

Subject: FIRE SAFETY IN SCHOOLS BUILDING BULLETIN 100 (BB100)

Report of the Chairman

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Department for Education has published non statutory guidance designed to show how new school buildings can be built in such a way to reduce the risk of fire and to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors if a fire occurs.

The consultation period ran from 4th July 2016 to a closing date for responses of 15th August 2016.
<https://consult.education.gov.uk/capita1i6b8c2667>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Government has recently changed the guidance to the Building Regulations whereby they do not require the installation of Fire Suppression Systems to be fitted into new Schools.
2. The Chairman considers this to be a retrograde step that does not make sense. Sprinklers do not just save lives, they prevent fires from spreading and causing significant disruption to children's education. They are supported by CFOA, Teachers and the LGA.
3. It is reported there were more than 600 fires in British schools last year. Arson was suspected in 40% of cases. Each large fire causes £1.5M of damage on average, according to insurers, who say sprinklers pay for themselves in lower premiums. Therefore this is a false economy change of policy.
4. In light of the above the Chairman recommends that GMFRA calls on the Government to reconsider their position and reintroduce the guidance to the Building Regulations with regard to the Installation of Fire Sprinkler Systems into new school buildings

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

5. The core objective of the Revised Building Bulletin 100 is to simplify the guidance. However in the process, it has removed the expectation that all new schools (except for low risk schools) will be protected from fire with automatic sprinklers. The benefits of Fire Suppression, extensively and emphatically documented in the foreword of the current BB 100 by the then Minister of State for Schools, have been erased from the

revised BB 100, with no mention made of sprinklers at all. This has taken place at a time when new schools in Scotland and Wales will have automatic sprinklers installed.

6. There has been no advanced notice, or prior indication of this alarming change, which is, strongly rejected across the Fire Sector, the Fire Sector Federation, the Fire Protection Association and the Arson Prevention Bureau.
7. This also seems remarkably out of step with what is going on in the rest of Great Britain. In both Scotland and Wales all new schools are fitted with sprinklers. Why should children in England be educated in schools in England with a lower safety standard than those in our neighbouring devolved administrations?

RECOMMENDATION

8. Members are recommended to call on the Government to reconsider their position and reintroduce the guidance to the Building Regulations with regard to the installation of Fire Sprinkler Systems into new school buildings.