

SCSN Response

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service LONG-TERM VISION Consultation



<https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/consultations/long-term-vision-consultation.aspx>

What could we do to improve the Draft Vision for you?

The Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) has consulted with experienced staff and partners, to review and offer a constructive reply to the Draft Vision.

The ambition of the document is impressive. It's a positive prospectus with little to disagree with. However, there are several areas that could be more clearly defined and expanded upon:

PREVENTION & COLLABORATION

SFRS states a determination to:

- "...prevent[ing] harm to people and communities before it arises" (Section 6, Our Purpose)
- "...work ever more closely with partners to prevent the circumstances that give rise to harm in households and communities from occurring" (Section 10, Where Our Vision Will Take SFRS)
- "...strengthen our team approach in co-designing services that meet community needs and we will fully integrate with and support a wide range of local partnerships" (Section 10, Where Our Vision Will Take SFRS)

It would be useful to mention, in practical terms, how this might happen; who will lead this work; which agencies might SFRS collaborate with (e.g. RoSPA, SCSN, Police Scotland etc.). Collaboration, co-production and multi-agency working are welcomed but describing - even in broad terms - what that looks like will add confidence.

TRAINING, RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

The job of SFRS officers will change substantially as the service evolves. Perhaps duties will weight towards more community focussed activities like home visits, household assessments, monitoring and reporting, and offering advice to help prevent accidents and unintentional harm;

- "We will increase our role in providing life enhancing responses across Scotland in meeting the needs of communities... Our future workforce will work in more agile ways, using time and skill in ever more innovative ways to keep people and communities safe from harm. We will evolve new roles and duty systems" (Section 10, Where Our Vision Will Take SFRS)

The document acknowledges that the role of emergency responder will remain at the heart of the service. But it might be helpful to highlight the impact that changes to the role will have on the existing workforce – particularly older serving staff – and to public perceptions of SFRS, especially prospective recruits. Offering an accurate picture of what SFRS does and will do could help increase general understanding, and help attract the best candidates to this new style of public service. And describing what “new roles and duty systems” are - and how this might change officers’ working patterns - could help manage staff and public expectations better. It will help illustrate what kind of service SFRS is evolving into and becoming.

Lastly, a note of how additional training might be coordinated - in practical terms – for officers in the new, changing environment would be of interest SFRS’s partners and the public. For example, might SFRS collaborate with RoSPA to train officers and gain expertise, specifically regarding home hazards and accident prevention? Which other partner agencies could SFRS look to work with, to help equip officers in the changing landscape? Some named examples could be a potent declaration of intent.

OCCUPATIONAL ROAD RISK / PERSONAL DRIVING

It isn't mentioned but shift work, long hours - combined with lengthy commutes to and from work - is a hazard to emergency service workers and other road users. There are many examples of emergency workers being held-on duty long after shifts end, and subsequently they experience near misses on the roads home. Perhaps a note of these dangers, and strategies to mitigate against the risks, would be in the interests of staff and the public.

EVALUATION

There's no note of how SFRS will measure the success of service changes or how work - particularly in local community settings - might be evaluated. It would be interesting if some examples were offered, such as survey and consultations, and a note of their frequency and how that data might be shared.

CHILDREN & EDUCATION

It's clear SFRS is - and will continue - embracing a community focussed approach that includes raising awareness amongst children;

- *“Since 2013 the SFRS has deepened our understanding of our purpose, we have strengthened our work to prevent fires and other accidents occurring... It has led us to educate our children and young people in all issues relating to safety to help keep them free from harm” (Section 6, Our Purpose)*

It could be helpful to highlight the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); Principle 4; Article 12; The Right to be Heard;

- 1) States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the

child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

- 2) For this purpose the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

If SFRS is actively in dialogue with children and young adults – offering advice and listening to the views and wishes of children – it might be worth emphasising UNCRC as a guiding principle. It would be a positive acknowledgement of Scottish public services' consideration for all age groups.