National Fire Sprinkler Network. Progressing decisions on access tiers, membership walls, and digital platform development.

4 **Progress the meetings tracker and stakeholder mapping**

Developing the sector ecosystem map into a functional strategic asset. This tracker will provide visibility of sector activity, identify duplication and gaps, and assist Ministers and sector leaders in navigating an increasingly complex landscape.

5 **Build the relationship with APPG**

Developing a programme of evidence-based briefings, parliamentary meetings and consultation support for the APPG as a route to raise strategic issues with Ministers, officials and Parliamentarians.

6 **Coordinate strategically important consultations**

Continuing to operate the Consultations Network as the sector's primary collective mechanism for tracking, engaging with, and responding to major fire safety consultations from government, BSI, and the Building Safety Regulator.

7 **Launch the Fire Futures concept**

Working with CROSS to develop a coherent, forward-looking programme addressing emerging threats including climate change, new technologies, lithium-ion batteries, modern methods of construction, and workforce challenges. A workshop is planned for May 2026, followed by the broader fire research alliance meeting at the University of Chester in June.

8 **Strengthen governance, compliance and administrative capacity**

Appointing a governance officer during the course of 2026 to support charity governance, APPG compliance, website content management, data protection and administrative coordination as the Confederation's activity increases.

9 **Demonstrate visible value to members, partners and funders**

Ensuring that the Confederation's impact is clearly communicated — through the website, at Fire Congress, through the APPG, and through regular engagement with members and partners.