



Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 4 - International Perspectives on Police and Fire Reform



CRIME AND JUSTICE

Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 4 - International Perspectives on Police and Fire Reform

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Executive summary

The evaluation of police and fire reform in Scotland began in February 2015 and has been undertaken by the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR), ScotGen Social Research and What Works Scotland.

This year's (Year 4) report concludes the four year evaluation and focuses on the international experiences of reform in police and fire services, building on the sharing of information with international partners which has been a major and ongoing part of the evaluation and which has positioned Scotland at the hub of an international knowledge exchange network. While previous reports have focused on the Scottish experience of reform, by adopting an international perspective in this report, it is possible to see what learning might be gleaned for Scotland from the experiences of other places.

The report focuses on the themes of:

- strengthening connections to local communities
- partnership working
- prevention
- and for the fire services, reconfiguring the role of fire services in an era of changing demands.

For **police**, four international locations were chosen: the **Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand and Manchester, England**. These were chosen as they had all experienced reform of their service, and Norway and New Zealand also have a similar geography to Scotland.

For **fire**, the four locations were: the **Netherlands, New Zealand, West Midlands England and Alberta, Canada**. The Netherlands and New Zealand were chosen because they have both experienced reform. West Midlands and Alberta were chosen due to their similarities in geography to Scotland and their interesting examples of prevention.

Twenty-nine qualitative telephone interviews were conducted with senior officers in the police and fire services, government officials and academics in the case study areas between June and September 2018. It should be noted that this is a relatively small number of interviews and the aim is to reflect a range of different views and experiences of reform across the different case study areas.

International experience of reform in policing

Policing local communities

- Reform has impacted on the policing of communities in different ways in the different case study locations.
- Evidence from Manchester and New Zealand suggests that reform has improved the relationship between the police and local community with a greater focus on community-centred policing, which was a specific aim of reform in New Zealand.
- In contrast in the Netherlands and Norway, an identified challenge of reform was maintaining relationships with the community during centralisation of the service, for example, officers being pulled away from the communities they serve to address national issues. In Norway, officers were expected to spend more time out of the office and in the community to try to maintain a close relationship with the communities they served.
- Different approaches were used in the case study areas to engage positively and build trust with local communities including regular community meetings, recruiting a more diverse workforce to the police, training on how to engage with communities and clearer lines of communication.

Partnership working

- In all of the international case study locations, the research findings illustrated the wide range of partners the police are working with in a post reform context, including health services, emergency services, local authority departments and third sector organisations. Typically such partnership working predates reform but often gains a renewed emphasis following organisational change as police and fire services look to develop new ways of delivering services.
- Factors identified for successful partnerships included regular face-to-face contact, having a shared focus and the need for a change in culture in both the police and partners to work in a more integrated way.
- Budget constraints were identified as a challenge to partnership working but also an opportunity by encouraging greater sharing of resources, including information.

Prevention

- There were differing views about the impact of reform on the prevention agenda in the international case studies.
- In Norway and New Zealand prevention has been a specific aim of reform.
- New Zealand has seen a significant shift to prevention through the development of a new operating model, 'Prevention First' which has been integrated into their strategy and is part of a broader police reform agenda.

- In contrast, interviewees from Manchester and the Netherlands did not view reform as having impacted on prevention. Instead, interviewees from Manchester indicated that a move towards more evidence-based practice has had more of an impact on prevention than reform.

International experience of reform in fire services

Widening role of firefighters and relationship with local community

- Due to a reduction in fires, in all four international case study areas the role of the firefighter had widened to include new roles, such as, prevention, additional response due to severe weather and terrorism, more specialisation, and becoming medical first responders.
- The fire services felt they had good relationships with the local community because of their community service role and being based and living in the communities they serve.
- Factors identified for building good community relations included having community-focused leadership and embedding community work in the role of the firefighter.
- Fire services are preparing for these widening roles by providing new forms of training for existing firefighters, for example, communication and leadership skills and for ensuring that the full range of activities that firefighters are now expected to undertake are included in recruitment materials.

Partnership working

- Partnership working was viewed as becoming more common in recent years across all the case study areas.
- Each area worked with a wide range of partners to deliver services to the community.
- Common challenges identified included funding cuts and the impact of the widening role of the firefighter on working in partnership with other organisations.
- Funding cuts were also seen as an opportunity as they served as a driver to organisations to look to engage in more partnership working initiatives.

Prevention

- Prevention is viewed as an important part of the firefighter role, with fire safety being the key prevention activity across the case study areas.
- Alberta, Canada and West Midlands in England have also expanded their role to non-fire prevention including initiatives to prevent drink driving and

safe and well checks, which are designed to identify vulnerability so that appropriate referrals to other services can be made.

- Common challenges identified included evaluating the effectiveness of prevention initiatives and ensuring firefighters have the required skills to take on prevention roles.
- However, with a new generation of recruits to the fire service, the view is that they are being brought into the service and made aware that there is a different expectation around the role of the firefighter which is more closely aligned to the prevention agenda.

Learning from international perspectives

For both police and fire services, key learning from the international case studies illustrates the importance of having open and honest **communication** and **clear aims of reform**, as well as keeping focused on what reform is trying to achieve for the service.

For **police**, key learning across the four case study areas includes:

- the need for **culture change** when undertaking reform which aligns with the priorities and approaches of the new organisation
- being clear about the priorities and sequence of reform and not attempting to change everything at the same time
- providing strong and stable **leadership** throughout periods of organisational change
- **supporting the workforce through change**, such as the development needs of the workforce, providing appropriate IT and information sharing platforms
- the importance of working in partnership with other services, stakeholders and local communities; and lastly
- **being patient** as delivering and achieving change takes time.

For the **fire services**, specific learning from these international perspectives includes:

- thinking beyond firefighting to prevention and safety to **remain relevant**, and
- **drawing on existing knowledge and experience** within the organisation when experiencing organisational change.

Conclusions and wider lessons

Despite differences of context, the police and fire and rescue services featured in the international case studies in this report have encountered similar experiences and challenges associated with reform.

Scotland's reform of its police and fire and rescue services has also followed a very similar path to the international experience considered in this research, and encountered many of the same experiences and challenges. Scotland is not unique in trying to establish an effective working relationship between centralised functions and local delivery; Scotland is similar to other places in trying to develop effective partnership working between service providers; and Scotland, like other places, also faces challenges of finding robust ways of measuring the impact and outcomes of preventative and partnership activity across different services.

For all the case studies explored in this research, the process of planned 'organisational change' has involved a complex interplay between both planned, top-down approaches to change and more emergent approaches involving continuous adaptation to changing circumstances and conditions.

Wider lessons for future organisational change in police and fire services, and other public services emerging from this international phase of the evaluation include:

- **Managing expectations** of how long organisational reform takes by recognising that it is a journey rather than a one-off event.
- Taking time to prioritise and **maintain external relationships with partners** which can be affected by organisational change as the focus is often on internal relationships. It is also important to raise awareness with partners of the changes being planned and delivered, in particular other public services, to enable partners to adapt and respond to such organisational change.
- **Risk mitigation and ongoing risk management** - there are a range of strategic risks associated with reform which need to be carefully managed, which include internal and external communication, performance, skills and leadership. Routine reviews of these areas of activity are therefore needed.
- **The opportunity for services to develop as learning organisations** – while periods of structural reform present significant challenges, reform provides the opportunity for police and fire services, and potentially other public services undertaking organisational change, to develop as learning organisations, skilled in creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and modifying their culture and behaviour to reflect new knowledge, insights and a changing context. International comparative analysis is particularly important in this regard as it often challenges taken-for-granted assumptions about how services operate as well as offering opportunities for information sharing and collaboration.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background on the evaluation

The evaluation of police and fire reform in Scotland began in February 2015 and has been undertaken by the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR), ScotCen Social Research and What Works Scotland.

The main aims of this evaluation are to:

- Assess the extent to which the three aims of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act, as set out in the policy memorandum accompanying the Act, appear to have been met, namely:
 - i. To protect and improve local services despite financial cuts, by stopping duplication of support services eight times over and not cutting front line services
 - ii. To create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity - like murder investigation teams, firearms teams or flood rescue - where and when they are needed
 - iii. To strengthen the connection between services and communities, by creating a new formal relationship with each of the 32 local authorities, involving many more local councillors and better integrating with community planning partnerships.
- Identify lessons from the implementation of reform that might inform the process of future public service reform.
- Evaluate the wider impact of the reform on the Justice system and the wider public sector.

The **Year 1** report of the evaluation was published in June 2016 and comprised a Summary Report¹ and Evidence Review². It focused on findings emerging from the initial two stages of the work (i) a review of publicly available evidence up to the end of 2015 and (ii) national key informant interviews.

¹ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 1 Summary Report published by Scottish Government June 2016 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-1-summary-report/>

² Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 1: Annex 1: Evidence Review published by Scottish Government June 2016 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-1-annex-1-evidence-review/>

The **Year 2** report of the evaluation was published in August 2017 and comprised a Main Report³ and an Annex⁴. It focused on findings from four geographical case studies in Scotland which examined local experiences and perceptions of the way police and fire and rescue services are being delivered in local communities. In addition, a two-page infographic summary was produced to highlight the key findings.

Year 3 has produced a series of publications; the first was published in February 2018 and comprised a Main Report focusing on findings from a thematic case study on partnership working, prevention and innovation.⁵ The second report was published in May 2018 and included findings from interviews conducted with the National Key Informants who had taken part in Year 1 of the evaluation and a Summary of Evidence for 2017⁶. In addition a two-page infographic summary was produced to highlight the key findings from the research.

1.2 Aims of the international perspectives work

Throughout the evaluation, the research team has been undertaking knowledge exchange with international partners to understand different experiences of police and fire reform across Europe.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that the origins of this international comparative perspective pre-date the evaluation and include:

- Work undertaken by Fyfe and Mendel commissioned by the Scottish Government's Sustainable Policing Project in 2011 reviewing international evidence of police mergers and amalgamations. This report was subsequently published as Mendel, J., Fyfe, N. and den Heyer, G. (2016) 'Does police force size matter? A review of the evidence regarding the restructuring of police organisations', *Police Practice and Research*, 18(1), 3-14.;
- An International Summit on police reform held in 2011 organised by the Scottish Government at which representatives from a range of northern European countries spoke about the experience of reform to an audience of

³ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 2 Report published by Scottish Government August 2017 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-2-report/>

⁴ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 2 Report Annexes published by Scottish Government August 2017 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-2-report-annexes/>

⁵ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Partnership, Innovation and Prevention Three Year Case Study published by Scottish Government February 2018 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-thematic-case-study-partnership/>

⁶ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 3 Key Informants Report published by Scottish Government May 2018 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-national-key-informants-report/>

local and Scottish Government officials, elected members, and police officers drawn from the eight legacy forces;

- A body of academic research on police reform led by Fyfe and Terpstra which has examined the drivers, implementation and consequences of reform across several countries and has been published in a range of academic and professional journals as well as in a book: Fyfe, N.R., Terpstra, J. and Tops, P. (eds.) (2013) *Centralizing forces? Comparative perspectives on contemporary police reform in northern and western Europe* (Eleven Publishing, The Hague).

In terms of activities undertaken during the evaluation, international seminars were held in Edinburgh in November 2016 and October 2018 attended by colleagues from Scotland as well as Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. These seminars captured many of the similarities and differences in reform in these countries compared with the Scottish experience.

To build on this knowledge and understanding, this report:

- presents findings from the fourth year of the evaluation which examines international experiences of organisational change in police and fire services and reflects what this means for Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), as well as wider public services in Scotland.
- focuses on the themes of strengthening connections to local communities, in particular, partnership working and prevention, with respect to police services; and on reconfiguring the role of fire services in an era of changing demands due to the risk of terrorism, changing weather patterns and the reduction in fires over the longer term.

1.3 Methodology

The approach used to examine international perspectives was similar to that used in the Year 2 geographical case studies and Year 3 thematic case studies for partnership, innovation and prevention. Case study areas were chosen from across the world - four for police and four for fire – and were chosen in consultation with Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Policing Authority, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland and HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland.

Building on existing comparative work (see, for example, Fyfe, Terpstra and Tops, 2013)⁷, the reasons for choosing the case study areas are outlined below.

⁷ Fyfe, N.R., Terpstra, J. and Tops, P. (eds.) (2013) *Centralizing forces? Comparative perspectives on contemporary police reform in northern and western Europe* (Eleven Publishing, The Hague)

Police:

- **Netherlands:** a very similar trajectory and timetable relating to police reform as Scotland therefore, learning from the experience of reform would be relevant to Scotland.
- **Norway:** very similar to Scotland in terms of population size and geography and aims of reform. Norway has had a national policing structure since the 1930s but is undergoing significant reform to policing structures aimed at strengthening local connections via reductions in numbers of police districts.
- **New Zealand:** similar size and geography to Scotland with a national police force, and on a similar public service reform trajectory focused on prevention.
- **Manchester, England:** reform in England and Wales has taken a different trajectory where they have preserved the local structure of policing and introduced new forms of governance through the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) but have seen an erosion of officer and civilian numbers due to budget pressures. Learning from a contrasting reform experience was agreed to be of value because it illustrates a different approach to responding to similar financial challenges.

Fire:

- **Netherlands:** Fire and Rescue Services were reformed between 2004 and 2014 resulting in over 400 municipal Fire and Rescue Services being reorganised into 25 Fire and Rescue Service regions.
- **New Zealand:** similar size and geography to Scotland. The Fire and Rescue Service in New Zealand reformed into a single organisation in July 2017.
- **West Midlands, England:** large metropolitan area which has some similarities to areas in Scotland in terms of scale and geography.
- **Alberta, Canada:** similar geography to Scotland, interesting examples of prevention activity.

1.4 Data collection

To examine the different international perspectives, qualitative telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from the police and fire services in the case study areas between June and September 2018. The interviews focused on the key themes of:

- the relationship with local communities
- partnership working
- prevention
- measuring impact and outcomes
- lessons learned.

The police interviews included organisation of local policing and the fire interviews included the role of the local firefighter.

One participant from each area was asked to answer scoping questions either via a telephone interview (n=3) or email (n=5). The scoping questions were answered before the main interviews to provide an overview of the structure of the services, shape and size of the workforce and details of any organisational change that has occurred.

The scale of reform is different in each country with some experiencing mid-level reform rather than major organisational restructuring. The interviews provided an opportunity to map the different experiences of reform and the widening of the fire service role internationally. Interviewees were asked to provide, where possible, reports and evaluations of the key themes explored in the interviews which are available in English.

In total across the case study areas 29 interviews were conducted with practitioners and representatives from policy and academia, all chosen due to their knowledge of the key topics. It should be noted that this is a relatively small number of interviews and the aim of the report is to reflect a range of different views and experiences of reform across the different case study areas. The focus of the report is to represent these different perceptions of the impact and challenges that reform has presented to the different services. Interviews were conducted with the following:

- Police interviewees (senior officers from superintendent level to deputy chiefs, government officials and academics) n=15
- Fire interviewees (senior fire officers, government officials and association of fire chiefs) n=14

Ethical approval for the international perspectives element of the evaluation was obtained from NatCen Social Research (NatCen) Ethics Committee. Access to the interviewees was arranged through a named contact in each case study area. Interviewees were invited to take part via an email from the research team and a convenient time was arranged to conduct the interview.

Prior to the interviews, interviewees were supplied with key topics they were going to be asked to discuss, to ensure they had time to prepare and reflect before the interview, particularly for interviewees where English was not their first language. All interviews were conducted in English.

Verbal consent was recorded before commencing interviews. With the consent of participants, the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. All interview data were stored securely, with access limited to the research team and all procedures relating to data handling and retention are in line with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) requirements. Interview data were coded with NVivo, a software package for qualitative data analysis, using an analytical framework based on the key themes discussed by interviewees. This system of

coding facilitates the organisation and analysis of qualitative transcripts and provides a tool to explore the range and diversity of views expressed by participants.

1.5 Structure of the report

This report provides an examination of the themes and findings from the international perspectives work, and has four main components:

- (i) international experience of organisational change in **policing**
- (ii) international experience of organisational change in **fire services**
- (iii) **wider lessons** from the international experience of organisational change in policing and fire services
- (iv) **appendices outlining each case study** area including background and context of organisational change.

1.6 Background to reform in each of the case study areas

1.6.1 Police

To provide some background context for the analysis that follows, below is a summary table of the police services in the four case study areas. Although data were not collected from a Scottish perspective for this report, Scotland is included in the table to add some further context. The table includes documentary material on (rounded) population size, policing numbers, current structure and the aims of reform derived from published sources and interviews.

