Newsletter
ISSUE 1 | WINTER 2025

NFSN National Fire Sprinkler Network

Welcome

TERRY McDERMOTT, NFSN SECRETARY

This year the NFSN have reviewed our arrangements for meetings and communications in a bid to maximise our reach across the fire sector in pursuit of our main aim, which is to promote the wider use of fire sprinkler systems in the built environment. Recognising the busy schedules of our members and the mounting costs of in person meetings, we are moving to a single but larger annual conference event supported by quarterly newsletters to keep people updated.

This is the first newsletter and within it you will find the key updates from members of the executive including the retirement of Ronnie King as the Secretary to the All Party Parliamentary Group and an introduction to Steve McGuirk his successor, an update on research material focussed on the cost benefits of sprinklers in school premises, supported by BAFSA, EFSN and IFSA (International Fire Suppression Alliance). In addition, there are links to the Autumn BAFSA sprinkler saves report detailing the effectiveness of sprinklers across a range of building fires.¶

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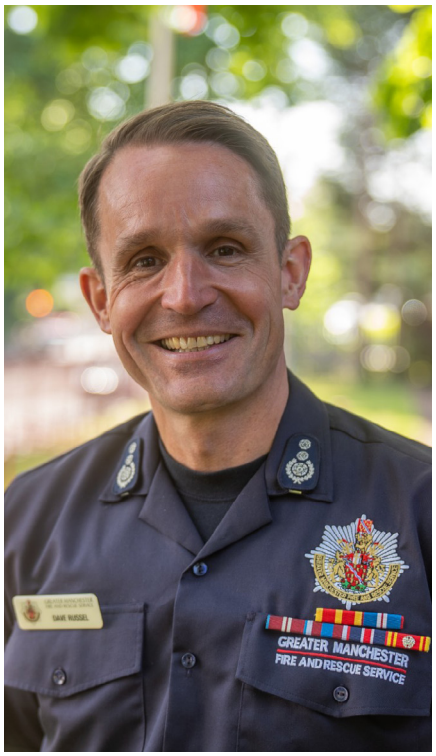


Chief Fire Officer Dave Russel GMFRS lends his support

DAVE RUSSEL, NFCC FIRE PROTECTION LEAD

As the lead officer for Fire Protection within the National Fire Chiefs Council I would like to add my support to the NFSN in promoting the wider use of sprinkler systems. As fire chiefs we all recognise the benefits that sprinklers play as part of an integrated building fire strategy to save life and protect buildings from avoidably losses. This is reflected in the NFCC sprinkler policy statement on sprinklers (download here).

In particular, I would like to encourage all UK Fire and Rescue Services to support gathering evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of sprinklers. This can be done by promoting and contributing to the BAFSA Sprinkler Saves initiative referenced in this newsletter. The reporting of incidents via this portal is incredibly powerful when providing examples to support improvements to building regulations and engaging with ministers.

I also commend the NFSN for its unique research into the impact of fire on school premises, including the case studies which extend far beyond cost benefit and demonstrate the wider social and educational impacts on pupils, staff and the community when a school is damaged by fire. ¶

nfcc.org.uk

Sprinkler in schools – the campaign continues

TOM ROCHE, SECRETARY, BUSINESS SPRINKLER ALLIANCE (BSA)

We sit in 2025 and we maintain our support for the NFSN campaign for sprinklers in schools. It was something that we thought had been successfully concluded back in 2007. However, life is never that simple.

