

Reflections on police and fire reform

Key figures look back on the police and fire reform journey and its positive impact on community safety in Scotland – from tackling domestic abuse and counter-terrorism to protecting vulnerable individuals.

Derek Penman, former HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland

“As Police Scotland reaches its fifth anniversary, there is no doubt that some areas of policing have been enhanced and the single service is better placed than the legacy forces it replaced to tackle modern demands such as increased vulnerability and the threats presented by cybercrime and counter-terrorism.

“Whilst there are still challenges around sustainability, governance, localism and leadership, there are real opportunities to improve policing through better understanding demand and creating capacity to deal with the new and emerging threats to our communities.

“Over the last five years, HMICS has also adapted to the new policing landscape, driving improvement through its inspection programme, tackling significant issues and publishing 39 reports containing 308 recommendations to Police Scotland and the Scottish Policing Authority.”

Steve Torrie, former HM Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

“Looking back on the reform exercise, I think mostly about the effort involved and the work put in by colleagues in the Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Government, and ministers.

“Then came the really hard bit – making it all work in the real world. It would, of course, be impossible to name-check the many people involved in that work but I can’t pass this by without saying that Ali Hay and Pat Watters were great appointments and worked incredibly well within their respective roles to ensure a successful once-in-a-generation change. Everything I now read about the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service leads me to believe that the Service is continuing to push forward in what were always going to be challenging times. So well done to all concerned – then and now.”

Mhairi McGowan, head of ASSIST and Domestic Abuse

Services, Community Safety Glasgow

“The creation of Police Scotland has ensured the development of a common approach to domestic abuse across the country, something that had been lacking previously.

“For victims, this commitment to national consistency ensured a new confidence and it led to increased reporting of crimes in relation to both current and historic abuse.

“The adoption of a common risk assessment, the creation of a national Domestic Abuse Task Force and a tasking process to target perpetrators has secured the conviction of many serial abusers, increased the safety of victims and is the envy of others across the world.”

Kirsty Darwent, Chair, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

“I am proud to lead an organisation that has gone through a period of great change in bringing together eight legacies – and yet continued to protect communities across Scotland.

“There is no doubt whatsoever that this is due to the commitment and the professionalism of each person within our Fire Service family, and I would like to express my very sincere thanks to each and every one of them.”

Bronagh Andrew, Operations Manager, TARA (Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance)

“Since the inception of Police Scotland, the TARA Service has observed significantly improved awareness and responses to vulnerable victims of trafficking no matter where in Scotland women have been recovered.

“In particular the close partnership approach between The TARA Service and the National Human Trafficking Unit has resulted in improved coordination and sensitive operational responses to women across the Divisions. We are always striving to improve and are confident in continuing our shared commitment to learning from survivors experiences so we can better work together to prevent harm, protect vulnerable people and prosecute those who commit this crime.”

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