Police service	Greater Manchester	Netherlands	New Zealand	Norway	Scotland
Citizen population	2.8 million	17.2 million	4.8 million	5.3 million	5.4 million
Total number of police officers and civilian staff	10,000+ (officers=6,237, volunteers=512, police community support officers (PCSO)=606, support=2,961)	65,000 (aggregate number of officers and staff)	12,000+ (aggregate number of officers and staff)	16,000 (of which 9,000 are police officers, rest civilians)	22,753 ⁸ (of which 17,251 are police officers, rest civilians)
Number of officers and civilian staff per head of (rounded) population	1 / 280	1 / 265	1 / 400	1 / 331	1/237
When reform started	2012	2013	2011	2001, 2012/13	2013
Structure	10 local districts mirror Local Authorities. 4 Chief superintendents , 10 superintendents (1 for each district). Moving towards the integration of the neighbourhood policing function alongside other public services that deliver at a	A single national police force with 10 regional police districts (reduced from 25). Management and administration are centralised. National department for special police tasks.	Single national police service. There are 12 districts, 9 in the North Island and 3 in the South. These districts vary greatly in the geographical area they cover.	A single national police force with 12 police districts. Each district is led by a chief of police and within these districts there are police stations in urban areas and sheriffs' offices in rural areas.	The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 brought together the eight police forces, the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA) into two new

⁸ Figures for police strength in Scotland are correct at 31 March 2019, and provide the number of full-time equivalent officers. Figures on police strength are published quarterly by the Scottish Government, and are available at: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PublicationPoliceStrength>. Further information on coverage of the statistics and how they are produced can be found here too. Police Scotland publish quarterly figures on the number of police staff at: <https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/police-scotland/212598/>

	neighbourhood level.				national bodies; the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and the Police Service of Scotland.
Aim of reform	Aim of reform was to integrate public services, functions and structures across Greater Manchester so they are delivered more effectively and efficiently. This includes responding to and reducing demand for public services at a local level by building on community assets and addressing the root causes of demand.	The aim of reform was to improve capacity to address emerging and more complex forms of criminality and to improve police infrastructure at a national level (e.g. computer system).	The aim of police reform was to move towards a 'prevention first' operating model and to achieve this there was an aim to build stronger relationships with local communities.	The aim of police reform in 2001 was to increase efficiency by restructuring. The number of police districts reduced from 54 to 27 and the number of police stations also reduced. Reform in 2012/13 was in response to criticism to leadership and culture of police after 2011 terrorist attack. Reform had 6 wide aims.	The aim of reform was threefold: I. To protect and improve local services despite financial cuts by reducing duplication of support services; II. To create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity where and when they are needed; III. To strengthen the connection between services and communities.

1.6.2 Fire

To provide some background context for the analysis that follows, below is a summary table of the fire and rescue services in the four case study areas. Although data were not collected from a Scottish perspective for this report, Scotland is included in the table to add some further context. The table includes documentary material on (rounded) population size, firefighter numbers, current structure and the aims of organisational change derived from published sources and interviews.

Fire service	Canada	Netherlands	New Zealand	West Midlands	Scotland
Citizen population	35.5 million	17.2 million	4.8 million	2.89 million	5.4 million
Total number of firefighters and support staff	152,650 (83% volunteers)	28,214 (volunteers= 19,106 career=5,212 support staff=3,896)	13,029 (Urban volunteers= 8,161, rural volunteers= 3,134, Career= 1,734)	1,900	7,776 ⁹ 3546 Whole time Operational, 2863 Retained Duty System (and 332 volunteers), 846 Support staff, 189 Control staff.
Number of firefighters and support staff per head of (rounded) population	1 / 233	1 / 610	1 / 368	1 / 1,521	1 / 694
When reform started	N/A	2004	2017	N/A	2013
Structure	Fire services operate at a municipal level, so the structure of each service is different in each municipality. At a national level the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs in an independent elected voluntary body comprised of fire chiefs from municipalities.	Between 2004 and 2014, 400-450 fire services were re-organised into 25 fire services regions. In 2011 this structure became the law.	National Fire and Emergency service was established from merging the New Zealand Fire Service, the National Rural Fire Authority and 38 rural fire organisations.	38 fire stations under the control of Chief Fire Officer and the Strategic Enabling Team who oversee the structure of the service and its strategic direction.	The Scottish Fire and Rescue service was formed on 1 st April 2013 by merging the 8 existing regional fire service in Scotland.

⁹ As at 31 March 2018

<p>Aim of reform</p>	<p>N/A The fire service has not been nationalised because of the complexity of federal, provincial and municipal government structures and population distribution (sparse).</p>	<p>In recognition To ensure that all municipalities, regardless of size, can respond to all types of major incident and promote greater coordination between public services (police, medical and municipal).</p>	<p>To improve service at a community level through the creation of a single, unified service with coordinated leadership that can allocate resources effectively.</p>	<p>In recognition of the changing role of firefighters, new modified contracts were introduced that stipulate the role includes prevention, protection, response and wider health work¹⁰.</p>	<p>The aim of fire service reform was threefold: I. To protect and improve local services despite financial cuts by reducing duplication of support services; II. To create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity where and when they are needed; III. To strengthen the connection between services and communities.</p>
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¹⁰ Note: This reform has stalled amongst opposition from the Fire Brigade Union about the level of remuneration offered for the expansion of firefighters' responsibilities.

International perspectives on reform of the police service

2 Policing local communities

Key findings: Policing local communities

- Reform has impacted on the policing of communities in different ways in the different case study locations.
- Evidence from Manchester and New Zealand suggests that they have achieved one of their stated aims for reform as relationships between the police and local communities have been improved by initiating a greater focus on community-centred policing. Reform has led both police forces to implement approaches to working with communities which co-develop solutions to prevent crime.
- In the Netherlands and Norway an identified challenge of reform was maintaining relationships with the community during centralisation, for example, officers being moved away from the communities they serve.
- Different approaches have been used in the case study areas to build trust with local communities including regular community meetings, recruiting a more diverse workforce to the police, providing training on how to engage with communities and clearer lines of communication.
- Police in Manchester, the Netherlands and New Zealand found it challenging to prioritise local policing tasks with finite staffing and resources, and competing national demands. Working in partnership with other agencies and communities is one way some forces are trying to overcome this challenge by providing opportunities to pool resources to tackle particular problems.

This chapter will discuss findings on the experience of organisational change in local policing in the **Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Manchester** in England, and will include an account of the positive impact reform has had on relationships with local communities, as well as the challenges that organisational reform has brought to the policing of local communities.

2.1 What has the impact of reform been on the relationship between the police and local communities?

2.1.1 Was improving community relationships an aim of reform?

For all four case study areas, improving the relationship between the police and the local community was a specific aim of reform to a greater or lesser extent. This is consistent with the reform journey in Scotland, where the third aim of Police and Fire Reform¹¹ is strengthening the connection between services and the communities they serve.

Most explicitly, in Norway, one of the six aims of police reform in The Police Analysis White Paper, was to have “a more accessible and present police force, anchored in, and cooperating with, local communities”. In New Zealand, the aim of police reform was to move towards a prevention model and to achieve this there was an aim to build stronger relationships with local communities.

In Manchester the most recent police reform was part of a wider public service reform taking place across Manchester. While the reform took place at a time of austerity, the aim of reform was to enable all public services, including the police, to work more efficiently together to respond to the needs of their communities. For the police, improving their relationship with local communities was imperative for them to be able to help support their communities.

In the Netherlands, there was a view that police reform was about strengthening the relationship between the police and local communities. There was also a perception that the main aim of reform was to move towards a more centralised police structure to standardise procedures and work processes for a more consistent approach, with the consequences that power shifted from the local to a national level. There are similarities here with the experience in Norway.

In all four areas, reform was seen to have impacted on the relationship between the police and local communities. For two of the police forces reform was viewed as enabling them to build closer relationships with local communities, while in the other two the challenges in maintaining a good relationship between the police and local communities were highlighted.

2.1.2 Improved community relationships as a consequence of reform

In both Manchester and New Zealand, police reform is perceived to have improved the relationship between the police and local community and changed the way engagement occurs. In moving towards a model of crime prevention and community centred policing the importance of being within communities and working to build positive relationships with residents was central to reform.

¹¹ The third aim of reform as set out in the policy memorandum accompanying the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

“It’s about going back to the basics of getting boots on the ground and having relationships with communities, hard to reach communities and the deprived communities...For me it’s about changing the way we are with people, getting into that area, getting relationships built, having different types of events...So we have got a different relationship and we can start to get the intelligence from the communities who don’t tend to talk to us.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

In New Zealand, improving relationships with local communities has been described as “a consequence of having a more prevention-orientated operating model”. With a greater focus on crime prevention the police have become more proactive in engaging communities and working with them to collaboratively identify the causes of crime locally and co-develop solutions to these. For example, population specific (e.g. ethnic minority groups) Advisory Boards were set up to enable communities to meet with the police to jointly identify community issues and agree a plan of action together. This has often resulted in the police working alongside communities to implement solutions which has further strengthened relationships.

Case study 1

Iwi Community Justice Panel: working in partnership with local communities

In New Zealand the police have developed approaches where they ask communities how they think problems should be addressed and what would help improve their community. One example of this is the Iwi Justice Panel. The Iwi Justice Panel is a rehabilitation approach which aims to tackle the over representation of the Maori population in the justice system. Instead of being sent to court, people can be sent to the Iwi Justice Panel, made up of members of the community, to explain what has led someone to commit a crime. If the panel decides the criminal behaviour is a result of social issues, e.g. alcohol abuse, the panel can decide on action which is an alternative to prison e.g. attend alcohol counselling. The pilot of this approach has been very successful with police reporting a reduction in reoffending. The Iwi Justice Panel approach is being rolled out into additional areas in New Zealand.

While early indications suggest that reform has changed the relationship between the police and local community for the better, both Manchester and New Zealand acknowledge that the full impact of reform takes time and that improving the relationship between the police and the public in some local communities, where there is distrust of the police, will be more challenging but the more collaborative approaches already being implemented should aid this process.

2.1.3 The impact of centralisation on community relations

For the Netherlands and Norway, police reform has created some challenges for the relationship between the police and local communities. In the Netherlands police reform resulted in the creation of one national police force while in Norway, which already had a long established national police force, reform involved a consolidation of the number of operational districts into fewer but larger units. In both countries however, this raised fears amongst the public that there might be a removal of police from local communities. Steps were taken as the reform process was implemented to engage with communities to maintain and improve the relationship despite centralisation occurring. Similar concerns were found in Scotland during the geographical case studies examined in year 2 of evaluation¹², where local resources were identified as being increasingly stretched and there were concerns expressed by both the public and police officers about a reduction in the visibility of police officers.

In Norway, at the start of the reform process, the police took part in local meetings in municipalities to explain to local communities why reform was taking place, how their approach would change and what that meant for their community. At these events the police were able to explain that some modern crimes, such as online crime, cannot be tackled with police on the ground but only by taking a national approach. Time was given for communities to raise concerns, one of which was that centralisation would result in the breakdown of the relationship between the police and local communities.

To prevent a breakdown in the relationship between local communities and the police following reform, under the new structure in Norway police officers are expected to spend more time out of their office and in communities. There was no evidence from the interviews as to views on the success of this approach.

In the Netherlands, the creation of a national police force resulted in a move towards streamlining and updating systems, including the centralisation and greater use of IT communication. As part of this infrastructure change, the police moved to a system of online reporting of crime. With the public no longer required to engage with police officers face-to-face or by phone to report a crime, some perceived this change as an example of how the national police force has moved the police further away from the community. One interviewee was also concerned that removing this direct engagement with the police may have resulted in fewer crimes being reported, although this is difficult to evidence.

In addition, a view from interviewees in the Netherlands was that there was concern that the move to a centralised police force would leave some officers isolated from their colleagues and senior officers as well as at a distance from the local community. Some police interviewees acknowledged that in some instances this

¹² Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 2 Report published by Scottish Government August 2017 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-2-report/>

could be the case, for example, local police officers could be pulled away from communities to address national issues.

“...local policing is used as the main source of police officers for lots of other issues that are nationally, so they're drawn from their local policing position, which in turn leads to the fact that there's not enough capacity at local level, especially to do like community policing work, so basically what's happening is that they are more and more concentrating on emergency calls, crime-fighting much more than local policing.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

Potential action or solutions to countering this did not emerge from this research.

For some interviewees from the Netherlands and Norway, the change in the relationship between the police and local communities was the result of a perceived change to the visibility of the police rather than a real change that has taken place. They argued that while some police stations had closed, at a local level neighbourhood officers had not been removed from communities by reform but were still present in the community. In Norway, there was a belief that in time reform has the potential to strengthen relationships between the police and local communities and that in time communities might see that the aim of reform was to shift police out of their local offices and into the community. For some, reform was seen as having the ability to strengthen communication procedures and thus increase transparency between the police and local communities.

“The relationship is now a much more structured one, with a very clear obligation from the police and from the council to work together on specific issues. Where we have very clear lines of information-sharing, there is more clarity, there's more transparency between the police and the local communities, so I think where it's actually worked, it's worked well. (Interviewee: Norway)

2.1.4 Achieving positive engagement and building trust

To improve relationships with local communities the police in each of the case studies have had to work on building trust with communities to make engagement with the police more positive.

In New Zealand police officers have received training in how to more effectively engage with communities in order to build trust. Consultation with groups in communities informed the development of this training.

“We've educated our staff on how to engage. We did forums with our young community about how they perceive the Police and what they wanted from us, so that was the big factor that came out was ‘how you approach us’, ‘how you engage with us’, ‘don't accuse us of being a criminal, without knowing what's going on’, and that paid real dividends...the engagement with them made a difference.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

To further strengthen relationships with the police, steps have been taken in New Zealand to try and attract a more diverse population to join the police to ensure that the force becomes more representative of the communities they serve, for example in gender, age and ethnicity. Figures released by New Zealand police in June 2018 suggest that greater diversity in gender and ethnicity of new recruits has been achieved.¹³

In the Netherlands, changes in how the police engage with the public are not directly attributed to reform but are rather seen as part of the continual development towards new ways of working which started before reform took place.

In some areas of the Netherlands weekly or regular meetings have been set up in the community where members of the public can meet and raise issues with local police officers. In others, the police link in with local services such as schools, to conduct visits and build relationships. One national initiative is the introduction of Neighbourhood Director Officers (NDO). For every 5000 inhabitants there is an NDO for that area. It is their role to link the community with other local services including social services, health services and local businesses.

“We are changing, and we are making things better, but it is very hard to say that that is an effect of the reform or not...because we were developing all the time...”
(Interviewee: Netherlands)

¹³ New Zealand Police, The changing face of Police, 28 June 2018
<https://www.police.govt.nz/news/ten-one-magazine/changing-face-police>

Case study 2

Participatory budgeting: investing in communities

Drawing on experiences of similar approaches elsewhere in the UK, in Manchester proceeds of crime are being used for community activities and diversionary activities for young people to prevent them entering organised crime, joining gangs or becoming involved with gun crime. When money or assets are seized from criminals, a third is given to the police. The police in Manchester have chosen to put this back into the community for community activities for young people. One method they use to decide how the funds are used is through participatory budgeting events. At these events local communities come up with ideas and bid to put these ideas into practice, in a Dragon's Den (British TV show) style event. Local Authorities are also match funding these ideas. The police set out funding criteria to ensure ideas funded will reach a large number of people and meet specific local outcomes.

“We do quite a bit of participatory budgeting...so we run participatory budgeting events in local communities, and we ask them to come up with ideas where they bid for the money...often the Local Authority'll match-fund it...They might be small projects. Might be a football club or something like that to tackle anti-social behaviour, so that's something we like to do.”
(Interviewee: Manchester)

2.1.5 Improving the relationship with local communities as a strategic priority

For all four forces, local policing and improving the relationship between the police and community was a key feature of present and / or future strategic plans. This is consistent with the picture in Scotland with the transformation vision for Police Scotland outlined in Policing 2026¹⁴ where a key area of focus is supporting communities and improving localism.

In Norway, improving the connection between the police and public was part of the strategic plan at both a local police district and directorate level.

In Manchester, the police are working in partnership with other agencies and communities to deliver the strategy Our People, Our Place to improve services and support for residents. In addition, improving the connection between the police and local communities is also one of five strands in the Greater Manchester Police's target operating model. This aims to support more partnership working in order to improve the outcomes for the people of Manchester by working together to tackle the social issues that lead to crime.

