

By: Dominic Bailey, Assistant Chief Fishery Officer

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority – 30th January 2019

Subject: **Hosting of national IFCA lead training officer**

Classification Unrestricted

Summary:

KEIFCA has agreed to host a national training officer post on behalf of all of the IFCAs through the Association of IFCAs.

Recommendations:

The Authority is asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT** upon the work undertaken so far with regards to national IFCO training

Introduction

As part of working towards delivering against our Success Criteria, IFCAs have in recent years been focussed on standardising training of officers and continually striving to improve on officers skill sets, especially related to enforcement. This is set out under our Enforcement as well as our Governance and Training criteria.

Throughout IFCA's, officer retention is a constant challenge, the modern working world and education system produces individuals who have attractive qualities to small organisations such as IFCA's such as drive, enthusiasm, ability and capability. However, with those skills comes an expectation for progression, upwards career movement, ever improving capabilities and provision of opportunities and skills. Unfortunately, not all officers are able to meet these expectations within IFCA's and move on to other positions in other organisations, often just as they have gathered the skills and experience to be effective senior officers. As a result, IFCAs have a constant influx of new staff. Training of officers in order to carry out our duties then is important to our success and effectiveness, and given the above issues will become ever more critical if we are to continue to prove and evidence the purpose and need of IFCAs in UK marine management.

In 2014 the MMO and IFCA began development of a bespoke vocational qualification aimed at recognising the vast array of knowledge and skills held by their enforcement officers. The qualification, a QCF Level 3 Certificate in Fisheries and Marine Enforcement, has been developed in conjunction with Skills for Justice (SfJ) and their awarding body SfJ Awards, and has been approved by the qualification regulator Ofqual. The accreditation scheme has been developed to provide enforcement officers working in fisheries and marine enforcement with external recognition of their abilities to carry out the specialist technical work that their roles require.

The current challenges with training for IFCA's

The Association of IFCA's identified that the biggest challenge facing IFCA's at present with regards to training of officers is that IFCA training does not have any dedicated resource and therefore standardisation, development and progress is restricted.

The AIFCA also identified that IFCA involvement in the development and management of the accreditation programme is now limited and that there was no current input into development and administration of the course i.e. Internal Quality Assessor. With regards to accreditation operation, IFCA's currently only have one officer working as a mentor/assessor in the Quality Assessor role, which is the role which deals directly with students.

What do IFCA's need?

The AIFCA discussions led to the setting of three main requirements to take IFCA training forwards:

1. A dedicated centralised IFCA training staff resource to develop, deliver and manage all IFCA training needs (induction, basic and advanced training plus bespoke where requested) and liaise with partner organisations (especially MMO) with regards to training.
2. Recognising that the accredited training was set up as a joint IFCA/MMO project, there is a need for a dedicated officer from IFCA's to function as an Internal Quality Assessor (this post takes care of standardization, and assesses the Quality Assessors work to ensure the standards for the qualification are being adhered to) alongside the IQA provided by MMO, and to help work with MMO to continue the management and development of the accreditation program.
3. Taking into account the initial high demand/peak in students passing through the accreditation programme followed by medium term lower level demand, there is a need for Quality Assessor's (these are the posts which interact directly with students and actually assess students' work as they pass through the course) from IFCA's to replace the ones which are no longer part of the programme, to sit alongside the QA's from MMO.

To meet the above requirements, the AIFCA agreed to the appointment of a national Lead Training Officer by the Association. The post would be hosted by an IFCA in much the same way as the MPA post is hosted by Southern IFCA, in order to facilitate HR and payroll functions. It was agreed that the mainland IFCA's would contribute £1500 each in capital costs plus £300 from Isles of Scilly

IFCA, with the remainder of the post costs coming from an increase in the course costs.

This post will result in IFCOs having their knowledge refreshed and updated every 3 to 5 years and include the development of an advanced training course and 1-2 day short courses to supplement learning from the existing basic course held annually at Torquay. The advanced course is something which will benefit senior Officers and their IFCA and the short courses are already being piloted to be able to provide the targeted training each IFCA thinks it needs. The overall aim of the LTO is to be able to standardise IFCA training nationwide.

Outcomes

In late 2018 a National Lead Training role was advertised by the AIFCA. In due course a successful candidate was offered the post. The post is for an initial period of one year, three days a week and, as a result of the significant input KEIFCA has had in leading national training over the past two years, we were approached by the AIFCA with regards to hosting the post, the cost of which will be covered by all of the IFCAs split equally, to which agreement was given. The successful candidate, Mr Ian Jones started on 14th January and we are currently working alongside the AIFCA to develop a workplan for the coming year.

Kent and Essex IFCA training workstreams

Kent and Essex IFCA have undertaken a piece of work to develop a 6 month induction program for new officers. This will enable all new officers to be supported through their initial learning in the same way by each IFCA. It has been developed with a mind to the needs of the Accredited Training Program so that officers will be able to evidence their learning so as not to repeat pieces of work unnecessarily.

KEIFCA have also been piloting the new 'short course' format for specific areas of enforcement skill development. During August we ran a two day course including practical elements for cautioning and questioning, with a focus on trying to put the officers under real world pressure.

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