Justice Committee

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

Written submission from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board

Dispersal of trainees graduating December 2018

The current 105 wholetime trainee firefighters will be allocated to Service Delivery Areas as follows:
- East SDA – 55
- North SDA 24
- West SDA – 26

Staff Survey

The Service staff survey closed on 28 October 2018. The results are being analysed and are not yet available. These will be shared with the Committee as soon as we are able to do so.

Examples of Local Flexibility in Planning and Delivery

Glasgow

We have commenced two initiatives which deliver on priorities within the City of Glasgow Local Plan – Unintentional Harm by supporting vulnerable members of our community and ensuring the safety and well-being of those within our community.

Highlighted as a local issue by Glasgow City Council Community Planning Partnership, City of Glasgow (CoG) LSO Area sought guidance from the National Human Trafficking Unit (NHTU) who provided both our CAT and FSE teams with input on Human Trafficking at the CoG HQ. This has now been progressed and has been delivered to the area management team. We are now working in partnership with our colleagues to develop a timetable for training all 55 watches within the city. Since the training commenced the Fire Safety Enforcement Team and Community Action Team have identified and subsequently referred into the NHTU on two occasions to raise concerns which have led to formal investigations by specialist NHTU officers.

Having identified sexual exploitation as an issue, the Community Planning Partnership the City Of Glasgow (CoG) addressed this issue through the Service Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO). Barnardo’s Scotland provided input to our Community Action Team (CAT - who have since won an Evening Times Community Champion Award for their work within this field to help the most vulnerable children in society). This training is also now being rolled out across the city. Working in partnership with colleagues at Barnardo’s we identified which stations were located in the areas of highest risk and prioritised the personal within these stations for the training. This has since been rolled out to both Cowcaddens and Polmadie stations in Glasgow. This training has resulted in Child protection Referrals to Police Scotland by the Glasgow Community Action Team as part of our safeguarding policy.
**Mid & East Lothian, Scottish Borders (MELSB LSO Area)**

The legislation has allowed a far more local focus on shared priorities across the three authorities in the Mid & East Lothian Scottish Borders (MELSB) area. The discussions and consultation around the local fire plans (Community Fire and Rescue Plans in MELSB) has given the SFRS area team a stronger footing in shared outcome improvement work streams.

Looking at the wider agenda of preventing harm in the home a bespoke small pilot was planned and delivered in the Cheviot area in the Scottish Borders. This “Living Safely in the Home” partnership initiative was then rolled out in an area surrounding Musselburgh in East Lothian and then an authority wide version in Midlothian. Each of these similar projects required local solutions to very local issues and have all evaluated very well in their own respective ways. The Midlothian version involved health statistics and a partnership analyst to examine the benefits and provide recommendations for progress. This local focus has received very positive feedback from local elected members, partners and most importantly the community stakeholders benefiting from the service provided.

**Edinburgh**

In Edinburgh the Council has undergone a restructure and effectively divided the city into four Localities North West, South West, North East and South East to achieve better outcomes for local people and communities. Each Locality has developed a Local Improvement Plan (LIP) which look at how each local area can be improved, by partnership working, based on 5 themes:

- place
- health and wellbeing
- children, young people and families
- community safety
- economy and employability.

The plans also highlight geographical areas of greatest need and the actions needed to make a difference and set out the key outcomes and how we aim to achieve them over the next five years.

The creation of LSO Areas by the legislation has enabled us to be proactive in both the creation of the Locality Areas and the LIP`s and to deliver SFRS`s stated purpose to work in partnership with communities and with others in the public, private and third sectors, on prevention, protection and response, to improve the safety and well-being of people throughout Scotland.

This has been achieved by Station Managers being nominated as SFRS representatives in each of the four localities with the power to commit SFRS resources to local issues. The ability to do this is enhanced by national policies, particularly prevention & protection policies which enable the wide experience which a national Service has to be available at a local level. It has also allowed our participation in Community Planning to be extended down to a very local level through the Station Managers.
East Renfrewshire

The LSO is currently engaged in with the Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council and Police Scotland with a view to reviewing the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and looking at subsuming the local Renfrewshire Fire and Police plans within the LOIP. This is a progression which is very much in the spirit of the Act taking into account that when the Act was drafted it was intended that it be permissive on such matters rather than prescriptive. The LSO is of the view that doing this would enable the CPPs to take collective ownership of all priorities across the Community Planning arena and scrutinise all outcomes as a collective.