¹⁴ Police Scotland and Scottish Police Authority, 2026 Serving a Changing Scotland: Our Ten Year Strategy for Policing in Scotland
<http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/138327/386688/policing-2026-strategy.pdf>

“For the first time we’ve got a strategy that talks about Greater Manchester as a place in itself drawing together police, health and social care, fire and rescue service, community and voluntary sector, our housing providers, so it’s an overarching strategy for Greater Manchester and it’s called Our People Our Place.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

While improving the connection between the police and the public is featured in strategic plans in New Zealand, how this will be implemented nationally is not prescribed, leaving flexibility in how this could be delivered locally. This may build on existing community policing structures such as Community Patrols and Maori Wardens that support local communities.

Strengthening local policing and the relationship with the community in the Netherlands is also captured in future plans for the police force. However, unlike the other areas, some interviewees are sceptical about whether it will happen in practice.

2.2 What are the challenges and opportunities of reform for developing local policing?

All four case study areas recognised that there were challenges involved in developing effective local policing during the reform journey.

Three main challenges were identified:

- i. the challenge of building and maintaining good community relations (explored previously)
- ii. the way in which local policing tasks are prioritised, and by whom, to cope with limited resources
- iii. the changing role of police officers.

2.3 Prioritising local policing tasks

For Manchester, the Netherlands and New Zealand, the biggest challenge was prioritising local policing tasks when demand for the police was high and staffing and resources are finite.

“You’ve got demand pressures, so you’ve got to really make sure that you’re really clear on your priorities, and that everyone understands what the priorities are, and what their role is within the big plan...otherwise, you know, you can drift and... You’ve still got to be accountable for reducing crime...” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

Police forces found it a challenge to make community policing a priority due to staff capacity and the competing demands on resources. They found that national policing tasks or response duties took priority over community policing due to a shortage of personnel and community policing roles not being protected.

“It’s really hard because the frontline staff don’t necessarily see that as a priority because they’re so overwhelmed with the cases that they’re carrying and the jobs coming in, ...I mean that’s where my Neighbourhood Teams come into play, but then they’re often helping to do the response work because they’re so short of staff. So they don’t have much capacity left beyond that.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

This challenge is amplified when community policing initiatives are driven forward by individual police officers. If that person changes location or their role changes, then any community initiatives they are involved with can disappear.

Working in closer partnership with other agencies is one of the ways that New Zealand police are trying to respond to meeting competing demands.

“So we can't do it by ourselves – the Police – so we need our partner agencies, Non-Government agencies to buy in to what we're trying to achieve...you need the support of (a) the communities, but also partner agencies to come in with services, you know?...You need businesses involved, particularly around, you know, when we were painting some of the shops and cleaning them up. We had businesses donate paint and bits and pieces, so you need the whole community to buy in to it...” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

Case study 3

Citizen Contract: building community assets

One way the police in Manchester are trying to improve their relationship with the community is with the Citizen Contract. Developed in other public services, the Citizen Contract is an approach which outlines the role and responsibilities of the police for communities, but also the role and responsibilities for communities. The Citizen Contract sits within the context of localised approaches of other public services. To raise awareness of the Citizen Contract the police run local community events. Some interviewees think that it will take time to see the full impact of the Citizen Contract, but early signs are promising.

“We have seen some shift in the demand around...not a massive reduction in calls but we are noticing that demand seems to be going to the right agency the first time, as to getting stuff around noise nuisance and fly tipping and stuff like that. But again it is early days, Greater Manchester has got a population of just under 3 million and so you know as a larger area it's going to take a wee bit of time to see the kind of consequence of that work. Despite there will be, you know, local kind of anecdotal case study stuff, where it's having an impact.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

2.3.1 The changing role of police officers

There is also a perceived challenge, highlighted by an interviewee in the Netherlands, in relation to the changing role of police officers, which impacts on the culture of the police service and on the recruitment and training for new and experienced officers. As the tasks the police are expected to do are changing, so the skills needed to do the role also change.

“Well, one of our concerns at this moment is thinking about what kind of police officers do we need to stay relevant as a police force...I need police officers that understand the virtual world for example...” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

There was also a view from an interviewee in Norway that implementing the reformed structure caused challenges due to the need to change staff culture. As the new focus of the police is on prevention this has changed the tasks and approach of the police force as a whole which is challenging to implement as officers work out how this sits alongside their response role.

3 Partnership working and the police

Key findings: Partnership working

- In all case study areas, the police were working with a wide range of partners including health services, emergency services, local authority departments and third sector organisations. These relationships typically predate reform but are often strengthened in a post-reform environment as new approaches to service delivery are developed,
- Factors identified by the police that supported successful partnership working included: regular face-to-face contact with partner agencies, co-location of services, and having a shared focus.
- Acceptance of the need for culture change in both the police and partners to enable them to work in a more integrated way was seen as vital for successful partnership working.
- Police reform has been both beneficial and challenging for partnership working for police forces. For example, in the Netherlands, the nationalisation of the police force provided more opportunities for strategic partnership working at a national level but reduced the ability of local police to develop local partnerships.
- Challenges to partnership working included budget constraints, both for the police and partners, as this has a negative impact on staff capacity, leading to less resources being available to support working together.
- In many case study areas there was a view that opportunities existed for information sharing between partners to be improved which could then help facilitate greater collaborative activity.

This chapter focuses on the changes that have occurred for the police in the four international case study areas in relation to partnership working, including changes in either the police service or partner agencies that have impacted on partnership working, and the challenges and opportunities faced in developing effective partnership working.

3.1 How do partnerships work in practice?

Across all four case study areas, partnership working is key to the way the police operate. For some of the case studies, partnership working is part of the police force's strategic planning, for example in New Zealand where partnership working is set out and supported at the strategic level through their 'Prevention First' strategy.

3.1.1 Range of partnerships with the police

All four case study police forces work with a wide range of different partners. Although the range of partners that the four different police forces worked with varied, these tended to fall into the following groups:

- health services, including mental health services
- other emergency services, including fire and rescue, and paramedics
- social services (both public bodies and private companies delivering services)
- local authorities
- housing organisations
- education and children's services
- elected officials
- third sector organisations
- local businesses.

In many of the case study areas, partnership working is built into specific job roles. All the case study areas have initiatives in place which are based on joint partnership working. For example, in Manchester police frontline staff at constable or sergeant level are co-located with equivalent level staff in partner agencies in shared buildings or work out of places within local communities such as libraries or GP surgeries, on a drop-in basis to reduce barriers to joint working between local partners.

3.2 What has the impact of reform been on partnership working?

Each of the case study locations have experienced changes in the way that they work in partnership with other organisations in recent years. This section explores the ways in which interviewees discuss changes to partnership working, highlighting where these changes can be directly attributed to reform.

While some of these changes relate directly to changes brought about as a result of reform, others reflect changes in the nature of crime, the profile of the local neighbourhood or the way that other public sector organisations are funded.

Overall, partnership working appears to have been an important element of the reform process in Manchester, New Zealand and the Netherlands, even where this was not a specific aim of reform. For both Norway and the Netherlands, improving partnership working was not one of the stated aims of reform.

In the Netherlands, one view was that the initial phase of reform was inward-looking and concerned with internal police processes but suggested that attention may shift outward on to partnership working in subsequent phases of reform.

In contrast, working in partnership was an explicit aim of reform in Manchester and New Zealand. In Manchester, the strategic approach taken by the local political leadership is seen as important as it provides a mandate for local partnership working.

3.2.1 The impact of centralisation on partnership working

There is a view that reform has had some unintended consequences on the ability of, and opportunity for, local districts to work in partnership with other organisations. One suggestion is that a centralised police force can, however, provide more opportunities for strategic partnership working at national level.

“I’ll stick to the example of mental health where actually we’ve been able now to make national agreements on how to deal with the mentally ill, and actually come up with a sort of a totally structured approach which is now used everywhere, and that would have been much more difficult when there wasn’t one centralised Police.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

In the Netherlands there was a feeling expressed that the centralisation of services provided opportunities for partnership working at the national level but meant that local police had often less time available to interact with their local community and to cultivate local partnerships.

3.2.2 Empowering local police officers

In New Zealand the importance of empowering local police officers to interpret the strategy and to build their own relationships with partners at the local level was highlighted. The national framework has “been implemented locally with quite a lot of discretion by Local Commanders” (Interviewee: New Zealand) and there is a level of autonomy granted to local police officers in partnership working.

“...giving a lot more empowerment to the staff to actually make a whole lot of decisions that they would need to make in terms of how they actually policed their local communities, and were empowering local Sergeants that ... you know,

“You know your community. You tell us how you wanna police it. We’ll get an agreement on how you want to do it, and then you go away and deliver it.”
(Interviewee: New Zealand)

3.3 What are the key factors for successful partnership working?

3.3.1 Face to face interaction

In all four of the police forces face-to-face interaction, facilitated by co-location or physical proximity was viewed as a key element of partnership working. Regular face-to-face meetings with partners were viewed as important to successful partnership working. In addition, getting together in the same space to discuss joint response to particular social or operational issues was viewed positively, as was the co-location of services. This was also discussed in a Scottish context in the thematic case study on partnership, innovation and prevention¹⁵, where regular contact between partners, including co-location helped develop the sense of a collective ‘team’. A driver for this was making better use of collective resources and identifying how to work together better in a time of reduced organisational budgets and growing demands.

In Manchester, daily face-to-face meetings are held as part of their place-based policing approach and are seen as successful in breaking down communication barriers between partners.

“...it works really well because it’s a daily meeting, it’s accountable, everyone has bought into it, everyone sees the benefits when they work together. So...in the past we were all in our separate little silos and you couldn’t get hold of anybody, now it’s just you turn up at the meeting and you can speak to the people you need. So it’s just...its dead simple, but it works.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

Interviewees from Norway, New Zealand and Manchester all mentioned the value of different services or partners being co-located. In Norway, the co-location of police and fire operational centres was a direct result of reform and allowed services to work together to respond to emergencies.

In Manchester, many services are co-located or use public spaces within the local community to come together. An example of this is the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, which aims to support the most vulnerable members of the community. The Hub is where co-located services come together to address high priority complex cases.

In Manchester, the ultimate aim of reform is to go beyond partnership working to full integration of public services, sharing premises, information systems and budgets

¹⁵ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Partnership, Innovation and Prevention Year Three Case Study published by Scottish Government February 2018

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-thematic-case-study-partnership/>

and allowing the needs of the local area to influence the balance and job profile of staff.

“Co-locating is nice, but integration is *better*. So, in the past, it's been a case of ... I guess the Police ... it's been a case of policing saying to partners, “I've got a problem. Can you help me with it?” ... and then we've gone through stages of “I've got a problem. Can you help me with it?...it'd be easier if we're in the same building”. We're now at the stage of “We've got a problem. How do we solve it? Which is the best way to solve it?”. So it's quite wholesale reform in that sense.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

In contrast, one of the consequences of the nationalisation of the police force in the Netherlands was to create greater geographical distance between local police and their partners due to the closure of local police stations. This is seen as making partnership working more difficult at the local level.

“...because the police used to work together with partners – especially at the local level – in the management of all kinds of criminal and disorder problems, and, formally, they should continue this. But on the other hand, if you look at how things are working out in reality, it has an unintended consequence, and what we see is that, by...because of the fact that there is more distance between the police and local community, it also means that there is more distance between the police and local partners.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

3.3.2 A shared focus across partners

The importance of bringing together organisations under a common aim and a shared focus was highlighted in both New Zealand and Manchester as integral to successful partnership working. Partnership working was described as having forced traditional policing issues to be reframed as social issues, which has led to shared goals being developed across the whole public service sector.

In both areas there was a perceived change in the way that the police conceptualise the issues that they are faced with, moving from an approach of “arresting their way out” to a deeper understanding of the social issues related to crime and developing joint problem-solving approaches with other agencies.

One example from New Zealand of a change in the way public services identify and understand the issues and work together to address the root causes of crime, was their approach to drug use. Traditionally in New Zealand the police have viewed drug misuse as being a criminal problem which needed to be dealt with by the judicial system. However, after a process of knowledge exchange with Scotland, they began working with partners to develop a model to look holistically at the situation for the individual. They explored how they could work collaboratively with other agencies to support the individual to tackle drug addiction and, in so doing, to reframe drug addiction as a health problem. As part of this approach the police

brought all the partners together to discuss how to deal with individuals in the community and they used this same approach to deal with family violence.

“The traditional response was that, “It's a judicial problem, and the courts would solve it”, but what we found is...what we're looking to do is try and rehab the users and actually look to – and will – prosecute the dealers and use that strategy there. Well, to do that, you know, there's housing issues, social problems, education things that we actually needed to have a whole lotta people, so what we did is we actually called together a whole lotta people that would look at how we deal with these particular people...” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

Case study 4

Multiagency approach to reduce family harm

In New Zealand an approach has been developed, led by the police, of a co-located multi-agency approach to family harm. This approach allows police to assess potential risks to a family in any situation that they encounter, to share information on risks such as the health of the family and any indications of drug or alcohol use in the household. These data are then discussed at a multi-agency meeting with representatives from partner agencies including health, education, women’s refuges, the prison service and employment agencies, allowing a coordinated approach to intervention to be agreed across agencies.

3.3.3 A targeted approach

Interviewees from New Zealand and Manchester described working with partners to identify the populations who created most demand across services and developed a more targeted approach towards those most in need. In Manchester, there is a view that the reduction in resources has led to less police being visible on the streets, so they have moved to an approach focused on the most vulnerable communities, moving “from visibility to vulnerability”. (Interviewee: Manchester)

“I think everyone realises demand and actually the same people are involved, you know? You think of those who are going to hospital, those that need mental health, are involved in crime, is .. it's our demand, so it's the same people that need the services from all our partners as well. So our lessons that we're getting from other organisations is really helping us all to focus on the right people.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

3.3.4 Culture change

For partnership working to be successful, there is often the need for a change in culture or in the mind-set of the organisations involved. In both Manchester and New Zealand, a change in culture has been required both in the police force and in their partners, to allow them to move to a more integrated way of working together. One interviewee in Manchester described moving from a culture of working in silos to one of problem solving.

“It’s that kind of thing that...it’s that kind of culture of creative problem solving instead of what we used to do, just kind of try and bat people away constantly and say we can’t help you, can’t help you, can’t help you. All that does is make people worse and ultimately it’s more expensive. It’s a changing mind-set more than anything, rather than structural sort of changes, you bring people together.”
(Interviewee: Manchester)

This was echoed in New Zealand where changes have been observed in the attitude towards collaborating with, and learning from, other organisations in tackling the root cause of social problems which lead to crime.

In both New Zealand and Manchester challenges were identified in relation to culture within the police and in their partners. In New Zealand challenges in overcoming some of the entrenched attitudes within the police service, and the slow pace of change were highlighted, as was a disconnect in cultures between the police and their partners which can create friction.

Case study 5

Working in partnership to innovate from within

In the Netherlands the police developed a process for sharing best practice, which has been introduced since reform. On a local scale, early career stage officers are encouraged to form a group and exchange ideas on how to improve and exchange best practices. On a national scale, they have organised events where police officers are invited from around the country to pitch in a six minute talk their innovation or best practice. They can then invite colleagues to work with them on their projects, with the intention they can be rolled out across the country.

3.4 What are the challenges and opportunities of reform for partnership working?

This section will explore the challenges that reform has brought to partnership working for police services identified in the international case studies, and will focus on the key findings of:

- i. Budgetary constraints experienced by the police services
- ii. Budgetary constraints experienced by partner organisations working with the police
- iii. Data and information sharing.

3.4.1 Budgetary constraints for the police services

The challenge which was most commonly spoken about across the four case study areas was the level of funding available to both the police and their partners. This tended to be expressed as concerns regarding the availability of staff for partnership activities. Even in the Netherlands, where reduction of spending is not a feature of the reforms, funding has affected partnership working. One view was that the centralisation of the police force in the Netherlands had led to local police chiefs having less discretion on how funds could be allocated at the local level which had implications for local partnerships.

3.4.2 Budgetary constraints of partner organisations

In Manchester and New Zealand, underfunding of partner organisations was highlighted as a significant challenge in partnership working, particularly in the availability of local services to provide an integrated and joined up response to social issues. At a local level in New Zealand there were concerns expressed by frontline officers about the lack of investment in other agencies which was needed to allow them to fulfil their role as police officers.