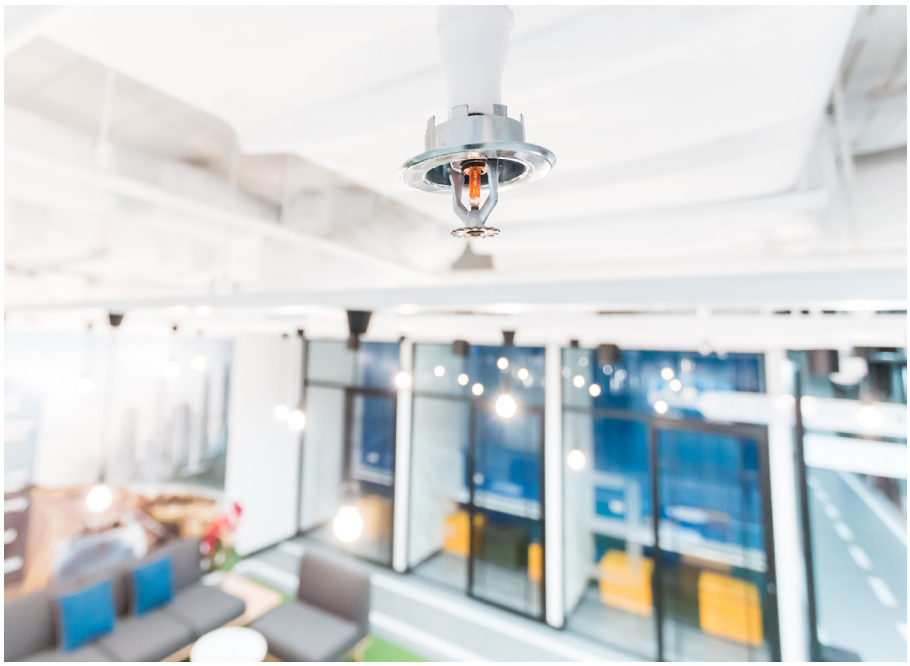
In the past 10 years we have seen two consultations on BB100 with no changes to that document. The first was in July 2016. The response to that consultation did not surface.

A call for evidence on changes to BB100 was launched in March 2019 with the findings surfacing in a botched response document in May 2021, which had to be redone after mislaying the responses of twelve organisations most notably the NFSN, the FPA, LFB, GMFRS and the National Association of Head Teachers.

The second consultation landed in May 2021, ending that Summer. Since then, it has been silent.

The Public Accounts Committee held an inquiry into the condition of school buildings. This coincided with the issues around RAAC construction which has seen several schools decamp into temporary buildings. They wrote a second report which was published on the 9th November 2023. Within that report they recommended to the Government the following: "Within the next year, DfE should set out its strategy for encouraging responsible bodies to carry out timely and effective repairs to better protect longer-term value for money. It should also reconsider its value for money analysis on fitting fire safety measures."

The Government response in March 2024 to the last point noted that it would consider this with the Government Actuary Department (GAD) and the impact of fitting sprinklers as standard on new school buildings. It further noted a new



version of BB100 which it expected to publish later in 2024.

Again, silence and the 2007 version of BB100 remains the extant guidance, but as DfE points out, it is non-statutory. The notion of sprinklers in all new schools is a localised issue dependent on local government initiatives.

All the while GAD updates us on the government alternative scheme to "self-fund" damage to schools through the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA). What many do not see is that the last full year's numbers (2023-24) show that the average claim to the RPA for fire damage was £231,056. The five-year average for claims for fire damage is £339,071. That is not an insignificant number and one that active fire suppression could help reduce.

Add to this the Government's own figures where they claim a lost day of education reduces the lifetime earnings of an individual by £750. They used this claim to trumpet the success of getting children back into schools after the low attendance figure post Covid. Stop and think about that number and the school fires we have witnessed where children in a school of 200,500 or 1,000 pupils have had their education interrupted and displaced for months. That £750 per individual per day would mount up pretty quickly to dwarf those average fire damage claim figures. It supports our claim all along that this is about community and continuity of education.

It made sense in 2007 when BB100 set an expectation for the continuity of education and the installation of sprinklers in new schools. The needless delaying and muddling from the DfE, the calls for evidence and consultations without outcome will not change that. This is why we continue to battle to gain acceptance for the positive benefit of sprinklers. ¶

business-sprinkler-alliance.org

Supporting Sprinkler Saves

The National Fire Sprinkler Network's primary objective is to promote the adoption of sprinklers by providing education on their benefits, addressing common misconceptions, and gathering evidence to support their effectiveness.

A key workstream supporting this mission is Sprinkler Saves UK, which documents real-life case studies where sprinklers have contained, controlled, or extinguished fires. By encouraging Fire Rescue Services (FRS) and industry professionals across the UK to report all forms of Automatic Water Suppression System (AWSS) activations, this initiative creates a centralised, comprehensive record of fire incidents.

This documentation plays a vital role in advancing the network's advocacy for greater use of AWSS influencing policy decisions and promoting increased adoption within the built environment.

We invite support from Fire Rescue Services (FRS) and members of the sprinkler industry to report AWSS activations to Sprinkler Saves UK. Activations can be reported using the Sprinkler Saves Activation Reporting Form at *sprinklersaves.co.uk*.

