

SFRS appoints new Deputy Assistant Chief Officer for the East of Scotland



The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has appointed a new senior officer for the East of Scotland – who has vowed to protect communities from modern risks.

Alasdair Perry has been a firefighter for more than 20 years and has spearheaded the drive to transform the SFRS to respond to new threats such as weather-related flooding.

He took up his new position as Deputy Assistant Chief Officer for the East Service Delivery Area – stretching from the Borders, across Stirling and up to Fife – on October 24.

The veteran firefighter, who grew up in Longniddry near Edinburgh, said: “I am absolutely delighted to have been appointed to this role. I have worked at the national level but coming back to the east feels like I am almost returning home.

“My core values are safety, teamwork, respect and innovation – and this will drive everything I do from working with partners and communities to building on the great work of my predecessor John Miller.

“We are in a far stronger position to protect our communities as a national service and I look forward to showing how we can do even more as we grow from strength to strength.”

DACO Perry was previously Local Senior Officer for Midlothian, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders before working with Her Majesty’s Fire Inspectorate where he played a key role in the development of the single Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

And he believes the SFRS has to transform to meet emerging modern risks which also include the rise of terrorism and an ageing population increasingly calling on support to stay safe at home.

He said: "The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service exists to save lives and while we have a delivery model that has served us well, it was designed for the risks of over 70 years ago.

"We can do so much more for our communities through the process of transformation.

"Let me be absolutely clear – this is not about a cuts agenda. Transformation will enable us to look at what else we can deliver, and how, by embracing new technologies and partners.

"You cannot just invent a fire service at times of peak demand – you absolutely need a trained and equipped fire service that is not only designed but deployed to meet the very real risks now facing modern society."

He added: "As we move forward, we will most definitely be welcoming and actively seeking the involvement of our communities in that big conversation about our Service for the future."

DAC0 Perry will also continue to push prevention efforts wherever possible after witnessing avoidable tragedy throughout his extensive career.

He first signed up for duty as a young firefighter at Dalkeith Fire Station in May 1994 after graduating with an honours degree in psychology from Edinburgh University, and was soon faced with the reality of standing on the front line.

He said: "I had just come through my probation. It was a very cold and snowy night and we were called to someone trapped within a car that had hit a lorry and been pushed to the side of the road.

“There was a male in the vehicle who was very sadly deceased and there were toys within the vehicle so it was clear that a child out there had lost their father.

“I went back to the station and didn’t really speak about it. I think I closed off the emotions.”

He added: “This really motivated me to look at how we can prevent such tragedies from happening by working with our partners and our communities.

“You become compelled to protect and so we continually look to teach communities how to stay safe on the roads and within the home. We are now even showing them how to perform CPR – all crucial safety advice that could save lives.

“Firefighters have the ability to respond to emergency – but we don’t actually want to.”

He added: “My message to communities is that we are there to keep them safe and they can help by engaging with us in CPR events or by requesting a free Home Fire Safety Visit, either for themselves or any vulnerable or elderly relatives and neighbours.”