Underinvestment in other public services in New Zealand and a lack of other agencies providing out of hours services was viewed as leading to the police having to meet some of the demand from these organisations. Similar concerns have been expressed in Scotland, as evidenced in the report from the geographical case studies in year 2 of the evaluation.¹⁶ In Scotland, there was a perception among local police officers that financial cutbacks in partner services impacted on these organisations being able to participate in joint working and information sharing. In addition, officers in New Zealand felt that in a context of limited resources they were being tasked with roles they believed should be the responsibility of another agency.

“I think the other thing is some of the services aren't out there for us, so we need more perpetrator services, we need more services for mental health, addiction services. They're just not there, so we're coming across people. er .. because of the 24/7 organisation, we're starting to deal with and pick up work that other

¹⁶ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 2 Report published August 2017, Scottish Government <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-2-report/>

agencies should be doing... because of their lack of funds maybe, or services available...and not being 24/7.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

In Manchester, cuts to local authority services have led to a loss of expertise at the local level as some positions have been removed and for others their roles have changed to a more central focus. These changes mean that these skilled employees were not available for place-based partnership working.

There was also a view from Manchester that reduced funding across public services can also be a driver for greater partnership working. It was suggested that the lack of funding across the police service and other agencies has meant that they have had to come together in partnerships to find better ways of targeting limited resources.

3.4.3 Data sharing

Another commonly identified challenge in partnership working was the difficulties in sharing information across organisations and systems, particularly in Norway and the Netherlands. In the Netherlands there was a view that sharing information both within the police force and across partners could be improved. In Norway, one interviewee described the difficulties in accessing health data from those working in the healthcare system due to concerns about breaking the law and breaching confidentiality.

“...it would be a good idea to improve information circulation within the Police, and, from there, with its partners. Well, I would say it's improving, but we're not there yet. It could be... it can be better.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

Information sharing was seen as less of a challenge in Manchester and New Zealand where systems had been developed to share relevant information across multi-agency partnerships. An example of good partnership working which was highlighted by an interviewee in Manchester was the development by the local authority of a new IT system for drawing together and sharing relevant information held by a range of different agencies with partners. The system allows a user (or identified users) from one of the collaborating agencies to access data, from a range of different partners who are engaged in the information sharing system, including housing and benefits data. It is envisaged it will be expanded to include police, domestic abuse and missing from home data.

4 Prevention work by the police

Key findings: Prevention

- Police reform impacted the prevention agenda differently across the international case study locations.
- In Norway and New Zealand crime prevention was a specific aim of reform. In both countries, prevention has become a key part of all officer roles, making it a more generalised rather than specialised function of policing.
- Interviewees from Manchester and the Netherlands did not view reform as having impacted on crime prevention. Instead, they perceived that a move towards more evidence-based practice has had a greater impact on prevention.
- Effective prevention requires the police to work formally with partners to identify issues, gain expertise, develop action plans for a range of different approaches and activities, and share resources. But, even on an informal basis, in each of the case studies the importance of partnership working and the support the police gain from working with partners on prevention initiatives was also discussed.
- Adequate time and resources for both the police and partners is a challenge for prevention. Staff culture is another challenge to prevention; it takes time to gain cultural acceptance of prevention within the police service.
- Getting the strategy right is key for the successful implementation of more prevention-focused policing (e.g. having leaders who support the changes and communicating the strategy to police officers).

This chapter will discuss the range of prevention activities undertaken by the police, the changes in how the police work with a prevention agenda, the role of partnership working in prevention, and any challenges and opportunities.

4.1 How has reform changed approaches to prevention?

The role of police reform in changing police services towards being more prevention focused varied across the four case studies. There are clear differences between Manchester, New Zealand, Norway and the Netherlands regarding the

impact that they feel reform has had on their prevention agendas compared with other factors.

For Norway and New Zealand prevention has been a main aim of reform. Reform is viewed as the catalyst for the prevention activities they are now undertaking and is also seen as influencing a change in culture to being more prevention focused.

“Prevention is...due to the Police Act, prevention is our first job...it's very important that we can ‘prevent’ more than repair and investigate.” (Interviewee: Norway)

In Norway, since reform, all police officers are expected to take on a prevention role including patrol officers. As such, it appears that prevention has become a more generalised rather than specialised function of policing.

New Zealand has also encountered a significant shift in the prevention agenda as a result of reform, which led to the development of ‘Prevention First’. This is explained by a senior officer as a shift from more output focused policing towards a focus on engaging with communities, with police staff being more empowered to work preventatively.

For Manchester and the Netherlands, reform was not believed to have impacted on prevention. Instead, interviewees in Manchester indicate that a move towards more evidence-based practice has had more of an impact than reform. This is particularly interesting as Manchester and the Netherlands did not mention that there had been a cultural shift towards prevention.

4.2 Is prevention a strategic priority?

Although reform has played different roles in moving police practices towards a more prevention-focused way of working, prevention is a feature of policing in varying degrees in all four of the international case study areas. For Manchester, Norway and New Zealand, prevention forms a key part of their strategic plans. Prevention activities in these places are broadly similar, involving partnership working and problem solving, and are being developed on an evidence base. For the Netherlands, prevention is less of a strategic priority.

Embedding prevention in policing culture is identified as an important aspect for New Zealand and Norway, where they describe a cultural change having taken place, with prevention now being embedded in their working practices. There is also now a stronger focus on prevention in Scotland as evidenced in the partnership, innovation and prevention case study report,¹⁷ with the Policing 2026 strategy demonstrating a commitment to prevention approaches.

¹⁷ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Partnership, Innovation and Prevention Year Three Case Study, February 2018, Scottish Government <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-thematic-case-study-partnership/>

An interviewee from New Zealand described their prevention activities as moving away from a 'traditional response' to a more holistic response. Early intervention is already part of the prevention agenda in New Zealand, with Manchester stating that they would also like to move towards this approach.

“What we’re trying to do is shift that, so by getting upstream of issues ...being able to nip issues in the bud would help to move us to a position in the future where that balance between what we invest in early intervention or late intervention starts to shift more towards the early intervention because we’re seeing a reduction in the more serious offences that are a symptom of us not being able to act earlier.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

In contrast, interviewees from the Netherlands discuss prevention differently. They describe it as a shared responsibility with partner organisations but where their partners take more of a lead. According to the interviewees the police are happy to cooperate with partners, but they view the focus of their role as enforcement rather than prevention, with the suggestion that local government can do more on prevention than the police.

‘We have to cooperate, and things that people can do by themselves or things that local government can do is more on the prevention side of the...of dealing with criminality, and our role is more to ... try to take criminals and to bring them...[to]...justice.’ (Interviewee: Netherlands)

4.3 What role does partnership working have in prevention?

4.3.1 Prevention work needs partnerships

Although different approaches have been used in prevention activities across the four case study areas, all of them involve partnership working. These partnerships vary but include:

- working with community members
- partnerships where other organisations are taking the lead
- working with traditional partners such as agencies in criminal justice, health, social work and the community
- working with non-traditional partners such as the private sector to address specific issues, for example cyber-crime.

These partnerships demonstrate an admission on behalf of the police that they cannot tackle prevention alone and need to draw on partners to identify issues, gain expertise, develop action plans for a range of different approaches and activities, and share resources. This is consistent with the role of partnership working in

prevention activities in Scotland. The case study of partnership, innovation and prevention¹⁸ found examples of different types of partnerships being formed, such as highly structured formal partnerships through to day-to-day joint working with little formal arrangements, and a prioritisation of prevention in partnerships in strategic documents, empowering the police to work collaboratively with a range of partners from statutory and voluntary sectors.

4.3.2 Formalising partnerships for prevention

In Norway the police are working with a range of partners in education, health and childcare authorities as well as private businesses to improve community safety. The main strategy for prevention work has led to joint meetings with partners and putting in place more formalised agreements.

“...we have also formalised agreements with the security ... the *private* security sector in terms of ... and *that* has been a great thing for us because ...acknowledging that we also need to work with private security companies is... something that has been a bit difficult for the Police in the past, but now we have formalised agreements with them in ...order to sort of secure a community”
(Interviewee: Norway)

The quotation above demonstrates the formalisation of partnerships for prevention work in Norway. But, even on a more informal basis, each of the case studies discuss the importance of partnership working and the support they gain from working with partners on prevention initiatives.

Case study 6

Expanding partnerships to fight crime

For Norwegian police, the way they work with partners in prevention activities is viewed as innovative, by one of the interviewees. This is due to information sharing and the way they are working with partners to address ‘new’ types of crime such as the risks to children using the internet and internet fraud. These identified ‘new’ types of crime appear to be leading to the police working with non-traditional partners such as those in the internet industry and tax authorities, to draw on different agencies areas of expertise to help tackle these issues.

¹⁸ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Partnership, Innovation and Prevention Year Three Case Study, published February 2018, Scottish Government
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-thematic-case-study-partnership/>

4.4 What are the challenges and opportunities of reform for developing the prevention agenda?

Findings from the international case studies illustrated that reform presented police services with challenges and opportunities regarding the development of prevention agendas.

Two key themes emerged from this research - time and resources for prevention partnerships, and changing culture – and these will be explored further in this section.

4.4.1 Time and resources for prevention partnerships

As discussed, partnership working forms an important element of the prevention agenda in all the case study areas. However, there are some potential challenges as identified in Norway and the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, there was a view that police had to focus on their core policing tasks which meant less time for collaborative working. In Norway, one interviewee discussed the need to allocate budgets for the police to take part in partnership activities. This was seen as particularly challenging when the police might have to invest part of their budget in a partnership initiative, but the benefit may be related to an area that is under another organisation's jurisdiction.

“I think that's one of the things that we probably are going to struggle with a bit...is to find the funding to digitalise...the different ways of working together, especially since our budgets are .. you know, we have Police budgets, we have a tax office budget, we have a labour budget, and then sort of be willing to put money where the benefit might not be *yours*. It might come to another entity.”
(Interviewee: Norway)

4.4.2 Changing culture

Another significant challenge on the prevention agenda identified in the international case study areas is the need for a shift in culture to occur. Interestingly, in Manchester, for those working at a strategic level, prevention was viewed as being a core element of the policing role but for the officers working at a community level, there was an identified challenge in moving towards a 'preventative mind set', particularly due to the focus on targets and response activities.

“The incidents you've had and trying to manage the demand that I mentioned. So...I'm trying to push all that back to create some capacity to try and move us towards a more preventative mind set but it's really hard...” (Interviewee: Manchester)

In Norway one of the interviewees explains that due to merging the police districts there has been a 'struggle' with cultural differences and how to integrate prevention into the way they police.

Reform in New Zealand is described as having given them the opportunity to concentrate on prevention and to change the culture towards embracing prevention as a core policing role. But it is acknowledged that it takes time to gain cultural acceptance of prevention within the police service. New Zealand are nearly eight years into their reform journey, but there is a belief that the prevention role has really only started to gain cultural acceptance in the last 12 to 24 months.

In New Zealand interviewees described the key to the successful implementation of more prevention-focused policing was to get the strategy right. This includes having leaders who support the changes and are looking to see a change in culture towards more prevention-focused policing and the importance of communicating the strategy to police officers.

“Get your strategy right, but make sure it aligns with the *culture*’, and then ensure that the leaders that are actually leading it are actually looking for the *cultural* change, and not just nodding their heads going, “Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.”
(Interviewee: New Zealand)

5 Measuring impact of police reform

Key findings: Measuring impact

- Police forces in each of the international case study locations found it challenging to attribute any improvements in police performance to reform due to the indicators used to measure performance not relating to reform. To address this, the New Zealand police force has reviewed, reduced and redrafted their performance indicators to better measure the impact of reform.
- All case study police forces think it will take more time to see the full impact of the benefits of reform than was originally anticipated given the complexity of the changes required
- Securing support for building in evaluation to police processes across all levels of seniority was a challenge associated with measuring the impact of reform, highlighted in both New Zealand and Norway.
- Police forces found it challenging to evidence systematically (rather than anecdotally) the positive impact of partnership working.

This chapter explores both how the impact of reform is being measured in the four international case studies and common challenges experienced in evidencing the outcomes of reform.

In Norway and the Netherlands, evaluations of the overall impact of police reform are being carried out. In both countries, a government directorate or state committee is responsible for carrying out the evaluation. In addition, external research is carried out by universities and academic departments into specific elements of reform.

In New Zealand and Manchester, some elements of reform have been evaluated but neither police force has undertaken an overall evaluation of the impacts of reform.

Evaluating the impact of reform on staff and workplace culture was discussed by interviewees from Norway and New Zealand. Both police forces ran surveys of internal staff to explore the experience of reform from the point of view of their staff members.

5.1 What challenges and opportunities are there in measuring impact?

5.1.1 Using existing performance indicators

Interviewees from all four international case studies mentioned the limitations associated with using their routine data, which they collect as part of their monitoring processes on police performance, for evaluating the impact of reform. One particular challenge identified is the ability to attribute any improvements in police performance to reform.

Traditional forms of monitoring police performance, such as crime rates and detection rates, were seen as a barrier to effectively measuring the impact of new ways of working and as running counter to the ethos of reform and innovation.

“Because traditionally what we see in the police...we’re kind of guilty of this is an emphasis on just bean counting, if you like, so how many burglaries have we had? How many have we detected? And actually when you study that, you see the kind of perverse incentives that creates within the system. It means that people just chase the numbers or just chase the easy detections because all they’re being measured on is those easy to count things.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

5.1.2 A review of performance indicators is needed

There was a view in Manchester, the Netherlands and New Zealand that it is important to review the types of indicators they are using to measure performance. Interviewees discussed the need to introduce a new type of monitoring framework that would include new indicators which are better suited to assessing the impact of reform.

In New Zealand the police force has already reviewed their indicators and have drastically reduced and simplified their outcome measures to reflect the aims of reform. They have reduced around 2,000 performance indicators down to four outcome measures related to the main aims of the police service. This has also led to more autonomy at the local level in how to achieve these overall outcomes.

5.1.3 Timescales

Another challenge which was identified in evaluating the impact of reform were the timescales over which the impact of reform can be identified. An overall evaluation of reform in the Netherlands police force concluded that the five-year period since the start of the reform was too short a time to fully understand the impact of the reform and recommended that a further evaluation should be commissioned. This reflects the more general observation that reform is a journey rather than an event and therefore it will take time to evidence its different impacts and implications.

5.1.4 Making effective use of evaluation findings

Securing support for building in evaluation to police processes across all levels of seniority was a challenge associated with measuring the impact of reform, highlighted in both New Zealand and Norway.

“The top leadership in the Police sort of brush it to the side and...er... “It doesn’t have much to do with what we’re doing” and so on. They don’t take it much seriously actually!” (Interviewee: Norway)

When discussing evaluating the outcomes of reform, particularly those relating to partnership working or prevention, interviewees focused on small scale evaluations of individual projects. An example of this was a cost-benefit analysis carried out by Greater Manchester Police Force of their place-based partnership working.

“And we do...we have got um...a cost benefit analysis tool that we developed so for each of the new ways of working that we do have locally, we’ve got a tool that we can run that through which sort of says what was demand before, how many agencies was it touching before, and what was the cost of that? So we know for example, the integrated neighbourhood working that we did..., they will say that for every £1 invested they save £3.23 I think it was, that sort of return on investment, and that’s not new money, that’s just using what we’ve currently got.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

There were examples of small-scale evaluations of partnership working initiatives given from Norway about reducing alcohol-related road traffic accidents and responding to people who present in mental health crisis in public places.

One of the main challenges of carrying out small scale evaluations of projects was described by one interviewee from Manchester, who highlighted the challenge of understanding wider impacts of local initiatives and transferring learning from small projects and applying these more generally to policing.

“So we really only measure the easy stuff. How do we go and measure that on an individual level, at the most local level? What does that tell us about what we need to do to improve and how can we aggregate those individual measures up to show the impact to the wider community?” (Interviewee: Manchester)

5.1.5 Evaluating partnership working

Another challenge associated with measuring impact through formal evaluation, which was identified in Manchester, was evidencing the positive impact of partnership working.

“Yeah. I mean, you know...so some o’ the challenges in policing, we seem really focused on sort of evidence-based policing...You know, you can’t really do a sort of significant evaluation on some o’ this stuff. It’s quite low-level. Some of it’s about the relationship that the police deal with local groups as opposed to the activity as well, so some of it’s quite intangible.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

Evaluation of partnership working was also viewed as a challenge in Scotland, the thematic case study of partnership, innovation and prevention,¹⁹ which formed part of this evaluation programme, found little evidence of systematic, independent evaluation of partnership activity in Scotland, although recent programmes of research supported by SIPR have begun to address this²⁰. However, there is a wider UK and international research literature²¹ that has provided some independent evaluation of partnership working involving the police which suggests a significant shift in police attitudes towards partnership working overtime. Among the emerging findings from this research is evidence that:

- The police increasingly see the advantages of partnership working because it allows for a more effective and pragmatic method of addressing social problems, encouraging longer term preventative work rather than short-term reactive approaches;
- Partnership working encourages strong inter-professional and inter-personal relationships with individuals from other organisations, building trust between police and other agencies to help address local problems; and
- While the police may often dominate many partnerships in terms of the resources they are able to mobilise, they increasingly engage in negotiation and compromise with other agencies as they learn to work together to adopt a problem-solving approach.