The Autumn summary of news and activities from Sprinkler Saves UK is now available to read and download identifying real life tangible examples where AWSS have made a difference. ¶

The Autumn update can be downloaded here. If you have any questions on how your organisation/FRS can contribute to Sprinkler Saves UK please contact Nick Coleshill, BAFSA Sprinkler Saves UK Coordinator, at nick.coleshill@bafsa.org.uk

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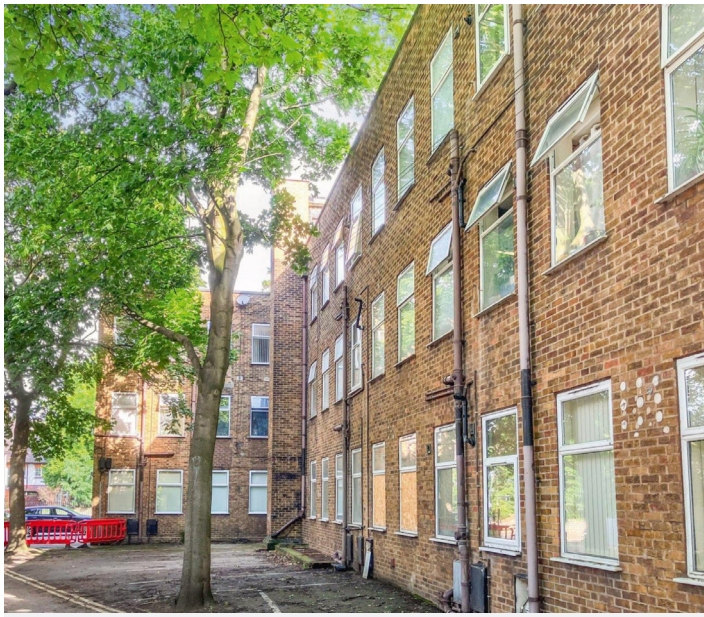


South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue match funding for sprinkler installation in Doncaster

Through our match funding scheme we have teamed up with St Leger Homes to install a Fire Sprinkler System in St Georges Court Doncaster.

This is a three- storey residential building and the system will be retrofitted during compartmentation upgrading work. Georges Court has 55 flats, which are a mix of one and two-bedroom properties.

SYFR recently teamed with St Leger Homes to retrofit a 17-storey 129 apartment block of flats, which since installation has had two fires both successfully controlled by the fire sprinkler system. Following that jointly funded installation St Leger Homes retrofitted the remaining seven high-rise blocks throughout the city. ¶

A year of progress and collaboration

BY ALI PERRY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BAFSA

The past year has been a period of significant progress for the British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association (BAFSA), with continued focus on raising competence, expanding training and professional development, and strengthening our evidence-based advocacy for automatic fire sprinklers across the UK.

Advancing competence across the sector

BAFSA has continued to place competence at the heart of its work. I chair several key working groups shaping the national approach to fire protection competence:

- The Setting Expectations Working Group under the ICC.
- The Active Fire Protection Group, part of the Engineering Super Sector within the Industry Competence Steering Group (ICSG).
- The Fire Sprinkler Group, reporting to the ICSG, which is developing a competency framework for the sprinkler industry in collaboration with the Residential Sprinkler Association, BRE, IFCC, and multiple third-party certification bodies.

These efforts are helping to define a clear, nationally recognised standard of competence for all those working within the sprinkler sector – from installers to inspectors and designers.

Research and collaboration

BAFSA has partnered with the Fire Protection Association (FPA), National Fire Sprinkler Network (NFSN), RISC Authority, and BRE and received funding from the Electrical Safety First Fund. This study will examine the impact of water-based fire suppression systems on lithium-ion battery fires — a crucial area of emerging fire risk as energy storage technologies proliferate.

Expanding training and professional development

In line with our focus on competence, BAFSA has modernised its training provision and digital infrastructure:

- New website and electronic training portal has been launched, providing smoother access to up-to-date information and with easier access to course bookings, events, and CPD resources.
- Flexible online learning is now available for many of our courses, supporting remote access for professionals across the UK.

- The ABBE Level 2 Certificate in Fire Sprinkler Installation has been fully reviewed and now offers three routes: Residential, Commercial, or Combined and is managed through BAFSAs own training centre.
- Introduction of the online ABBE Level 3 Award in Inspection & Commissioning of Commercial Fire Sprinkler Systems, expanding pathways for technical upskilling.
- New CPD modules, including two free courses – *Owners and Occupiers Guide to Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems* and *Awareness of Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems* – and one offered at a small cost – *Principles and Practices of Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems.*

BAFSA has also commissioned a Labour Market Survey to better understand current and future skills needs within the industry – ensuring training provision remains aligned with workforce demand and national competency goals.

