

Fire Service publish 'Lessons identified report' following Balmoral Bar tragedy



Following the incident at the Balmoral Bar, Edinburgh on 12 July 2009 when firefighter Ewan Williamson tragically lost his life and the subsequent court case at the High Court in Edinburgh in February 2015, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has published its 'lessons identified report.'

Produced in partnership with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), the report identifies areas for improvement by closely reviewing the various operational policies and procedures that were in place at the time of, and following, the incident.

Commenting on the publication of the report, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Chief Officer Alasdair Hay said:

"In publishing this report, we are making clear our commitment that the recommendations made will each be implemented in full.

"All operational recommendations are now embedded in our Safer Firefighter Programme.

"Moving to a single service gave us the unique opportunity to introduce the pan-Scotland Programme in 2014 and since then we have been pro-actively learning from the past to improve firefighter safety in the future.

"We are making progress. In direct response to the incident, we have implemented new training standards for Close Personal Contact with all other operational recommendations in the report also being actively progressed.

“The report should help us look ahead. Our commitment is to learn from the past and take all necessary steps to improve the safety of our firefighters and communities.

“The role of a firefighter will always be inherently dangerous but this report will help us reduce potential risk through more effective procedures and a culture of continuous improvement.

“We recognise just how difficult this experience has been for Ewan’s family, colleagues and friends and we are committed to ensuring that Ewan leaves a legacy of improved safety for his fellow firefighters across Scotland.”

Speaking on behalf of the FBU, Chris McGlone, Executive Council Member said:

“We welcome the lessons and recommendations in this report and the Fire Brigades Union is committed to working with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service to ensure the report is implemented in full.

“We are confident that, when fully implemented, the Safer Firefighter Programme will promote lasting improvements to the safety of firefighters not only in Scotland but across the UK.

“We believe that this report can be the start of that journey and will help us to achieve our shared aim that no firefighter should lose their life protecting our communities.”