¹⁹ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Partnership, Innovation and Prevention Year Three Case Study published February 2018, Scottish Government
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-thematic-case-study-partnership/>

²⁰ Local Approaches to Policing Research is ongoing, more information can be found here, SIPR, June 2018, http://www.sipr.ac.uk/assets/files/Information_Sheet_070618.pdf

²¹ M. O'Neill and D.J. McCarthy (2014) (Re)negotiating police culture through partnership working: trust, compromise and the new pragmatism, *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 14(2) 143-159

6 Police: Learning from international perspectives

Key findings: Learning from international perspectives

- Have clear aims for reform before beginning and do not lose sight of these.
- Reform typically requires a culture change in the police service in line with new ways of working and new priorities which can be challenging. Explaining to staff why reform is taking place and allowing staff to have autonomy about implementation of the strategy can aid culture change.
- Reform is a journey with multiple stages, so patience and stamina are required.
- Making a series of incremental changes, rather than trying to make all changes at once, will help the workforce navigate the new environment.
- Honest two-way communication with staff, partners and the community about the reasons for reform, the timescales of reform and what can and cannot be achieved is vital. It is essential to listen to others views and experiences and use them to inform the reform journey.
- Strong, stable and consistent leadership is essential through organisational change as this helps to provide a single clear vision and direction of change.

This report has examined the impact of reform within the police service internationally by focusing on local policing, partnership working, prevention and measuring impact and outcomes. One of the purposes of this exploration is to learn the wider lessons from organisations across the world that have also experienced some level of police reform. This chapter draws together the wider lessons learned from Norway, Manchester, the Netherlands and New Zealand, as well as bringing together advice based on the findings from these international case studies of organisational change.

6.1 Have clear aims for reform

Many of the interviewees felt that having clear aims were important before starting the reform journey and that it was also important to not lose sight of these through the organisational change process.

Have a clear purpose: Ask the following questions from the start: why are you going through reform? What is the purpose? What does the end-point look like? (even if the end-point changes as you go through the reform journey).

Don't neglect the initial aims of reform: Keep in mind what you initially wanted to achieve. For example, if one of the initial aims was to improve community policing, then this should not be neglected during the reform process.

Take a systematic approach to reform: The police are part of a wider system of public services and as such it is important to create a common purpose and vision for reform.

6.2 Recognise the importance of culture

Each of the four case studies recognised that reform requires cultural change and discussed the challenges of changing the culture of the police service as part of their organisational change process.

Resistance to change: One of the commonly described barriers to cultural change discussed by the interviewees in the case study areas is the prevalence of a culture of resistance to change, which is seen as part of a wider resistance to change within police services.

This resistance is also described as being a barrier to changes taking place, delaying the shift to new working practices.

“And the cultural issues within the organisation is...holding the changes back a lot more than we could expect...or maybe we *should* have expected it! But it takes longer to...turn the organisation in to working in new methods.”

(Interviewee: Norway)

Build change resilience from the start: This is particularly important as there may be much resistance to change amongst staff. As such change resilience can partly be achieved by explaining ‘why’ to staff, listening and allowing staff to have autonomy about implementation of the strategy.

6.3 Be patient because change takes time

It is generally viewed by the four international case studies that it takes time to reform an organisation, whether that be culturally, as described above, or structurally.

Set realistic expectations: There was a view that some of the early expectations were unrealistic about what reform could achieve within certain timescales. However, interviewees recognised that reform takes time and that, as with cultural change, there is a need to be patient.

For the Netherlands and Norway, the time it has taken to instigate changes as part of the reform process was described as unexpected.

“A key lesson is that we absolutely underestimated the...scale of the reform...The reform started in 2013... we're half way (through) 2018 now. It's still not ...in practice, it has still not been ...it's still not finished.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

Have stamina: You can be ambitious, but you need to have the stamina to go through the whole process of reform which takes time and requires patience.

6.4 Make incremental changes

One explanation put forward by an academic in the Netherlands for why reform has taken years to implement is that they tried to change everything about the organisation and police work at the same time, which was viewed as too much. Instead it was believed that those who are reforming should be specific about what the problems are and try to do something about that, rather than changing everything at the same time.

6.5 Prioritise communication

Be honest in your communication with staff, partners and the community:

One of the key elements identified was the need for clear communication, both at the national level, with local police officers and with partners and the community. This includes explaining and being clear why your organisation is reforming, the timescale of reform, what can and cannot be achieved, and setting realistic expectations of the challenges that would be faced within the police service and making sure everyone was aware of how they should be tackled. During this process it is also essential to listen to others views and experiences and use them to inform the reform journey.

Need to explain the reasons behind reform to police officers: It was viewed as important to explain the reasons behind the reform and the purpose for specific changes to those within the police service.

“Communication was viewed as crucial to explain the purpose of reform but also to explain why reform was happening. In the Netherlands it was felt that communication was poor between senior officers and local police officers, which led to local officers not being involved in the reform process.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

Listen to the local community: Interviewees in New Zealand and Norway explained that one of their key lessons was to listen to the local community. This is described as easier than trying to reform by only changing things within the police service. They advise against becoming too inward looking and suggest instead that it is important to understand the impact that changes might have on the local community.

“I think...in every reform, you tend to look very inwardly, and not pick up on...what's going on in ...your local community. You...become very sort of self-centred, and we should have been more agile when it comes to understanding the community around us.” (Interviewee: Norway)

Local engagement includes asking the community to identify the key issues and potential solutions and how they can work together to tackle them.

“Engagement with our communities is about not us telling *them* what the issues are and what the solutions are, but actually saying to them, “what are the problems? What are the solutions?...and how can we work together?” I think that's the *key*, for me anyway.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

6.6 Ensure strong and stable leadership

Strong, stable and consistent leadership is needed: Strongly linked to the need for good communication was the view that strong, stable and consistent leadership is essential through organisational change as this helps to provide a single clear vision and direction of change.

Linked to this is the view that having consistent leadership and commitment over the long-term is essential to instigate reform of a large institution.

“I think you need to be in it for the long game, and therefore it takes that leadership, that vision, and that commitment to that beyond a couple of years, or beyond someone...a Chief Officer retiring after a few years or whatever, it really does need that long-term commitment.” (Interviewee: Manchester)

A view from an interviewee in Manchester was that strong leadership is required politically and across the public services to drive the reform agenda. Without political consensus and buy-in it would be difficult to start the reform journey.

Senior officers in New Zealand felt that they have had strong leadership from their Commissioner who has been able to clearly communicate what they are trying to achieve, including being clear on key priorities and the strategic plan which helps provide consistency across the service. This ‘strategic program of change’ has been managed effectively allowing them to deliver projects on time and to budget.

6.7 Focus on the future needs and role of the workforce

The interviewees offered the following advice about planning and designing a large-scale change in an organisation.

Supporting the workforce through change: From the start of the reform process ask some key questions about: how the restructure will affect the current workforce and how that workforce might need to be supported and developed to adapt to change; what IT infrastructure will be needed and what type of information-sharing platforms will you need to develop; and finally, what cultural changes will be needed in order to successfully implement these changes?

Don't lose the balance of the policing function: Ensure all policing roles are maintained including response, community policing and prevention. This includes not taking personnel away from prevention work when major cases arise.

6.8 Recognise the importance of partnerships

Chapter 3 outlined partnership working across the international case studies including the impact of changes, challenges and opportunities. Interviewees in Manchester identified partnership working as being essential in their reform journey. It was suggested that reform is something which should be done in partnership and even that better results can be achieved by working in an integrated way, especially as different social agencies are experiencing similar issues.

“When we work in a more integrated way we get better results...We're all sharing the same issues and the same people so why not...why don't we work together more?” (Interviewee: Manchester)

International perspectives on reform of the fire service

7 Reforming fire and rescue services

Key findings: Reforming fire and rescue services

- In all of the international case study locations, the role of the firefighter has widened to include new roles, such as: medical first response, fire prevention, and responding to terrorist threats and the effects of severe weather.
- In addition to generalist firefighters, all four fire services have a number of specialist roles which differ depending on local requirements. These specialist roles include: hazardous materials; road accident response; medical response; land management; Search and Rescue; technical land rescue; technical water rescue; and Airport Crash Rescue.
- Where specialist services are placed is based on need but also on capacity. On the whole, large cities are more likely to have more specialist firefighters due to population density and service capacity, but some rural areas will have specific specialist skills, for example, Land Management Teams.
- The fire services in New Zealand, Canada and the Netherlands are made up of a mix of career firefighters who work full-time in the role and retained (or volunteer) firefighters who are employed on a part-time basis. The majority of firefighters in these countries are retained. The West Midlands is the only fire service from the case studies which is made up of 100% full-time paid firefighters.
- Challenges experienced by the widening role of the fire service include the emotional impact of responding to medical emergencies, additional training requirements to responding to widening activities and pay disputes because of widening role.

This chapter discusses changes to the role of the firefighters in each of the four fire services, and includes changes relating to:

- activities undertaken by firefighters;
- the level of generalist and specialist skills; and
- the balance of career firefighters and retained (volunteers).

Challenges experienced as a result of the widening role of the firefighter are also presented.

7.1 The widening activities undertaken by firefighters

Traditionally the role of the firefighter is to respond to fires, prevent fires from happening and protect people and buildings from fires. In recent years there have been changes in the activities undertaken by firefighters in all four areas. Some of these changes were a result of reform, others reflected changes in community need.

7.1.1 Changes to number and types of fire callouts

As in Scotland, all the fire services described having experienced a reduction in the number of fires over time that they attend. This, in part, has led to firefighters taking on new tasks as they have more capacity to do so, which are discussed in more detail below.

While the reduction in fires has enabled firefighters to take on new roles, the fire services stress that the current infrastructure needs to be maintained to effectively respond to fires when they occur. In Alberta, while firefighters are responding to fewer fires overall the view is that the fires they are dealing with are bigger and more intense. There is a view that as these fires take up more resources and are more costly to deal with, they do not, in fact, need to reduce the fire service in spite of the reduction in the overall number of fires.

“The evidence shows that there has been a reduction in Fire and Rescue related incidents but we still need the resources because they still occur. But we have to find other ways to utilise those firefighters when they have got that capacity to reduce vulnerability.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

Fewer fires have also meant firefighters are required to commit more time to training to ensure that their firefighter skills are maintained.

“They will undertake significant amounts of training activities, recognising as the number of incidents have gone down, the amount of training required has to go up to maintain that level of competence, or excellence is what we try to achieve in the skill sets of our firefighters. (Interviewee: West Midlands)

7.1.2 Increased medical first response

While the number of fires that firefighters respond to has reduced over time, firefighters in several countries have increasingly taken on the role of medical first response. There is also recognition that because fire services are based within communities, and are physically closer to incidents, they are able to respond more quickly to medical emergencies.

In Alberta and New Zealand, the fire service works alongside the ambulance service to respond to medical emergencies.

“If someone calls 911 with a medical .. with a request for a medical assistance, that call’s evaluated, and if it’s evaluated as something that’s immediately life-threatening, Fire & Rescue is dispatched along with our provincial ambulance response.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

Many of the fire services have found that the volume of medical emergencies that firefighters are responding to has increased rapidly. In Alberta, waiting times for ambulances have contributed to this as the fire service responds when ambulances are not available.

“What’s becoming much more prevalent is the long wait times for ambulances to offload patients in hospitals. Therefore, the Fire Service is picking up a lot of that response primarily on the life threatening critical medical emergencies to provide that stop gap of care until an ambulance can respond.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

All fire services reported that firefighters (full-time/career and retained/volunteer) are trained in basic medical response skills, such as advanced CPR skills and oxygen administration, but skills varied across the different services. Historically, in some departments in Alberta (and in other parts of Canada) firefighters must be trained paramedics before they can join the fire service. This requires all staff to undertake regular training to maintain both firefighter and medical first response skills:

“It takes a lot of time; however we believe that it’s the best service model for the citizens of our community.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

The West Midlands is the only fire service we spoke to that did not respond to medical emergencies. It was explained by interviewees that due to the local Ambulance Trust outperforming on targets, it does not currently require the additional support from the fire service.

7.1.3 Fire prevention

In addition to medical response, the reduction in fires has enabled firefighters to undertake more fire prevention work, both with the community as a whole and with target groups. The role of prevention in the work of firefighters is explored in Chapter 10.

Some services see prevention work as the most effective way to reduce fire deaths and are investing in this work.

“We have about 40 people in domestic fires killed every year...We can build another thousand fire stations in the Netherlands. It’s not going to reduce the death, so we have to do more on behaviour of citizens, do more on prevention, more community safety, and that’s gonna reduce the casualties...if we want to make a difference in saving lives, we have to do more on prevention.”
(Interviewee: Netherlands)

7.1.4 Extreme weather and terrorist threats

In addition to responding to more medical incidents, firefighters in the international case studies are increasingly responding to more severe weather which causes destruction and disruption to communities. All fire services also mentioned that, while still rare, they are more frequently responding to terrorist threats.

“So in the last 10 years there’s definitely been changes in the role of a firefighter, not just with prevention type activities but also responding to terrorist type incidents, flooding, climate change I think has made a significant difference to the amount of flooding and the amount of dry spells we’re getting and the wildfires...”
(Interviewee: West Midlands)

7.2 Have there been any changes in the balance of skills required by firefighters?

In all four fire services firefighters receive general training to become a firefighter. In addition to this, each service has a number of specialist roles. All fire services have specialist roles such as dealing with hazardous substances, but others differ depending on local requirements. Such specialist roles include:

- Road accident response
- Medical response
- Land management (e.g. vegetation, forest and wild fires)
- Search and Rescue
- Technical land rescue: e.g. Confined Space and Technical Rescue, Rope Rescue
- Technical water rescue: e.g. Swiftwater Response; Surface Water Rescue; Underwater Dive Rescue; Maritime Response; and Airport Crash Rescue.

7.2.1 A move to more specialist roles

In New Zealand, fire service reform and new legislation²² have resulted in a move towards more specialist roles, one of which is the development of Maritime Response. This change will mean firefighters should not need to have all skills sets and will separate general and specialist roles out more.

Across the fire services, specialist roles have developed as need has arisen and the role of the firefighter has changed to meet these needs. As a result, within a country, different regions may have different specialist teams, which is the case in the Netherlands. However, as the Netherlands fire service is organised at a national level, there are national level teams and agreements in place for regions to use

²² The Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 which established Fire and Emergency New Zealand on 1 July 2017.

specialist teams from other areas. The challenge of this is that it may take longer for the teams to respond and arrive at the scene.

“We share. All risks that are too big for one individual brigade, we organise on national level, so we have on national level 5 teams in the Netherlands who do heavy accidents. We have 6 drone teams who work with drones. We have teams who do rescue on high altitude. We have two teams of that. We have 6 hazmat teams in the Netherlands. So we organise specialist teams on national level.”
(Interviewee: Netherlands)

7.2.2 Capacity affects the distribution of specialist services

Where specialist services are placed is based on need but also on capacity. In Alberta, the large cities are more likely to have more specialist firefighters due to population density and service capacity, but some rural areas will have specific specialist skills, for example, Land Management Teams. Less densely populated areas will have smaller teams who are unlikely to have capacity to have a wide range of specialist skills.

All four fire services identified the need for firefighters to be well trained in a wide range of generalist skills as they are likely to be part of an initial response to an incident and need to have the skills to deal with it until specialist personnel can arrive.

“So in terms of generic and specialist skills, the fundamental principle of our integrated risk management plan is that we've distributed our firefighters with all of the same skills across the area in those 38 fire stations...they are distributed with the same skills, same equipment, in order to respond to the most serious incidents...So the vast majority of our workforce are skilled to be able to respond to that. We have a smaller number of people, Tech Rescue – Technical Rescue – which have enhanced skill base to respond to specialist type incidents for working at height, working in water – swiftwater – and other type of environments like building collapse.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

7.3 Have there been changes to the balance of full-time and retained staff?

In New Zealand, Canada and the Netherlands, the fire service is made up of a mix of career firefighters who work full-time in the role and retained (or volunteer) firefighters who are employed on a part-time basis to be available on call. Retained (volunteer) firefighters will have other jobs and may be paid on call or in some areas they can sign-up for shifts. The West Midlands is the only fire service of the four that we spoke to in these case studies which is made up of 100% full-time paid firefighters.

