



UK-AFI

UNITED KINGDOM
ASSOCIATION OF
FIRE INVESTIGATORS®

2023 Report – James Acott

2023 Review

Resuming our biannual training schedule with our ATC in January 2023 saw one of our largest gatherings in Heathrow/Windsor, with 170 delegates participating in two days of presentation lectures and celebrations marking the 20th Anniversary of the UK-AFI. With speakers from across the UK, Europe and US this conference provided 12 hours of tested CPD covering Fires involving Electric Powered Personal Vehicles; Findings from full scale fire tests involving electric vehicles; How the new edition of NFPA 921 and NFPA 1033 Affects You; Towards the statutory regulation of fire investigation under the Forensic Science Regulator Act; Developments in the analysis and methodology for ignitable liquids; Complex Case Management; CT and laser scanning: analysis and reconstruction'; and a hotel fire case study.

January 2023 also saw us welcome the board and executive members from the IAAI who held their mid-year board meeting at the conference hotel on the Sunday before our event and joined us for our ATC.

Our STC in July 2023 was held in Edinburgh, with over 70 delegates attending 6 hours of tested CPD with presentations covering The use of Forensic Archaeological Recording Techniques in Fire Scenes; Emollients and the Fire Risk: New research on viscose bandages and other fabrics; Fire Investigation Dogs: Are Our Investigations Flawed?; Police Scotland Air Support Unit – joint working with Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Fire Investigation Unit; and a case study: A sunny day in July (London Wildfires, July 2022).

During 2023 the UK-AFI has delivered two IAAI Evidence Collect Technician (ECT) practicums, which we plan to continue running biannually.

The UK-AFI has been approved by the Commissioners for HM Revenue and Customs for inclusion within the HMRC list of approved professional organisations and learned societies under Section 344 of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 with effect from 6 April 2023.

Members can claim tax relief on professional membership fees, where they pay fees to be able to do their job and annual subscriptions that are paid to approved professional bodies or learned societies, if being a member of that body or society is relevant to their job. Members cannot claim tax relief on life membership subscriptions, or for professional membership fees or annual subscriptions if their employer has paid their membership or subscription fee.



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Membership

Our membership has continued to grow over the last 12 months seeing numbers rise to over 60 members across both public and private sectors. The public sector is still the dominant proportion of our members and of those that engage in our CPD and training events the proportion of public to private sector attendees reflect the overall membership.

Membership Affiliation	Count
Fire Service	393
Private Investigation	60
Consultant	46
Scientist	38
Engineering	30
Police Service	21
Other	12
Insurance	6
TOTAL	606

If a membership lapses and the member does not respond to emails from the Director of Administration then their profile is deleted from the website. It should be noted that deletion from the website results in the loss of all information stored there including details of events and CPD relating to those events. It is not possible to revive that information once it is deleted. Therefore, it is very important that you maintain a current email address on the website.

We are pleased to confirm that membership fees once again remain at £60 with a modest discount for multiple member organisations.

Enhanced Membership Levels

The UK-AFI offers five distinct levels of membership. All membership grades have the same benefits in terms of the access to the website, journal, seminars and training conferences and are subject to the Association's Code of Ethics. Membership grades are intended to differentiate between those that have recently entered the profession and those that have actively progressed through the objectives of the UK-AFI over a number of years.

Associate Member: this category of membership is open to those professionals in good standing who are actively engaged in some phase of fire and arson investigation. It is intended that members with less than two years practice in fire investigation and are working on fire investigation



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qualifications or related professional certifications hold Associate Grade Membership. All new members will be placed by default at the Associate Membership Grade.

Professional Member: this is the main category of membership denoting professional status open to those members with two or more years practice in fire and arson investigation, and those that have attained fire investigation qualifications or related professional certifications.

Fellow Member: this is the senior category of membership open to those who meet the requirements for Professional Member AND have demonstrated an outstanding contribution to the field over a significant period.

Professional Members are entitled to use the post-nominals MFireInv to indicate professional membership of the Association. Fellow grade Members are entitled to use the post-nominals FFireInv to indicate their grade of membership within the Association. Life Membership does not carry separate post-nominals, however the holder remain entitled to use the post-nominal MFireInv or FFireInv (depending on the highest membership grade achieved).

Life Membership: Life Membership will be conferred at the discretion of the President.

Student Membership: this category of membership is open to those who are studying a full-time, undergraduate degree related to fire investigation, fire science or forensic science or a related field of study; are over 18 years of age are not currently working in a paid position in the fire or forensic investigation field. Student Membership is intended as an introduction to the UK-AFI. It is intended that Student Members will move to the Associate Membership Grade, when they become employed. Student Members do not have voting rights, they may not serve on or nominate others to serve on the Board.

Membership Grade	Count
Associate	551
Professional	27
Fellow	21
Lifetime Member	8
Student	0

One member was approved for a Membership upgrade in 2023-24, down from 8 applications approved during 2022-23.



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Website

Our website (www.uk-afi.org) generates a significant amount of traffic. In addition to the UK-AFI website being a source of information with public and member's only content, our website forms our primary 'customer relationship management' software, managing our membership who can book conferences and seminars and manage their CPD records.

The website has a host of functions to keep you up to date with information about the status of your membership and is embedded within our mailing communication tool. Individual memberships can be maintained and renewed via the website and corporate memberships can add and remove individuals from their organisation without the need to contact the board via their Team Lead.

Website Log-In Status	Number of Members
Have never logged into the members area of the UK-AFI website.	118
Have logged in the members area within the last year.	278
Have previously logged in but have not logged into the members area within the last two years.	105

2023 saw an overhaul of the product recall section of our database. For 20 years the UK-AFI had maintained a database of recalled products and dangerous products in lieu of a national database. In the last few years separate databases of recalled products have been issued by the UK Government, Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) and a dedicated charity ElectricalSafetyFirst. This meant that the UK-AFI database became redundant. The decision was taken by the UK-AFI to maintain our historic record but to stop updating the database instead signposting to the OPSS database for the latest recalls. The UK-AFI website now shows the five most recent OPSS recalls and is updated using a RSS feed.

We still receive enquiries relating to historic recalls, and we were recently able to link multiple enquiries from separate members of the public relating to a recalled water heater timer, with UK-AFI members identifying the enquires were all coming from the same property. This enabled the UK-AFI to raise the issue with the local fire service fire safety officers and with the local authority.



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Accredited CPD Activity

The UK-AFI runs a CPD accreditation scheme where we provide accreditation to third-party training events, where the CPD activity promotes the objectives of the UK-AFI.

Where CPD hours are formally validated by the UK-AFI, event organisers are permitted to display their assigned UK-AFI CPD logo (including the activity hours within and a unique reference number) on certificates, programmes or advertising materials.

Since 2019 the UK-AFI has recognised over 50 third-party training events that promoted the objectives of the UK-AFI, this has resulted in over 400 hours of Accredited CPD Activity being issued.

In 2023-24 twelve events were approved with a total of 160 hours of Accredited CPD Activity Hours recognised.

For any help or further information, please do not hesitate to contact me: james.acott@uk-afi.org

James Acott

President