Ayrshire

The LSO is of the view that the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 has enabled local authorities to apply a level of scrutiny on the service that wasn’t there previously. For example when during legacy FRS there was no distinct methods of scrutiny on the fire rescue service other than within the confines of any objectives within community plans but the level of scrutiny was varied across local authority areas.

The development of local plans also compels an LSO to ensure the priorities within the local plan support and compliment the wider partnership agenda as this then enables them to seek collaborative approaches to reduce demand and to protect those who are at risk from harm. In addition, with the continuing evolution of the service, this will ultimately reach over to other areas that previous were not seen as fire and rescue work; such as the well being agendas focusing on matters such as dementia, violence against women or Adverse Childhood Experiences.

One specific example of where this has been done in Ayrshire is we have utilised the safety agenda to support the employability agenda. By involving the voluntary sector in working alongside Prevention and Protection staff to carry out home fire safety visits, we are providing work experience opportunities. This supports those who have barriers in terms of routes back to employment, and enables SFRS to diversify and multiply prevention and protection resources and offer something back to partners at the same time.

Aberdeen

The formation of the SFRS Aberdeen City Plan is predicated on the LOIP and how we will support its achievement. The flexibility provided by the legislation allows for much more focus on local issues and the delivery of a national service at a local level. We are represented at all levels of the community planning process from Chief Officers Groups to ward level, and provide detailed information on our activities and their outcomes at each of these. We also now have the opportunity to not only engage with, but be accountable to all of the councillors in Aberdeen City. While there is a formal Public Protection Committee that scrutinises our performance, all councillors are now able to contribute to this oversight.
Clackmannanshire

In Clackmannanshire, we were fully involved in the development of the LOIP with a Group Manager one of a very small team of partners that wrote the document. This then led to the development of the Clackmannanshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan which mirrors the objectives of the Local Authorities LOIP and highlights how the SFRS will work locally and in partnership to achieve the local objectives of the Clackmannanshire LOIP as well as the national objectives of the SFRS Strategic Plan.

An example of this in action was the running of a five day fireskills course for girls only with participants selected from the Clackmannanshire Secondary Support Unit. This was to reflect one of the key objectives of Clackmannanshire’s LOIP which was to improve opportunities for women and girls.

Fife

In Fife, partnership working has been embraced from top to bottom with the LSO attending Scrutiny and CPP, the Group Manager P&P attending CPP sub-groups with a safety theme. And Station Managers attend Local Area Committees where Councillors representing wards within each Station Managers area of responsibility can raise queries and question performance. These committees also provide the opportunity to address local issues and the Levenmouth Local Area Committee had established a Deliberate Fire Reduction Group, chaired by the local Station Manager, to identify causes and solutions to a spike in deliberate fire raising in this area.

Stirling

In Stirling, we have a very active Community Justice Board of which the LSO lead member. The focus of this group is restorative justice and community payback. In partnership, we are developing a road safety initiative that is aimed at those who have committed road related offences. Stirling Council’s Community Payback Officer will refer appropriate individuals to the SFRS who will invite them to Stirling Fire Station to participate in a road safety educational event as part of their community payback order.

Perth, Kinross, Angus & Dundee (PKAD LSO area)

Local community engagement has led to a project to tackle inequalities and poverty in the town of Brechin, for which Brechin fire station is the hub. Close partnership working has brought together a number of key organisations in the area – including SFRS, Voluntary Action Angus (VAA), Homestart Angus, Citizen Advice, Angus Women’s Aid and Tayside Council on Alcohol – into one building, to help tackle the link between poverty and ill health, attainment and life opportunities.

Local people can get involved in this project, they can come and speak to one of the workers at the fire station but we are also going to be working out and about in communities, holding meetings with community groups and knocking on doors. Our aim is to work with people in the local area most affected and to empower communities through learning opportunities and better engagement. Recognising the value of this community project, SFRS and VAA are exploring opportunities, to extend this model to other Angus towns, using the local fire stations in Angus as hubs.
Dr Kirsty Darwent
Chair of the SFRS Board
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