How volunteer or retained staff are employed and paid varies across countries and even regions within a country. All volunteers get paid for their time working for the fire service e.g. attending incidents or for being on exercise or education. In the Netherlands retained/volunteer firefighters get paid a yearly fee.

“...they are on a volunteering base, they come in when there is an alarm and they go out, they get a yearly fee for it and there is also money for education, training, and to reach out.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

In all three countries with retained staff, the majority of firefighters are retained/volunteer. The proportion of career and retained/voluntary in a fire station is not consistent within countries or regions. However, in countries such as Canada, there tends to be more career firefighters in urban areas and a higher proportion of retained/voluntary firefighters in rural areas. While the majority of firefighters are currently volunteers in the Netherlands, there is concern voiced by several respondents that in the future it will be challenging to recruit and retain volunteers. One interviewee believes this is in part due to the amount of training that is required to become a firefighter as the service becomes more professionalised.

“The balance is showing that it will not be easy to enrol these people [volunteers], or to get them because of the education and training they have to do to be a good firefighter. And that’s one of the main problems we have to face in the future, that what you see is also by inspections and professionalising, that we are asking more and more of our volunteers...” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

7.4 What challenges and opportunities are there in the widening role of the local firefighter?

Many of the fire services have experienced challenges as a result of the role of the firefighter widening , particularly in relation to the medical first response role being undertaken. Challenges with the widening role of the firefighter which relate to community relations, partnerships and prevention are discussed in the following chapters.

7.4.1 The impact of becoming medical first responders on firefighters

An interviewee from New Zealand articulated the multifaceted challenges for firefighters attending medical emergencies. The first challenge firefighters have experienced, was the public not accepting medical help from firefighters when they are the first to respond. In addition to dealing with the medical emergency, firefighters have had to deal with the reaction to their presence at incidents.

“The one thing that is a challenge for us is actually preparing our staff for that changing role...By putting them in to this new environment, there are a number of things that are happening. Firstly, often in stressful situations the public aren't accepting our firefighters turning up ...That creates a bit of a problem right at the start you know, “I called an ambulance. I don't want a fire engine”, type thing. That creates tension within our own staff.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

Responding to medical emergencies was also described as being challenging for firefighters emotionally, particularly in small communities where firefighters may know the casualty.

“Probably the most profound thing...80% of our staff are a volunteer often – as with many of their incidents – people they're attending are people they know and so that is causing cumulative grief effects, and you'll have exactly the same of that in your volunteer and retained communities.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

In medical emergencies, even if firefighters are first to respond, an ambulance will take a casualty to hospital. In these circumstances, firefighters may not find out what the outcome is for an individual which they can find difficult.

Preparing firefighters for the new roles they are undertaking is a challenge for fire services. Some services are beginning to respond by making changes to the training firefighters are offered to include more project management, communication and leadership skills. For example, in New Zealand the fire service is exploring how to advertise and recruit volunteers to show that there are a wide range of activities that people take part in, not just fighting fires.

7.4.2 Pay disputes related to the widening role of the firefighter

In the West Midlands, the widening of the role of the firefighters led to a dispute regarding a pay increase between the Fire Brigades Union and the Fire Service. While the role of the firefighter is widening, and firefighters have been taking on a range of prevention work and had a contract to respond to elderly residents who had fallen in the home, this work is now on hold while the dispute is being resolved.

“Experience with us as an organisation is that firefighters don't want to do some of this additional work...they would be quite happy to do the EMR (Emergency Medical Response) – so the Red 1 responding, the cardiac arrest. They're quite happy to do that type of work. The wider health work certainly, for us as an organisation, there was a real resistance to enter in to that without more pay...” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

8 The fire service and the local community

Key findings: relationships with local communities

- All fire services in the international case study areas felt their community service role and being based and living in the communities they serve enabled them to have a good relationship with local communities.
- All four international case studies recognised the strategic importance of working in partnership with local communities. Factors identified for building good community relations included having community-focused leadership and embedding community work in the role of the firefighter.
- Challenges experienced by fire services included balancing national and local needs and priorities, and recruiting and retaining firefighters.
- Some fire services found the widening role of firefighters had made it harder to build trust with communities because of the increased enforcement element to their role associated with, for example, checking buildings comply with fire safety legislation.
- In contrast, other fire services found their widened role gave them greater access to, and awareness of, vulnerable groups in the community which was strengthening their relationship with local communities and partners.
- All the fire services collected routine monitoring data on targets and performance. In all the international areas, there was an appetite to develop more meaningful indicators and evaluation to evidence the impact of the wider work firefighters undertake on outcomes that aren't captured by routine monitoring data.

This chapter will explore the relationship between the fire service and the local community. This includes key factors in building good community relationships, changes to the relationship with the local community and challenges and opportunities in developing positive community relations.

8.1 What are the key factors in building good relationships with local communities?

All the fire services that were interviewed reported having a good relationship with the local communities they serve.

8.1.1 'In the community for the community'

Interviewees from all services believed the positive relationship they had with local communities stemmed from the fact that firefighters were often from the communities they worked in which built a sense of trust. This was particularly true in small rural communities. In addition, the view is that the public see firefighters as playing a community service role, being there to help the community which contributes to the positive relationship they have with the community.

“So our brigades are our communities, they represent a large part of the community, they tend to be the hub of the community also. So if it’s a civil defence emergency people will gather to that point, sometimes it’s the only significant building in the town. So it’s certainly a place of comfort...I think there’s good relationships.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

In the Netherlands local communities pay for 85% of the fire service and have boards which oversee local policy and delivery plans which mean they feel they are directly accountable to their local communities.

“We have about 85% of the Fire Service is financed by local communities, and 15% is financed by national level. That's for the special groups and tasks...we make policy plans, and those policy plans we make every 4 years, and the policy plans go to the Boards of the local communities, and they have to approve our policy plans...the local Boards, approve our policy plans, and approve our financial system so we are, by law, bound to each other. And that’s a good relationship. We don’t have a national Fire Service. We have a, by law, a Fire Service responsible...it’s in the communities.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

8.1.2 The importance of leadership

The importance of leadership was also highlighted as a factor in maintaining good community relationships. As one interviewee explained, having a positive relationship with local communities is not guaranteed, and the relationship firefighters have with them can vary depending on the approach of the local brigade leader. Having a leader who is proactive in building partnerships locally is seen as critical in developing and maintaining good community relations and it helps to encourage a community-focused culture within the fire service.

“I think it’s fair to say that relationships are key, and the ability to create and maintain relationships are very reflective of the leader of the day, and so if you’ve got a Chief that is very proactive, community based minded, doesn’t mind getting out and interacting with some of the partners in policing or other agencies, then that particular municipality is going to have very good community relationships both with the community as well as with the partners.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

8.1.3 Embedding community work in the role of the firefighter

Ensuring that community work is part of the role of the local firefighter was also seen as key to building good community relationships. In Alberta, developing and maintaining a positive relationship with local communities is seen as a priority and this message is frequently communicated to firefighters. This message is backed up with action, with firefighters being encouraged to take part in community engagement activities to help build and maintain positive connections with the community; for example, opening the fire station to schools or community tours.

“So, strategically, we do a number of business planning sessions with all of our staff ...we always take probably half an hour out of each one of those business sessions to talk about the importance of relationships with the community, and how our very future depends on that solid good working relationship...”
(Interviewee: Alberta)

Actively engaging with communities in events to improve community connections is an approach that the other fire services also adopt. For example, one interviewee from the West Midlands described engaging with local schools and in New Zealand being part of community events is seen as a key part of the role of the firefighter.

“We have open days. We engage regularly with the younger community through schools, at key stages, so certain years within those schools. So I perceive that engagement to the community to be very positive.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

In addition to engaging directly with members of the public there was evidence from Alberta that engaging with those who represent communities was also seen as important, for example elected officials and senior bureaucrats. In Alberta, one way that they do this is to invite them to take part in a half-day event where they can experience first-hand what it is like to be part of a live fire event.

“We run what we call the Fire Ops 101 opportunity on an annual basis, and really this is about a half day set aside where we invite elected officials, senior bureaucrats, public personalities from the media to come out and experience what it's like to be a firefighter in an actual live fire, and we spend about 4 hours with them, put them through a live fire event, very carefully familiarise them with the way we're staffed and deployed, and why it's essential for us to have the staffing levels that we have, how that translates in to an effective service delivery model, and that has really worked well for us as well.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

8.2 Is improving the connection with local communities a key strategic priority?

Developing a good connection with local communities was mentioned as a key strategic priority by several interviewees, though not all of the four services in the international case studies had this written into a strategic plan. However, interviewees were able to demonstrate that it was a strategic priority in the ways they work with local communities.

All four case studies recognised the strategic importance of working in partnership with local communities, as this was essential in identifying local needs and developing solutions together. Through their fire prevention work, the Netherlands and New Zealand identified that maintaining a good connection with local communities was an important part of this work.

In New Zealand, firefighters see part of their role is to empower local communities to prepare themselves for major incidents. At the time of interview, the New Zealand fire service was in the process of developing a strategic plan with the focus being on a community driven emergency service. In the past all fire services were equipped in the same way, regardless of local needs but a significant change in this approach is planned.

Instead of deciding what communities need, communities themselves will be asked to identify their needs to ensure that it is tailored to each community. This would be done through setting up Local Area Committees, made up of local community representatives to inform the fire service about local risks and needs so they can respond.

“The change that we're trying to make, is changing from being, thinking we know what the community needs, because we often are volunteers from the community, to actually asking the community what they want...what they want from the emergency services, and what resilience, community resilience looks like to them, and how we can support that. (Interviewee: New Zealand)

Having new Local Area Committees in New Zealand was perceived as a good idea in theory as it would give the community a voice in the fire service. However, there was a view that implementation could be difficult because the areas the committees cover are very large, so there would be a range of diverse needs. Expectations of what the fire service can achieve within available resources would also have to be managed.

8.3 What are the challenges and opportunities for developing strong community relations?

Each fire service acknowledged experiencing some challenges in developing good relationships with local populations. However, alongside these challenges, opportunities have also been identified.

8.3.1 National versus local needs and priorities

As experienced by a number of the police services, being organised at a national level has the potential to create a distance between the fire service and the communities they serve. In the Netherlands, this challenge has been recognised and the fire service work hard to continue engaging with local communities and partners.

“Challenge is that if you are organised on a bigger scale than your communities, then you have to maintain the relationship okay. It's very easy to get separated because we are not a part of the community any more. We are organised on a different level. Then the connection between the communities and our Fire Service is very important because they are accountable for the Fire Service, so we have to put a lot of effort in going to the local communities, talk with the mayors, talk with the Boards about what we are doing.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

Another challenge identified by interviewees in New Zealand and Alberta is the potential for tension between local areas and the national body. There can be challenges for the fire service at a national level when perceived local needs are prioritised over national needs. For example, in New Zealand there have been instances of tension when communities fundraise to buy equipment they think they need for their local fire brigade without consulting the wider organisation.

8.3.2 Recruiting and maintaining firefighters

In the Netherlands, a challenge faced in maintaining good relationships with local communities was recruiting volunteers to the fire service, particularly in rural areas. Interviewees thought that recruitment was challenging because of people moving out of villages to look for work.

One interviewee believed that the time investment required for training to be a firefighter was another barrier to recruiting people to the fire service especially for those with busy lives. Training firefighters is costly, particularly when people do not complete the training and go on to become a firefighter.

“The people are very busy...especially when you see people from 25-45 they are starting a family, they have their own career, they have the social things, they have the private things, and then also to have a sort of, education for 27 months to be a firefighter...that's getting more and more of a problem to keep the firefighters with you...” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

Recruiting senior staff was seen as being particularly challenging, particularly in more rural locations. Interviewees recognised that the fire service was competing with a number of other sectors for more senior positions.

In contrast, having an image as a trustworthy and reliable service is seen as having a positive impact on recruitment which is required for continuation of the service.

“Firefighters in general are, you know, one o' the most trusted groups of people...it doesn't matter what it is, you call us, we'll come quickly. We'll deal with it...It's what drives people to join the organisation, and it gives them their standing.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

8.3.3 Balancing the needs of diverse communities

In the Netherlands, the role of the firefighter has changed as a result of structural reform. The fire service was reorganised into 25 regions each consisting of around 20-30 geographical communities. This has created challenges for firefighter relationships with local communities because they have to balance the needs of many communities, not just one, which can cause tension.

“I think the biggest impact has been our regionalisation in 2014...relation management between our regional organisation and our local mayors for instance is...has become a real part of our job...because it's still difficult for the Local Authorities that they are obliged to be responsible for the fire brigade, but have to do that together with all other communities, which means...if a single community wants a change within the Fire Department, it's very difficult...that has had a big impact on our relationship with them, so we have to work between being a regional Fire Department and being there for the local community with the local wishes of how we should be present, or how we would interact with prevention or even our reaction to incidents.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

8.3.4 Building trust through changing roles

In the West Midlands the positive relationship the fire service has with the local community is perceived to be related to the changing and widening role of the firefighter. In comparison with other services, where the view was that the widening role had presented some challenges, interviewees in the West Midlands thought that offering other services, in addition to fighting fires, is enabling the fire service to increase trust with local communities (see Section 7.2 above).

“Our relationship with the local community is really positive...in enabling us to be able to deliver those wider services, we have a trusted brand of the ‘Fire Service’. We are able to get through people’s front doors and over the threshold, and then, when we do we're able to build that relationship...We still get the rhetoric of, “We didn't think that you did this type of work. Isn't it great?”! So in being able to broaden the activity that we *have* done, albeit that they are still a bit restricted at the moment ...I think the evidence is there, and it can only *improve* our relationship with the communities. (Interviewee: West Midlands)

In New Zealand, the structural changes to the fire service have had some perceived benefits. One interviewee thought service reform has provided a more direct link to volunteers at the local level, which wasn't there before.

“With our new organisation and legislation, we have a direct linkage with volunteers now. That didn't happen before, we had...they fed directly into our Board and so there was a lot of lobbying with um...politicians to...and there still is to be fair but now they come direct to local management who can have a greater influence on working through things with the brigade, without getting too political too quickly.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

This research found that having a trusted relationship with local communities was perceived by the fire services as helping the fire service gain access to communities in ways that other public services might struggle to achieve. This then enables firefighters to carry out vital prevention work in and with local communities they serve.

“I think, in its very broadest sense, we are a trusted brand...We're a humanitarian service in today, so we find it easy to, or 'easier' I would say, than other public services to engage – particularly from the police perhaps – to engage with local communities, and we do use that brand to promote our prevention work and engage effectively where we can, so I think we're quite accepted by our local communities...” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

8.3.5 Enforcement and public trust

As discussed in Chapter 7, the role of the firefighter has widened over recent years to include other activities such as medical first response and working more closely with other public services, such as, the police and local authorities to prevent fires (e.g. checking buildings comply with fire safety laws).

With firefighters taking on this more diverse role, including enforcement tasks, there is concern that the fire service is being perceived by some communities as an enforcement agency which leads to mistrust, particularly in the most vulnerable areas.

“We did do a study in one area with our vulnerable communities, and in the most vulnerable areas of our communities, this research showed that we are still seen as an enforcement agency. And as soon as we're seen like that, then the level of trust disappears and goes...We have got evidence to show that actually in the most vulnerable areas as soon as we are linked to agencies such as the police, and other agencies, then that trust starts to disappear.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

8.3.6 Building relationships with communities

While all fire services stated they generally had good relationships with local communities, many also acknowledged that there were some groups within the community where relationships could be improved.

The general challenge of trying to maintain and build trust is experienced by all the case study fire services and they are trying to address it in a number of ways. One way in which two of the fire services, Alberta and the West Midlands, are trying to improve relationships with groups within their local communities is by trying to develop a fire service which is more reflective of the communities they serve in terms of staffing.

“Primarily our service is probably for the most part... I would say at least 95% are white Anglo-Saxon male and so...it's tough for some of these communities to relate to us when they can't relate to their own culture being within there. So that's a challenge...some of that messaging and things we're doing around recruitment um...will...could take a while to do.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

In the West Midlands, there is a view that the widening role of firefighters has already helped attract a more diverse group of people to the fire service. This in turn is perceived to be helpful with building positive relationships with local communities, as if communities can see themselves reflected in the service, they are more likely to trust it. This is something that the other fire services have also identified and are trying to address.