Technical and standards contributions

BAFSA has continued to play an active and respected role within UK and European standards development. Over the past year, BAFSA has contributed to: →

A year of progress and collaboration *(continued)*

- BSI FSH/18/2 – Fixed Firefighting Systems (Sprinklers): Review and revision of BS 9251 and BS EN 12845.
- BSI FSH/18 – Fixed Firefighting Systems (General): Cross-standard discussions on interfaces between sprinklers, watermist, and other suppression systems.
- NFCC Suppression Working Group – Aligning design guidance with operational firefighting practices.
- BS EN 12259 – Sprinkler Components: Input on testing and performance criteria.
- BSI FSH/17 – Fire Precautions in Buildings: Contributions relating to car parks, EV charging areas, and large enclosures.
- LPC Rules for Automatic Sprinkler Installations (FPA) – Support on commercial system standards and best practice.

Through the BAFSA Technical Committee, we have ensured all technical work is strategically aligned with the wider regulatory and building safety framework.

Evidence, advocacy and impact

BAFSA's Sprinkler Saves project continues to grow as Europe's only comprehensive and credible evidence base for sprinkler effectiveness:

- Over 160 verified saves were published between April 2024 and September 2025.
- Quarterly reports were shared with members, fire and rescue services, and MPs.
- Development of a standardised national reporting template now adopted by more than 15 fire services.
- Direct engagement with 42 MPs, highlighting saves within their constituencies — with 11 providing formal acknowledgements or responses.

This verified data continues to underpin BAFSA's advocacy, turning operational evidence into persuasive tools for policy and parliamentary engagement, and reinforcing the case for wider sprinkler inclusion within national building safety policy.

Looking ahead

BAFSA's work over the past year demonstrates the association's commitment to advancing competence, supporting technical excellence, and providing a strong, evidence-based voice for the sprinkler industry. Through collaboration, innovation, and a shared vision for safer buildings, BAFSA continues to lead the way in promoting the life- and property-saving value of automatic fire sprinklers across the UK. ¶

bafsa.org.uk

BAFSA SCOTLAND UPDATE

Sprinklers in traditional buildings

In Scotland, significant progress continues to be made toward improving fire safety through the wider use of sprinklers - particularly in existing and traditional buildings. Following the tragic Cameron House fire in 2017, the Scottish Government established a multi-agency working group to examine the role of sprinklers and other active fire protection measures in traditional and heritage premises.

BAFSA has been an active member of this working group, contributing technical expertise and practical insight from across the sprinkler industry. The association supported the development of the business case for sprinklers in traditional buildings, drawing on data, evidence, and case studies provided by BAFSA members. This input helped demonstrate the feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and life-safety benefits of modern sprinkler solutions in complex heritage environments.

The group – comprising representatives from the Scottish Government, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Historic Environment Scotland, and key industry bodies – has focused on developing proportionate and sensitive approaches to fire safety retrofits in older structures such as hotels, guest houses, and residential conversions. Its work includes assessing technical options, reviewing case studies, and producing practical guidance for designers, enforcers, and building owners.

BAFSA's involvement ensures that the recommendations remain grounded in real-world installation experience and reflect the full capability of today's water-based fire suppression technologies, including low-impact systems suitable for heritage contexts.

This work complements wider Scottish initiatives promoting sprinkler protection in new housing, care settings, and other high-risk accommodation. By contributing industry data and supporting evidence-based policy development, BAFSA continues to help shape a pragmatic national approach to fire safety in both modern and historic buildings – ensuring lessons from past incidents drive meaningful progress. ¶

Parliamentary briefing

FROM THE APPG ON FIRE SAFETY & RESCUE ANNUAL REPORT 2024–2025 HIGHLIGHTS

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fire Safety & Rescue, chaired by Bob Blackman CBE MP, continues to lead the charge for fire safety reform across the UK. Supported by long-serving Adviser Ronnie King OBE, the Group's 2024–2025 efforts focused on implementing the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 recommendations, improving building safety legislation, and accelerating remediation of unsafe structures.

