

Ron Hedger IEng MIFireE

Year joined the IFE: 1995

Year of gaining IFE Membership and

Registration: MIFireE – 1998; EngTech – 2008; IEng – 2018

Job Title: Director and Fire Engineering Consultant

Company: TecFire Limited

Please describe your current role:

Having completed 30 years within Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, I have set up an independent Fire Engineering Consultancy, which allows me to have direct control over the work I take on and the quality of the advice provided.

Although currently small, using associate contacts and ex-colleagues to provide resources, I plan to develop my company to be able to compete for the highest-profile Fire Engineering projects.

Please provide a brief outline of your career:

Back in 1989, I began work as a firefighter with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) before taking roles as a Fire Safety Inspector, Sub Officer Community Safety, Fire Safety Office Manager and Station Manager: Technical Fire Safety Support. More recent roles have included Station Commander and Station Manager at different fire services to a variety of management roles including Commercial Training manager COMAH site enforcement officer and CBRN(E) Tactical Advisor. Since 1998 I have also carried out the role of Associate Instructor for the Fire Protection



Association which includes matters such as fire safety legislation and fire safety design of buildings.

How did you gain IFE membership?

I was encouraged to join by the Fire Service in 1995 and sat the Member examinations two years later achieving MIFireE grade in 1998. During this time, I joined the IFE Southern Branch and attended CPD events to gain an appreciation of the wider application of fire safety outside of the Fire Service and the work carried out by the IFE to encourage and support improvement in standards of practitioners.

How has IFE membership benefitted your career?

Early in my career, being a member of the IFE opened up promotion opportunities. Later, as I worked my way up the IFE membership ladder, it gave me increased confidence. Involvement in the IFE as an advocate for Engineering Council registration, as an active member of a local branch, and as an active member of

Member Spotlight



Special Interest Groups has been a means of making and maintaining contacts outside of the Fire Service. My engagement with other professionals from diverse backgrounds has widened my understanding of my own field of interest. I have now retired from the Fire and Rescue Service and I felt equipped to take the next step into the private sector. My involvement with the IFE has given me the confidence to take this step.

What attracted you to gain IEng registration?

In 2004 I wanted to gain formal, professional recognition for my increasing competence in the field of Fire Engineering. My desire to do this was supported by the Fire Service who are keen for their serving officers to achieve professional recognition. I also became an EngTech peer reviewer for the IFE and an advocate within Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, encouraging and supporting my colleagues to apply for registration. I encourage my team members to become registered with the Engineering Council at the level appropriate to their role.

How did you find the process and assistance you received?

I was initially very disheartened to discover that my degree was not accredited by the Engineering Council. However, having now completed the task of the Technical Report, I am very pleased to have been required to do so. The assistance I received from my mentor was clear, timely, concise and enormously helpful. I probably did not ask for help enough, and as a result made it difficult for myself. I would strongly advise anyone going through the process,

particularly the Individual Route, to make good use of your mentor. Most of my personal development was in learning the 'academic process' necessary to carry out an effective and valid investigation and to write an appropriate technical report. This has shaped every aspect of my dealings within the Fire Engineering community and proved to be very beneficial in reshaping my thinking.

What are your future goals?

Having retired from the Fire Service and set up my own consultancy, I am now in a position to develop my business services in the direction I feel most comfortable with. In five years, I hope to be the Director of a thriving business with a proven reputation for quality.

I have enrolled on the Master of Fire Safety Engineering degree at the University of Central Lancashire as a part-time student. I hope to qualify in 2020 and I intend to register as a Chartered Engineer. I remain involved in the IFE Southern Branch currently acting as Treasurer and intend to remain active within the branch, hopefully assisting in the shaping of the future of fire engineering and fire safety across the community.

What is your employer's attitude towards registration? Were they supportive while you were working towards IFE membership/registration?

I have always been fully supported in my drive for professional recognition and in my work for and support of the IFE. I was actively encouraged to apply for registration as Incorporated Engineer, with facilities provided freely to me to carry out my investigation in support of my technical

report.

It is the stated aim of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service that all future members of the Fire Engineering Team should either be registered at the appropriate level with the Engineering Council, or be actively working towards such registration.

How does your employer benefit from you being professionally registered as an IEng?

I have been very fortunate to have been supported throughout my career with HFRS to gain qualifications and registrations to demonstrate competence in fire operations and fire engineering. Unfortunately for HFRS, as I have now moved on, future direct benefits are limited to my maintaining the high standards they have encouraged in me during my development.

As Director of my own consultancy, I hope to be able to demonstrate the ethical standards espoused by the Fire Service and the Engineering Council in the development of my business and dealings with my clients.

Do you have any advice for potential members / registrants?

Yes, for anyone wondering whether to apply for registration; do it. The benefits are not limited to internal recognition within your own organisation. Professional registration demonstrates competence worldwide and opens doors to new and exciting opportunities.

In respect of the effort involved – a journey of 1,000 miles starts with the first step. Start. Even if it takes a long time, constant slow progress will get you there in the end.