“We're seeing an increase in the diversity of our workforce...30 to 35% of them are women, and about 30% of them are from BME communities...part of that is absolutely this broadening of a role of a firefighter around a prevention, protection and response...the new entrants are, you know, see the real value in delivering that type of work.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

In addition, fire services have identified groups within their communities that they need to improve and strengthen relationships with. In New Zealand specific ethnic minority groups were identified as communities where relationships were weaker. They set up forums with these minority groups to better understand the needs of those communities and build stronger relationships.

“We have set up a Pacific Island Forum in Auckland, and a Māori forum, and these are local leaders of those two ethnic communities, and they again are both in Auckland, help us to access people that we wouldn't necessarily get access to in any other way, and we've found that really effective. So they become kind of twofold: first, they become our advocates out in the community, but, secondly, they take us in to communities that we just, we wouldn't probably, through our normal network, get access to.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

In Alberta, to improve relationships with communities, the fire service is working with minority communities to develop training for firefighters to improve how they interact with these communities. This has included engaging with indigenous communities, LGBTQ communities and religious communities.

“One of our big goals in our business plan for this cycle was about diversity and inclusion and engagement with some of our cultural groups. So we have been reaching out to different cultural groups. We’ve been incorporating bringing in guest speakers to our Leadership Teams, putting out training...different training, so for example, the Fire Inspectors had a course on how to properly enter, dress and act inside a mosque...Some of our fire crews recently received some training on autism, and some dementia training, to better be able to understand and relate to some of the communities, especially with some of those growing trends of dementia.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

8.3.7 The responsible use of resources

One interviewee from Alberta stressed that, in a time of austerity, it was particularly important to maintain a good and trusted relationship with local communities, so the fire service is still viewed as a good investment of resources at a time when other services are struggling. Another interviewee from Alberta saw this as a product of increasingly becoming a professionalised fire service. Once firefighters are being paid for their role, a level of expectation comes into play.

In the West Midlands the fire service are utilising resources, such as fire stations, in new ways which help to serve the local communities they are located in. In addition to opening up the rooms in fire stations to be used by community groups, fire stations are providing a safe place for vulnerable members of the local community to come to.

“So we have definitely tried to use our fire stations differently now, it’s just a garage for our resources, but for the community it’s something different. So...we are using fire stations as safe houses, safe rooms, so if a vulnerable person is finding they’ve got problems then they can come to any community fire station and they are...their construction, and the way we look at them now, they offer that safe house for them. So we’re trying to change the way we utilise our stations, and they’ve all got community rooms on them and they’re actively used by our communities as well.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

8.4 Measures to assess performance

8.4.1 Type of performance measures

Across the case study locations, the fire services commonly collected routine monitoring data on targets and performance such as the number of fires, injuries

and casualties, the fire service response time, whether the fire had been contained to the room of origin, and the monetary value of damage caused by fire.

In the Netherlands, each of the 25 safety regions report their performance in a different way, making it difficult to draw a cohesive overview of the performance of the fire service at a national level.

“There have been some experiences in the Netherlands just trying to get to common key factors on which to report our performance, but they've never been really successful, so what we see is 25 different ways of telling to the local authorities on how we do our job.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

Some interviewees mentioned that they monitor public opinion using surveys. However, they acknowledge that there are limitations to this, as most people do not have contact with the fire service in any given year.

“...the public overall if you ask them, when we have done through surveys, will say that the Fire and Rescue Service is well thought of. However, we engage with such a small number of our community it is hard to evidence what they really think about us...we probably have 60,000-70,000 interventions in to our community. We have a population of 2.7...2.8 million people in our area. So the reality is most people in our area will not engage with the Fire Service on a yearly basis.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

8.4.2 The challenge of measuring impact

One of the challenges in evaluating prevention and community work which was most commonly identified by the case study areas was the intangible nature of the outcomes and difficulties in capturing them in a meaningful way. In New Zealand, community engagement work was identified as an important facet of prevention work, but it was difficult to measure.

“...the community engagement work that they do is very hard to measure. But actually it's probably the most valuable part of their job. The turning up and putting the fire out is important but the relationships that they have with those communities, it's really hard to kind of measure that.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

In all the international areas, there was a feeling that numerical performance measures and statistics which are gathered as routine performance measures did not give a full picture of the impact of the work done by the fire service.

“It's always been problematic to me that our measurement of the effectiveness of the Fire Service is typically measured backwards, and I'm not sure that there's a good way to measure it forward that would have any impact on anyone... So we've... we typically record the numbers of fires, the types of fires, the dollars lost, the injuries, the fatalities etc. as a measure of what didn't go well... but we don't really have some sort of normative baseline to say either what is good or what is normal or what is stasis. All we record is the bad, so can we, with any degree of confidence, say that doing fire prevention inspections will reduce our fire loss statistics in any way, shape or form?” (Interviewee: Alberta)

Two specific examples of activities, which were felt to be difficult to measure their impact, were outreach work, in the West Midlands, and prevention activities, mentioned by an interviewee in Alberta. One suggested solution was to monitor changes in knowledge or behaviour in young people following a prevention activity.

“Yeah you know it's been a little lax in the past, you know going to an event and then say there was 2,000 people at the event, so we engaged 2,000 people. Well not really you didn't. How many did you actually make contact with and then how do we know that there's a behaviour change? So for example, with our community safety trailer that I spoke of what we do is the staff do a pre-test with the children, and then they do a post-test with the children. And then we compare the results and we see a knowledge enhancement, or a behaviour change and we're recording that as the result of that as opposed to just the number of people that were engaged.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

A final challenge in evaluating and evidencing impact which was unique to New Zealand was the reliance on volunteer firefighters to complete the paperwork necessary for their data to be processed.

“I think when you've got 14,000 personnel that use it um... the amount of times that they use it varies, you can't train 14,000 people individually. The... the buy in of some people that are volunteers to utilise the system is low and they'd prefer not to because they're volunteers doing a whole heap of paperwork.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

8.4.3 Linking performance and budgets

Another common challenge identified by interviewees in the West Midlands and New Zealand was the way in which funding and budgets were reliant on the figures gathered by traditional numerical performance measures. Interviewees in the West Midlands highlighted that the national measures required by the UK Government and the method for determining funding for fire services is focused on outputs rather than outcomes and does not take into account the impact of prevention work.

“So we have found, as a whole, our prevention work hard to evaluate, and I would say not the short term “How did you find it?” and “What impact has it made now?”, but the impacts later on down the line so you can draw a stronger correlation to the reduction in incidents for example...And that has been to our disadvantage really, particularly through the spending review period...Whilst we have had some success, it is hard to create the story really to evidence that story.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

8.4.4 Developing meaningful performance indicators

There was an appetite across the case studies to develop more meaningful indicators and evaluation methodologies which can be used to evidence the impact and outcomes of the work of fire officers, alongside an understanding that these impacts were often intangible and difficult to capture.

Two of the case study areas had developed their own research approaches as a solution to some of the challenges associated with evidencing the impact of their activities. The New Zealand fire and emergency service operates a dedicated research programme which explores aspects of the fire and emergency service, including the impact of work in communities and research on volunteer retention over the life course of the volunteer, using routine and secondary data, combined with qualitative data.

The Alberta fire service has worked in partnership with the University of Alberta to develop a way of assessing the value-added by the work of the fire service.

“We've just completed a study on the positive economic impacts of firefighting where, rather than look at a dollar loss, we actually worked with our University of Alberta School of Business and we've developed a model to measure ... put a monetary measurement on property and business that was saved, and that's been very exciting and very positive actually. There's a real story to be told about the cost benefit of having a well-structured, well-run, well-resourced Fire Service. There's a tremendous value, return on investment in doing so, and we've been able to show that.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

9 Partnership working and the fire service

Key findings: Partnership working

- Partnership working was viewed as becoming more common in recent years, and particularly since the reforms of the last 5-10 years, across all the international case study areas.
- Each area worked with a wide range of partners to deliver services to the community including the police, health service, ambulance service, local authorities, social services and a wide range of third sector organisations.
- One of the main reasons why fire services work in partnership with other agencies is in response to large-scale incidents, such as wildfires, floods and other natural disasters, or incidents of terrorism.
- Fire services engaged with communities to identify fire and safety risks and develop solutions. The level of current engagement with the community to identify risks varied between the international case studies.
- Common challenges identified included funding cuts, sharing data with partners, and the impact of the widening role of the firefighter on working in partnership with other organisations.

This chapter focuses on partnership working in the four case study areas, with a particular focus on the changes that have occurred for the fire services since reform, and includes:

- how partnerships work in practice
- the role of the community in partnership working
- changes in partnership working and the impact of changes in other emergency services on the fire service
- the challenges and opportunities faced by fire services in developing effective partnership working.

9.1 How do partnerships work in practice?

There were some similarities in the ways that the four services from the case study areas worked with their partners, particularly in terms of disaster management and home safety visits. However, the extent to which the fire services in each of the areas are required by law to collaborate differs.

9.1.1 Range of partnerships with the fire service

All four case study areas worked with a wide range of partners to deliver services to the community. Statutory agencies that were often in partnership with the fire service were the police, the health service, ambulance service, local authorities and social services. In addition, there was widespread partnership working with third sector organisations, including groups for older adults, smoking cessation groups and alcohol awareness organisations.

In Alberta, as many Canadian provinces operate their own fire services, partnership working also takes place between fire services in different regions, particularly around training or responding to large scale incidents where crews and equipment are shared across provinces. In some areas there were also examples where services are co-located. For example, in New Zealand, in some districts a range of emergency services are co-located in a Justice and Emergency Sector Centre including the police, fire service, St John's Ambulance and civil defence.

There is a view in the Netherlands that, as a result of reform, they are now able to better cooperate within the fire service. As the local stations now have the same training and policy, this has led to increased cooperation between areas.

“Well what we have learnt is that I think it's a more effective organisation, it's a better cooperating organisation, you see we have 26 local stations which have our own...everybody had their own policy, but what we now have is...they have the same education, they train together, they come to each other's...come to each other's...work with each other's stations.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

Case study 7

Mental health partnerships

In Alberta, the fire service is working in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Commission and the Department of Defence to develop the “Road to Mental Readiness Programme”. This programme is aimed at increasing awareness of the mental health and wellbeing impact of serving as a firefighter and reducing the stigma associated with help seeking and accessing mental health services, alongside increasing resilience across the fire service and better equipping fire officers to cope with the demands of their role.

9.1.2 The role of partnership working in incident management

One of the main reasons why fire services work in partnership with other agencies is in response to large-scale incidents, such as wildfires, floods and other natural disasters, or incidents of terrorism. The fire services commonly work with police, ambulance services and the local authorities, with additional partners such as local

forestry workers and farms in New Zealand or third sector organisations in the West Midlands.

With the exception of the Netherlands, interviewees from all the case studies spoke about a strategic joint planning group for large-scale incidents which involved other key partners such as the police and ambulance services.

Interviewees from both New Zealand and the West Midlands spoke about how their disaster management plans operated at both the strategic and local level. In New Zealand, there is one plan for use within the fire service which identifies risk factors for large-scale incidents such as weather patterns and natural hazards, while the other, local plan, engages the community in identifying local plans to be implemented in the case of an incident occurring.

“The local plan is supposed to be a plan for that community on how they will respond to major incidents, so whether that's a wildfire or whether that's a major other kind of incident, so that we know what the exit route the community want...where they have vulnerable people that we may need to go in to rescue.”
(Interviewee: New Zealand)

In Alberta, large-scale incidents such as wildfires and floods were cited as a driver for greater partnership to improve the coordinated approach to future incidents.

“In Alberta here we've had a lot of wildfires, large wildfires in the last few years...and that's really prompted more work with the province around municipal affairs and emergency management to look at...training skills, to be able to deploy resources from multiple municipal departments to assist with some of that work.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

9.1.3 Home safety visits

Another way of working in partnership which was common across several of the case study areas was identifying and responding to safety risks in the home. In the Netherlands, the partnership with home care and social work organisations involved home care staff informing both the fire service and social service of any potential dangers.

In Alberta, the fire services take part in a project called 'Seniors Connect' which brings together services which regularly enter older adults' houses in the course of their duties and educates them around indicators that an older adult may be at risk. If the firefighters identify that someone is at risk then they are able to share this with the health service, so that somebody can be sent out to do a welfare check on the individual.

The West Midlands fire service operates a more formal partnership with the NHS to transport people home from hospital and carry out “Safe and Well” checks within their homes. This partnership was also spoken about in terms of providing funding for the fire service, as the NHS fund the fire service to provide this service.

“We have worked with the NHS and hospitals to take vulnerable people back home from hospital, back to their home and then when they get back to their home we do a Safe and Well Check within their home. That services multiple purposes, it enables us to identify a vulnerable person and we only do it for those who are in our ‘at risk’ groups, then we can take them home from hospital which clears the hospital beds quicker and then we go back to their home and make sure that when they are at home they are safe and well, and less likely to experience a house fire.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

9.2 What role do the community have in partnership working?

All four fire services acknowledged that communities themselves had a good understanding of the fire and safety risks in their community and therefore it was of strategic importance to engage with communities to identify these risks and develop solutions. The level of current engagement with the community to identify risks varied between the international case studies.

“The community know what their risks are probably and how to manage and deal with them more effectively than we do. So we need to engage more and more effectively with them...so yes it has to be a key objective...” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

In the West Midlands and the Netherlands, the fire services are involved in running public consultations. In the West Midlands they have a Community Membership Scheme where anyone in the community can sign up to be involved in public consultation about developments in the fire service. They also conduct a public consultation on their proposed Integrated Risk Management Plan.

In the Netherlands, local fire brigades are given responsibility for implementing local plans to ensure they are appropriate for each community. This has had a positive impact on local relationships.

In two case study areas, Alberta and New Zealand, having a high proportion of volunteer firefighters was seen as helping them connect the fire service to the community. This partnership with the community was highly valued by an interviewee from the Alberta fire service.

However, another interviewee in Alberta raised concerns that the commitment to developing and maintaining community partnerships may not be consistent across the region. The view was that where there is a volunteer fire department in a small town, it must prioritise being able to provide response to any emergency calls rather than building or maintaining community partnerships, whereas in larger municipalities it is a key priority.

9.3 What changes have occurred in partnership working?

Overall, the feeling amongst interviewees was that partnership working had become more common in recent years across all the case study areas. All the areas were either developing, or had developed, a more formalised approach to working with partners. Challenges to partnership working were also identified. For example, in the Netherlands reform of both the fire service and police service was seen to have impacted on the ability of the fire service to form and maintain partnerships.

9.3.1 Partnership working in law

For both the West Midlands Fire Service and the Netherlands Fire Service, a focus on partnership working is set out in law. In the West Midlands, the Policing and Crime Act sets out the requirement for the fire service to work together with other blue light services. In the Netherlands, the fire service is similarly required to work with the police service, ambulance service and the community.

“...in England we have the Duty to Collaborate which is within the Policing and Crime Act, which states that we have to collaborate, legally we have to with the Police and the Ambulance Service to try and improve public safety, proficiency, effectiveness and economy.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

9.3.2 Partnership working supporting strategic priorities

In the Netherlands, Alberta and New Zealand, the fire service has either moved towards a more formalised approach to partnerships or is currently developing a more strategic approach to partnership working. In the West Midlands, they already see partnership working as embedded in the way they operate but feel that they are moving to a more targeted approach.

In the Netherlands, there was a feeling that partnership working had become more common in recent years and that partnerships had become more strategic and were involved in longer term planning.

“The biggest change is that we've tried to formalise a little bit more than we did in the past. I think it's the...still the same partners, but what we're trying to do is to make more of a programme for a few years, rather than just a single activity based on a local contact. So just trying to get things more in a continuous system.” (Interviewee: Netherlands)

In Alberta, the fire service is also moving towards a more formal structure for partnership working with the introduction of an Inter-municipal Collaboration Framework regarding resource sharing across municipalities for the provision of infrastructure, leisure services and emergency services. This agreement must be in place between municipalities which share a common border by April 2020 and will detail the way in which emergency responses to incidents such as road traffic accidents and wildfires will be coordinated across municipalities.

In the West Midlands, there was a view that partnership working was embedded throughout the fire service, from the strategic to the local level. Another view from the West Midlands was that partnership working had become more targeted and evidence-informed and that the partnerships were supporting the fire service's priorities and objectives and bringing them into line with a health and prevention agenda.