Key developments

- Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2: The September 2024 report issued 58 recommendations, including the creation of a Fire Safety Secretary, a new construction regulator, and a College of Fire & Rescue. The APPG stressed that the tragedy was preventable and called for urgent action.
- Building Safety Regulation: Despite progress by the Building Safety Regulator, over 1,300 high-rise buildings in London still await remediation. The APPG raised concerns over fire door standards and pushed for clarity to avoid unnecessary replacements.
- New Requirements: From 2026, all buildings over 18m must have two staircases. Sprinklers are now mandated in new care homes, with continued lobbying for their inclusion in all new schools.

Governance & leadership

Following the July 2024 General Election, the APPG was reconstituted with expanded cross-party membership. Ronnie King formally handed over his advisory role to Professor Steve McGuirk CBE at the October AGM, marking the end of King's 14-year tenure and 64 years in fire service.

Policy engagement

The APPG maintained strong ministerial engagement and collaborated with the Fire Sector Federation and Fire Protection Association. It contributed to debates on:

- Fire safety in leasehold and social housing
- PEEPs for disabled residents
- Lithium-ion battery and EV fire risks
- Unsafe e-bike/e-scooter imports

Sector challenges

- Cladding Remediation: Estimated completion by 2035 at a cost of £16.6 billion.
- Leasehold Reform: Advocacy for fair treatment of leaseholders facing fire safety costs.
- Education Safety: Support for the £740m SEND building fund and continued push for sprinklers in schools.
- Accountability: Calls for a government duty of candour following Grenfell-related inquiries.

Priorities for 2025

1. Full implementation of Grenfell recommendations
2. Creation of a unified Fire Safety Department
3. Mandatory sprinklers in high-risk buildings
4. Accelerated remediation with transparent reporting
5. Stabilised fire door testing standards
6. Legal enforcement of PEEPs
7. Innovation in fire safety tech
8. Stronger inter-agency collaboration

The APPG remains a cornerstone of parliamentary oversight, ensuring fire safety reform stays at the forefront of national policy. With new leadership and renewed commitment, the Group continues to champion life-saving legislation and accountability across the built environment. ¶

Ronnie King OBE hands over the Honorary Secretary of the APPG to Steve McGuirk

In October we saw Ronnie King stepping down as the Secretary to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Fire Rescue and Safety (the APPG), a role has held since 2012. Ronnie is widely respected across the fire sector and has been dedicated and devoted to the promotion of fire safety in its widest context and not least in advocating the benefits of sprinklers. His commitment to and knowledge of fire safety and parliamentary process is unparalleled. With some 64 years of dedication and commitment to fire safety the NFSN wish to extend our sincere thanks to Ronnie and wish him a well-earned and relaxing retirement.

Steve Mcguirk is the executive director of the Fire Sector Confederation, formerly the Fire Sector Federation and now operating as a UK registered charity. The confederation aims to promote collaboration across the sector in its widest sense including the UKFRS, construction, manufacturing, insurance and many others. In his capacity as APPG chair, Steve will be positioned to channel the widest sector experience into the APPG and ensure that all facets of fire safety are represented and heard.

On taking up his new role Steve McGuirk commented:"I am both honoured and delighted to be taking on the role of Secretary to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fire Safety and Rescue, though I know I follow in the footsteps of a hard act indeed. Ronnie King OBE has set an exceptional standard through his years of dedicated service, combining professional authority with humility, humour, and an unwavering commitment to public safety. His work has not only shaped better legislation and policy but has also saved lives and strengthened confidence in fire safety across the country. It will be no easy task to succeed someone who has given so much and done it so well, but I look forward to building on Ronnie's remarkable legacy with the same spirit of integrity, collaboration, and determination that he embodied throughout his tenure."

"Ronnie King OBE has set an exceptional standard through his years of dedicated service, combining professional authority with humility, humour, and an unwavering commitment to public safety."

In regard the relationship between the NFSN and the Fire Sector Confederation Steve added: "The NFSN brings together fire & rescue services, sprinkler manufacturers, installers, insurers and allied sectors to champion sprinkler systems as one of the most effective life-saving measures in buildings. Meanwhile, the FSC has evolved into a charitable body that acts as a neutral convenor of the fire-safety ecosystem — facilitating collaboration, knowledge-sharing and policy influence across the built environment, fire services and industry alike.

