

Sarah Parker EngTech TIFireE

Job title: Fire Safety Manager
Employer: Peaks and Plains Housing Trust

Tell us about your career.

I started working for Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service in 2005. My first role was in planning and performance but following on from a department restructure, I decided that I wanted to pursue a different path and so I took a redeployment opportunity that came up in the protection department. From there I trained as a Fire Safety Inspector and completed my Level 4 Diploma in Fire Safety in 2018. In 2020 I registered to become an Engineering Technician, and it was in that year that I changed jobs to my current position.

Please describe your role.

My role is to design and manage the Trust's approach in relation to fire safety including statutory and regulatory requirements. This includes working with fire risk assessors, contractors, tenants and leaseholders, colleagues and the fire and rescue service. The main aim of my role is to keep people safe in their homes.

Can you describe a typical working day?

I'm not sure that there is a typical working day! Whilst we would all like to be able to plan our days, in the fire sector these days are few and far between. There is always something that crops up that presents a challenge. This is because buildings are not standard, people are not standard, and one size does not fit all.



However, there are some things that I deal with most days including managing the actions coming out of fire risk assessments and managing contractors undertaking fire risk assessments and fire remedial work.

What inspired you to work in fire engineering?

I love the challenge of having to think on my feet. As a Fire Safety Inspector, I was often presented with situations which were not really what I was expecting. Assessing risk and deciding whether it was acceptable was a key process and having done that, looking at ways to mitigate those risks. It was a case of deciding what was reasonably practicable and cost-effective for the Responsible Person and whether there was more than one option to bring a premises back to being compliant.

Member Spotlight

What contributed to your decision to become an IFE registrant?

It was a pathway that was offered through the fire and rescue service, and I felt that it would provide validation of all the hard work and education that I had gone through to get to that point.

How have you benefitted from being an IFE Engineering Technician registrant?

For my career I have accreditation through a nationally recognised body. This demonstrates to other industry professionals that I am serious about what I do and that I have the knowledge and practical experience to be able to challenge when necessary and offer advice and support. On a personal level, having been through the process, I have confidence that others in the industry feel that I am worthy of this accreditation.

Would you recommend joining the IFE to others?

Yes, I would definitely recommend it! Through the IFE there are learning and networking opportunities that are invaluable. I also think that if we are asking other people to be third party accredited to work in our sector then we should be doing it too.

How does your employer benefit from your IFE professional registration?

My professional registration enables my employer to have confidence in my ability to do my job and they also know that I will not accept sub-standard work.

