

Public consultation on future of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service



THE Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is set to launch a 90-day public consultation (Your Service, Your Voice) to seek views on proposals that would see the role of firefighters expand.

SFRS Chief Officer Alasdair Hay said: “There is absolutely no doubt that by seeking to transform, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is leading the way in Scotland’s public sector.

“It is a bold step but one that is necessary – rooted within the intelligence before us and what it is telling us about new and emerging risks, and how we need to meet those to protect our communities.

“But we want people to tell us their thoughts and walk beside us, shoulder to shoulder, as we shape a modern fire and rescue service fit for the future.”

The SFRS attended over 91,000 emergency incidents in the year to 31 March 2017 including water rescues and severe weather related flooding, and visited more than 70,000 homes in Scotland – helping the number of fires drop by 40 per cent over the last decade.

As fires have decreased, new and emerging risks have risen such as a growing elderly population needing support to stay safe in their homes, and the threat of terror attack.

A safe and planned transformation will allow the Service to better meet these risks and ensure SFRS staff are equipped and trained to take on an even wider role, and that stations and

fire appliances are targeted to greatest need.

The widening emergency medical response role has already seen firefighters saving lives across the country by responding to Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest, a co-responding trial with the Scottish Ambulance Service that recently won the Campbell Christie Public Service Reform Award.

The biggest impact would be through an expanded prevention role – stopping emergencies from happening in the first place to not only improve community safety and wellbeing, but reduce the demand on Scotland's other public services.

The Scottish Government demonstrated its belief in SFRS to turn the transformation vision for into a reality by increasing SFRS spending capacity by over £15m.

Chief Officer Hay said: "We exist to save lives and ensure wellbeing, and we can better achieve that by re-aligning our stations, equipment and people to the needs of a modern Scotland.

"We are also proposing a new firefighter role so they can prevent and respond to new risks. Firefighters will be fully trained, equipped and recognised.

"We can deliver so much more for our communities – the public deserves maximum value from the Service it funds – but can nonetheless be assured that the transformation of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will be planned and safe."

Minister for Community Safety Annabelle Ewing said: "It is essential that the public can continue to rely on the skill and professionalism of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and this consultation is about transforming the way the SFRS delivers a service that better meets the risks facing Scotland's communities.

"I would encourage people to take advantage of this

opportunity to be part of the decision-making process and to let their views and ideas for the future be made known.”

The consultation will ask members of the public if they:

- Agree with the transformation vision
- Trust the SFRS to change its operating model in ways that are safe for Scotland
- Think firefighters should be trained and equipped to meet the new and emerging risks
- Believe firefighters should be rewarded for an expanded role and the risks they take
- Agree new technology should be used to improve firefighter and public safety
- Think firefighters can be trained to take on roles that reduce burden on other public services
- Agree a more flexible approach to crewing during the late evening and early morning hours would allow firefighters to do more during the day when demand is higher

The consultation can be accessed at:
firescotland.gov.uk/transformation/public-consultation