This creates a natural opportunity for alliance. NFSN's specialist focus on sprinkler deployment, evidence-gathering (such as the "sprinkler saves" initiative) and awareness-raising dovetails neatly with the FSC's broader strategic role in shaping policy, standards and sector collaboration. By working more closely together, both organisations can amplify their impact – ensuring that the case for sprinklers is integrated into the larger fire-safety narrative and that sector-wide strategies are grounded in proven solutions.

Looking ahead, a closer partnership could mean NFSN providing data, case studies and expertise for FSC consultations and networks, while FSC brings those insights into high-level policy and regulatory discussions. This two-way flow of knowledge and influence would help ensure sprinklers are consistently recognised as a cornerstone of fire safety and prevention, while avoiding duplication and presenting a stronger, unified voice to government and industry.

For members and stakeholders, the benefit is clear: a more coherent, positive and joined-up approach that highlights sprinklers as part of a wider safety system. By aligning their strengths, NFSN and FSC have the chance not only to reinforce each other's work but also to shape a safer, more resilient built environment for the future." ¶

NFSN update Wales

In a recent consultation, *Fire safety in multi-occupied buildings: residents research October 2024*, 13% of 1562 respondents (203 people) said they have a sprinkler system in their home.

Between 2023 and March this year 12757 new dwellings have been completed in Wales, whilst not all of these will have been sprinklered due to a loophole which allowed new dwellings where work had commenced prior to the introduction of the Domestic Fire Safety Order, a high and growing percentage of these houses and flats will be fitted with automatic suppression systems Forthcoming changes to *Approved Document B (Fire safety): Volume 1 and Volume 2* coming into effect 20 December 2025.

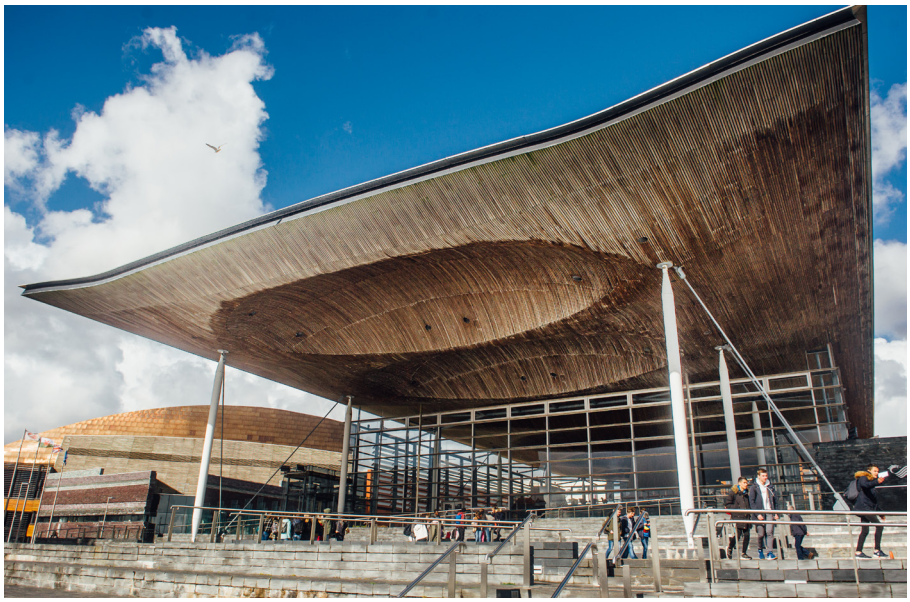
Amongst other things there are changes to the construction of external walls. In *Approved Document B (Fire safety) – Volume 1: Section 9 – Construction of external walls Regulation 7(1A)* prohibits the use of relevant metal composite materials in the external walls, and specified attachments, of all buildings of any height.

In Section 13 of that document the upcoming changes will state that the external wall of a building should not provide a medium for fire spread if that is likely to be a risk to health and safety.

Combustible materials and cavities in external walls and attachments to them can present such a risk, particularly in tall buildings. The guidance is designed to reduce the risk of fire spread as well as the risk of ignition from flames coming from adjacent buildings.

Solar shading devices more than 4.5m above ground will be required to achieve class A1 or A2-s1, d0.

Other changes will include a requirement to provide wayfinding signage for the fire service to assist the fire service to identify each floor in a block of flats with a top storey more than 11m above ground level, floor identification signs and flat indicator signs should be provided. Blocks of flats with a top storey over 18m above ground level an evacuation alert system should be provided in accordance with BS 8629.



