

Adreana Parkin-Coates CEng MIFireE

CASE STUDY

Education and qualifications: BEng (Hons) Fire Safety Engineering

Which institution(s) are you a member of? Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE), Chartered Institute of Education Assessors (CIEA)

Current job title: Business Support Group Manager

Company: London Fire Brigade

Length in current role: 1 year but I have worked for London Fire Brigade for over 15 years

Approximately how many staff are employed by your company? 7,000

Where are you based? London

Please describe your current role:

As the Business Support Group (BSG) Manager for London Fire Brigade (LFB), I manage a team of six which consists of a team leader, four case officers and administrative support. The BSG is a newly established team which forms part of the Regulatory Fire Safety Department of the LFB. The team's remit is to engage with businesses and support them by working to decrease their regulatory burden.

Together with establishing the BSG, my current primary focus is on developing the systems and procedures required to service Primary Authority Partnership working with businesses. Primary Authority for fire safety legislation came into force on 6 April 2014 and permits businesses, which have premises across local authority borders, to form a legally binding contract with a single fire and rescue service for all their fire safety compliance advice. This includes meeting with business representatives to discuss the benefits of Primary Authority working, giving presentations to a number of different audiences with regards to the work of the BSG and informing and consulting with 16 fire safety teams (170 officers) and administrative staff to ensure that new procedures are understood and adhered to.

In addition to this, I also sit on a British Standards technical committee to support continual improvement in fire safety design standards as a result of my previous role as a fire engineer within our internal Fire Engineering Group.



Please provide a brief outline of your career so far:

After successfully completing a geography degree at Middlesex University I joined the LFB, initially in an administrative capacity, and then as a fire safety officer. After a number of years I was fortunate enough to be sponsored by the Brigade to undertake the BEng (Hons) Fire Safety Engineering degree at Southbank University on a five year day release arrangement.

Throughout my studies I was called upon to use my new found knowledge to support other officers where fire engineered solutions were proposed.

I was also seconded to LFBs Arson Reduction team for a period of time, to investigate the impact of arson on schools and outline the mitigating measures that could be taken.

Following a career break to spend time with my young children, I was seconded onto the Fire Engineering Group before moving into my current role.

CASE STUDY**Have you worked on any unusual or high profile projects?**

One of the major benefits of working within the Fire Engineering Group of LFB is the diversity of projects that I have been involved in. Some have been small refurbishment projects with a small element of fire engineering, while others have been major new builds with significant engineered solutions, such as The Shard. Sometimes the newer builds are more straightforward than existing buildings that are undergoing refurbishment, where certain physical constraints are already imposed. Whatever the size of the project, there is always a high degree of problem solving involved.

What attracted you to become registered as a CEng?

Gaining professional registration as a Chartered Engineer was something that I had been working towards for a number of years. CEng is actively encouraged within LFB's Fire Engineering Group as it confers professional status to the individual and supports the performance and professionalism on the group. It also provides assurance to my business partners that I have not only achieved a high level of technical expertise but also that I am professional and operate with integrity.

How did you become registered as a CEng?

I became a member of IFE when I graduated from Southbank University several years ago, but I have only recently gained CEng registration. As my degree was accredited for CEng I was able to apply for registration without completing a Master's degree first.

Fortunately I had the help and support of the Fire Engineering Group members who had been through the process themselves and therefore I knew what to expect and found the process relatively straightforward.

How has professional registration as a CEng benefitted your career?

I believe that it has provided me with opportunities which I wouldn't have had previously. It has helped me to demonstrate both a high level of competency within fire engineering but also the capacity to learn and work at a more senior level.

What advice would you give someone considering professional registration as a CEng?

Talk to people who have already been through the process so that you have a clear understanding of what is required of you and ask for honest feedback to ensure that your application form is as robust as it can be and demonstrates your true abilities.

What are your future goals?

To keep on enjoying what I do, maintain my fire engineering competency through continuous professional development and fulfil my potential whilst assisting others to fulfil theirs.

What is your employer's attitude towards registration?

LFB is extremely supportive of individuals who wish to develop their engineering competence. My line managers helped me to have the confidence in my own ability to apply to become a Chartered Engineer.

How does your employer benefit from you being professionally registered as a CEng?

LFB's Fire Engineering Group encourages its engineers to apply for CEng registration as it demonstrates that they are professional and competent and shows that the organisation supports the performance and development of the Group.

Adreena Parkin-Coates CEng MIFireE
Registered: 2002