"The Building Safety (Wales) Bill was laid before the Senedd in July this year. The bill, which is similar to the legislation introduced by the UK Parliament, creates a new building safety regime for multi-occupied residential buildings."

The Building Safety (Wales) Bill was laid before the Senedd in July this year. The bill, which is similar to the legislation introduced by the UK Parliament, creates a new building safety regime for multi-occupied residential buildings.

The bill will apply to all residential buildings containing two or more residential units (with some exceptions such as HMOs), but the specific requirements that apply depend on the type of building.

Regulated buildings will be divided into three categories:

- 'Category 1' – at least 18 metres in height or has at least 7 storeys.
- 'Category 2' – less than 18 metres in height and has fewer than 7 storeys, and is at least 11 metres in height or has at least 5 storeys.
- 'Category 3' – less than 11 metres in height and has fewer than 5 storeys. ¶

European Sprinkler Network Update

BY ALAN BRINSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK (EFSN)

The European Fire Sprinkler Network was inspired by the NFSN and brings together stakeholders across Europe who wish to see a step improvement in fire safety through the wider application of sprinkler systems. Working with our members, we coordinate and support national campaigns. We have someone leading this process in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland and Spain. Here in the UK I work closely with BAFSA, the BSA and NFSN, while avoiding duplication.

Across Europe we see common concerns about emerging fire safety risks expressed by regulators, fire services and consultants. These include:

- batteries in electric vehicles, e-scooters, e-bikes and consumer devices
- the use of combustible materials such as wood in construction
- increasing numbers of vulnerable people as our societies age

Sprinklers can help mitigate all these risks and this is being recognised, mainly by new requirements to fit sprinklers in enclosed car parks (although regrettably not yet in the UK) and in buildings where there is exposed wood. On a project basis we see sprinklers prescribed in buildings known to house vulnerable people, even if this is not yet codified in regulations or regulatory guidance.

BS 9991 and BS 9999

I am a member of BSI committee FSH/14, which among other standards drafts BS 9999 Code of practice for fire safety in buildings and BS 9991 Code of practice for fire safety in residential buildings. The latter was revised late last year and contains a number of incentives to install sprinklers in blocks of flats less high than the 11 m threshold at which they are anyway required by Approved Document B.

BS 9999 was last revised in 2017 and the next revision is gently getting going – as a first step we will look at the comments received over the past eight years. BS 9999 also contains incentives for sprinklers that are not in Approved Document B. I will remain on the panel but not chair it this time. Unfortunately I do not see much scope for further progress for sprinklers in this revision.

European Standards

The EFSN provides the secretariat for CEN Technical Committee 191 Working Group five, which drafts all the European sprinkler system design and component standards. I am also a member of CEN working groups covering foam, water mist, fire protection for battery energy storage systems, fire engineering and the provision of remote services.

EN 13565-2, the foam systems standard, is being amended to reflect the move to fluorine-free foam concentrates. In the absence of European standards for these products (the standards are under development), EN 13565-2 will refer to FM, UL and VdS test standards for foam-water sprinkler systems, with further design details in the approval or listing. Following publication of the amendment work will begin on a revision of EN 13565-2 but this revision is not expected to change the above approach for foam sprinkler systems.

Water mist standards have made huge progress in recent years, with 14 of the 16 fire test protocols under the EN 14972 series published and the remaining two imminent, while component standards now exist for filters and strainers, nozzles and check valves, and standards for other key components are in development. Furthermore, EN 14972-1, the water mist system design standard, has been amended to include limits of application of the above fire test protocols and tighten design guidance. It is now to undergo a full revision.

Working Group six of CEN TC/191, which covers gaseous extinguishing systems, is drafting a fire test protocol for systems to protect battery energy storage. Over the past year the draft has been much improved and now sprinklers and water mist should perform well against the protocol.

More and more manufacturers and installers are offering products and services for remote inspection and testing. Such services can potentially improve the reliability of sprinkler systems by helping to ensure that periodic tests are conducted and recording evidence of that, as well as analysing trends in performance to identify when preventive maintenance is needed.

To assure stakeholders that these services work as intended, groups have looked at writing standards in The Netherlands and Sweden. The Dutch group, led by my Dutch colleague, has now applied to CEN to create a preliminary work item for a European standard. The EFSN will closely follow this important development. ¶

eurosprinkler.org

The EFSN September update can be downloaded here.