In New Zealand, interviewees expressed the view that, while strong partnerships exist at the local level, these are variable across local regions and are not reflected at the strategic level. However, with the implementation of the Fire and Emergency Act, which brought together services across New Zealand, the fire service plans to develop a more structured approach to partnership working across agencies with consistency across regions, and a focus on leadership.

Interviewees spoke of this new approach to partnership working as setting out a clear framework for partnerships and how they can be supported at every level, from the strategic to the local.

“We will have far more structured national partnerships with other Government agencies and other national entities, and that will be clearly defined down through the regions and the areas as to what those relationships look like, what the intent of those relationships are, and how our local people need to foster them at the local level. At the moment, there is a variability in partnership arrangements.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

One interviewee further explained that local firefighters would retain the autonomy to develop their own local partnerships, but that these would exist within a more strategic overall framework of partnership working.

9.4 Have changes in other emergency services impacted on the fire service?

In the Netherlands, changes in the structure of the police service were highlighted as having had an impact on the ability of both services to work in partnership together. The reform of the police service resulted in the formation of one national police force in 2014 from 25 police regions. At the same time, the fire service also undertook a reform to create 25 regional fire services. Interviewees from the Netherlands felt that the nationalisation of the police force had increased the distance between local fire services and the national police force, making it more

difficult to build local relationships, and that a reduced police budget had reduced the time and capacity that the police have to spend on partnership activities.

“That had a big impact – a real big impact – on several levels. We don’t have the same geographical area of which we are talking, so it’s difficult to find your right contact, but also because the national Police had a large budget cut, so there was a lot less Police available for exercises together with the Fire Service, or community services like communication.” (Interviewee – Netherlands)

9.5 What are the challenges and opportunities of partnership working?

When speaking about the challenges associated with partnership working, the only challenges identified which were common across at least two of the areas were:

- funding cuts, and
- The impact of the widening role of the firefighter on working in partnership with other organisations.

Other challenges associated with partnership working tended to be unique to the case study areas. These challenges and, where relevant, the opportunities they offer for greater collaboration, are explored in this section.

9.5.1 Financial challenges and opportunities

For the West Midlands and Alberta, funding cuts both directly to the fire service, and to the public sector more widely, were seen to have constituted both a challenge to the services and an opportunity for greater partnership working. In Alberta, one interviewee felt that restricted budgets across public services had been a driver for greater partnership working and that services were being encouraged to work together by the city council in the interest of reducing costs.

“Yeah its becoming more prevalent because of obviously the economic times and a lot of push from city council to work together more as one city, as opposed to separate departments doing things independently...They’re looking for...dramatically looking for efficiencies, across service lines, and looking who you can partner with to get work done as opposed to hiring your own people...” (Interviewee: Alberta)

In contrast, some joint services between the police and fire services in the West Midlands were cut due to budget constraints.

“So I think austerity did have a big impact with regards to things like working with Local Authorities for arson for instance. Just trying to think of the big ones really. So, you know, funding was withdrawn. We used to have an Arson Response Team which was jointly funded between the Police and ourselves. You know, austerity, you know, that kind of got pulled.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

However, another interview in the West Midlands felt that working in partnership with health services could bring cost saving by increasing efficiency and represented a new income stream for the fire service by carrying out ‘Safe and Well’ checks which are funded by the NHS (see Section 9.1.3 above for details).

And in the Netherlands, there was a view that the move to a more formalised approach to partnership working was an outcome of the reform to the fire service. The reduction from 450 fire departments to 25 regional fire services had released more resources for partnership working.

9.5.2 Widening role of the firefighter

As already discussed in previous chapters, in all the case study areas, there have been changes to the role of firefighters that have taken them into new areas of work, such as prevention.

In both New Zealand and the West Midlands, interviewees described the challenges associated with working in partnership with other agencies and organisations since their fire officers have been required to carry out duties beyond their traditional firefighting role. In New Zealand, the reform of individual fire services into a national fire and emergency service was met with suspicion from some agencies who felt that the fire service was taking over some of the services that they provided, and this created a barrier to working in partnership with these agencies. Another view from interviewees in New Zealand was that strategies had been put in place to avoid other organisations feeling that the fire service is encroaching on their role.

“... with all of these additional activities that the Fire Service now finds itself engaged in, there's always a very close tension of, you know, scope creep and taking over other people's roles and things, so doing it at their behest is very much a strategy for us to ensure we don't do that.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

Concerns were also expressed about the impact on their response role of having to carry out additional duties. In the West Midlands, a partnership with the health service for fire officers to respond to falls in the home had not been met with universal approval from fire officers due to concerns that responding to these incidents may come at the expense of carrying out their normal duties. It was suggested, however, that there has been no evidence that it has impacted on their ability to respond in practice.

9.5.3 Data sharing

This research found different experiences of data sharing and partnership working in the case study areas. In New Zealand an example was given in the case of joint working between the police, youth services and the fire service to address arson in the community where data could not be shared across services. The interviewee felt that this was a significant challenge and that data sharing was not currently supported by legislation.

“...we’re not good in New Zealand with data sharing and I think it might take a legislative change to improve that. Our systems don’t speak to each other and we...in terms of confidentiality we have issues in sharing that data.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

An example of where data sharing across partners can be facilitated was given by an interviewee in the West Midlands who described the data sharing partnerships which function across local authorities and the police service.

“So data sharing partnerships with local authorities and with police exist. We have West Midlands Combined Authority, and we are working collaboratively with them on public service reform, and also addressing multiple complex needs across the region.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

9.5.4 Variability in partnership working across the service

Another challenge which was identified was the difference in attitudes to collaboration across the service. In New Zealand, while it is hoped that a new formalised approach to partnership working will increase consistency across regions, one interviewee felt that partnerships worked best in those areas where they were driven forward by individual staff members.

However, the same interviewee felt that the changing structural approach to partnership working across the fire service was having a positive impact on attitudes to and capacity for partnership working across the service.

“So it's thinking about the effects that the whole thing is having on people, so that's quite a...you know, that's a cultural education shift that we've got to go on, but certainly from our middle managers, our area managers and such like, you know, there's much more engagement and much more thinking needs to occur, so there's some work being done at the moment around how we, you know, how we strengthen that relationship building capability of that within our organisation.” (Interviewee – New Zealand)

10 Prevention work and the fire services

Key findings: Prevention

- Prevention is viewed as an important part of the firefighter role in each of the fire services in the four international case studies. Fire prevention activities focus on building inspections, fire safety checks in homes, school visits and open days at the fire stations.
- Prevention in some areas has moved beyond the role of fire prevention and into the area of safety and wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly or those with reduced mobility.
- Working in partnership for prevention activities was a feature in all of the four fire services participating in this research. This included working with communities as well as other public and voluntary sector agencies.
- The ability of firefighters to include more prevention work in their role has in part been made possible by the opportunity that has been presented to them by the reduction in the number of domestic fires that they attend.
- One of the challenges associated with preventative duties is that not all existing firefighters wish to take on these new roles or feel that they have the skills, or experience, to do so. For newer recruits, however, this is now a more explicit requirement of the role.

The focus of this chapter is the approach taken to prevention in the four international case study areas; West Midlands, Netherlands, Alberta, and New Zealand.

This includes a discussion on:

- the range of prevention activities undertaken by the fire services
- changes in how the fire services worked in relation to prevention
- how the fire services worked in partnership
- the challenges and opportunities associated with working to a prevention agenda.

10.1 What are the different types of prevention activities?

Prevention is viewed as an important part of the firefighter role in each of the case study areas. Many of the prevention activities described in each case study area focus on inspections of buildings both commercial and domestic to prevent fires, with the Netherlands and New Zealand focusing their prevention solely on fire safety, whereas Alberta and West Midlands have expanded their role to non-fire related prevention activities.

10.1.1 Fire prevention activities

Fire prevention activities focus on building inspections, fire safety checks in homes, school visits and open days at the fire stations.

In New Zealand the home visits are specifically targeted at vulnerable community members who are deemed to be most at risk. In both New Zealand and Alberta, they have a specialised team focusing on prevention. In New Zealand, the Risk Reduction Team focus on fire inspection activities including examining data to establish most at-risk groups requiring home fire safety visits. It is the full-time firefighters who then conduct the home fire safety visits. Their schools programme is delivered by the schools with resources provided by the fire service, but they can request a firefighter visit at the end of the course.

“And then at the end of the program they have the opportunity to request a firefighter visit and they will kind of bring the truck in and the firefighter will come and talk to the children and they just reinforce the messaging. We’ve tried very hard to get the schools to take responsibility for it and in fact the firefighter visit is just the icing on the cake...the kids love the firefighter visits.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

In Canada, prevention is a specialised role with Fire Prevention Officers based in the Fire Prevention and Public Education department carrying out prevention activities. These officers are involved in building inspections as well as public education with ‘at-risk’ groups and running school programmes.

Case study 8

Utilisation of virtual reality to aid prevention

As part of their prevention strategy, New Zealand fire service has developed technological interventions to improve fire safety in the home.

A tool called 'Escape My House' is available online and can be downloaded by the public to provide fire safety advice. You can also take part in a virtual reality programme which simulates a house fire which people need to escape. It aims to develop understanding of how quickly a house can fill with smoke, how disorientating this can be and the need to develop and practice an escape plan and problem solve how to deal with obstructions. This tool was developed with young people in mind to help engage them as part of a broader strategy of targeted interventions and utilising different modes of engagement.

10.1.2 Moving beyond fire prevention

Prevention in some areas has moved beyond the role of fire prevention and into the area of safety and wellbeing. In Alberta, they have introduced speaking to the community about non-fire related prevention, such as drink driving.

The primary focus of prevention activities in the West Midlands are home visits which are now called Safe and Well Checks, having evolved from 'home fire risk assessments' over time (see Section 9.1.3). This evolution marks a change in the prevention role from fire safety to a wider safety agenda, where the fire service work with partners to examine vulnerability and ask questions on behalf of other agencies about, for example, their health, as long as they feel that these health factors are linked to an increased vulnerability from fire. West Midlands fire service have introduced 'Vulnerable Person's Officers' to carry out these checks and they have data sharing agreements with partners, making it clear to the home owner who the data will be shared with.

"So *why* that is significant is we've moved well beyond asking the fundamental questions of "Do you have working smoke detectors? Do you smoke? Do you have a night time fire escape routine?..." We still ask those questions, but ... they're supplemented with behavioural type questions as well...so if health-related factors that might make them more vulnerable...So we'll also ask questions now on *behalf* of other agencies as long as we can, through our risk assessment, link them back to vulnerability from fire and other emergencies in their home." (Interviewee: West Midlands)

There has also been an identified shift towards targeting vulnerable groups in the community in the West Midlands. Through the use of shared data and better intelligence, the service is viewed by one interviewee as feeling more confident in identifying vulnerability and targeting those individuals for prevention-based

services. Different factors which are taken into account included smoking, age, mobility, employment status and social demographic status.

Part of the reason for fire officers taking on this role is that it is identified that sometimes only firefighters can access vulnerable people in their homes and as such they are in a good position to signpost them to other agencies.

“We often find that we're easier – an easier agency to get through the door – and we use that to go and talk to these individuals, understand their problems, and try and help them work those out, or refer them, where appropriate and needed, on to other agencies.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

Case study 9

Targeting prevention work

In Alberta, the fire service works in partnership to deliver “Safety City”. This is an initiative designed to engage children in safety messages. Safety City is a miniature city with buildings that look like garages, supermarkets etc. and the children are provided with inputs on bicycle safety, car safety, how to cross the road safely, home fire safety etc.

In the Netherlands the fire service organise ‘safety expeditions’ in hospitals and care homes for the elderly . They ensure that the building complies with fire regulations and work with the personnel such as nurses to examine the fire risks and what improvements can be made. This represents a change in practice, as previously they would work only with management in the hospitals, whereas now they are ensuring all staff are aware of fire safety.

10.2 How has the role of the firefighter widened?

10.2.1 Reduction in fires

The ability of firefighters to include more prevention work in their role has in part been made possible by the opportunity that has been presented to them by the reduction in the number of fires that they have to attend (see Chapter 7 for further details on the changing role of the firefighter). This was particularly mentioned by an interviewee from New Zealand, but also reflects the experience of firefighters in

Scotland,²³ where the number of fires has reduced by over 40 percentage points in the past ten years (between 2007-08 and 2017-18).²⁴

10.2.2 Moving from response to prevention

In New Zealand and the West Midlands, the shift from being response-focused to having both a response and prevention role has been set out in legislation. New Zealand has introduced a new Act, in which prevention and risk reduction is a key part. The Act outlines that the service is not just for response but needs to take a preventative role.²⁵

“In our Act and it talks about how we are not just a response organisation, we are you know...there to think about how do we actually stop these events from happening in the first place.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

West Midlands feel they have developed a more ‘sophisticated’ understanding of the impact of prevention in the last 15 years. It is outlined that they have a statutory duty to enforce the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005²⁶ which includes applying the principles of prevention. One of the interviewees explained that over time they have developed prevention practices, which started as simply fitting smoke alarms in homes and then supplementing that activity with providing advice. They found that the advice led to behavioural change and the introduction of safer practices being put in place, which in turn reduced the number of fire incidents and the number of injuries.

“The smoke alarm fitting didn’t reduce any incidents. It just provided an earlier warning which meant incidents potentially could be less significant – so, less injury, less damage. The advice part started to focus on helping people change their habits to make them less likely to have incidents.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

In the Netherlands, prevention has become more of a priority since the early 2000s after several big incidents where there were several victims, leading to a shift from response to prevention. This led to each fire department having its own prevention section.

²³ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 2 Report published August 2017, Scottish Government <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-2-report/>

²⁴ Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Fire and Incident Statistics (Scotland) 2017-18, 31 October 2018 https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/1332742/incident_statistics_2017_18.pdf

²⁵ For more information see Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2017/0017/43.0/DLM6712701.html>

²⁶ The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made>

In Alberta, interviewees described having had a prevention agenda for decades, so rather than describing a move from response to prevention, they are now expanding the role to include taking part in more community events to share fire safety messages.

10.3 What role does partnership working have in developing effective prevention strategies?

Working in partnership for prevention activities was a feature in all the case study areas, even where the focus of the prevention work was fire safety. Partnership working is seen by some interviewees as an essential part of successful prevention initiatives.

10.3.1 Partnership working essential for prevention activities

In the Netherlands they explained that they work with many partners including public servants, healthcare organisations, insurance companies, building companies, police, rail organisations and schools to deliver the fire safety messages. This range of partners is also reflected in the other international case studies.

As described previously, in the West Midlands the fire service is now conducting 'Safe and Well' checks in homes (see Section 9.1.3). Key to this approach is partnership working where the Service has data sharing agreements with partners. They are working to a 'making every contact count' agenda, in which they have a target of 50% of their 'Safe and Well' checks being identified through partnership referrals.

"We started doing, you know, safety checks, and knocking on people's doors, you know, 10 years ago, whereas, *now*, we know that the most vulnerable would have been seen by another partner, and so therefore we seek to have partnership referrals rather than finding them ourselves." (Interviewee: West Midlands)

There appears to be an understanding in the West Midlands and New Zealand that partners are essential for prevention and targeting identified vulnerable community members. For example, in New Zealand, firefighters set up a stall at Age Concern events which target 70 years plus. This is a means of engaging with an older age group deemed to be more vulnerable, in order to arrange home fire safety visits. In New Zealand it is also explained that they tend to work in partnership for many parts of their role, however, in prevention they do not take the lead, but instead work in collaboration with partners.

10.3.2 Working with the local community essential for prevention activities

In the Netherlands and New Zealand, the importance of working with the local community to effectively deliver prevention work was discussed. In the Netherlands groups within the community have been identified to undertake tailored education and prevention work. In addition, in the Netherlands and New Zealand a programme of activity to build community assets to enable communities to do more fire prevention in the home themselves has been implemented. There is a view that without a good relationship with communities, this fire prevention work could not happen.

“I think [in] the past we were seen as the hero, and we’d respond to everything and anything. And the space we started to move into strategically is around community resilience and communities being able to support themselves...and understand that we won’t necessarily be...in major events we won’t be able to get to them so how do they prepare themselves? So we’re moving to more that...yeah empowering our communities, versus being there for everything all the time.” (Interviewee: New Zealand)

10.4 What challenges and opportunities are there in working to a prevention agenda?

10.4.1 Evaluating the effectiveness of prevention activities

One of the identified challenges was how to evaluate prevention activities in order to show that they are effective. Evidence from Scotland on prevention activities, from the third year of the evaluation, showed that for both the police and fire services, the importance of being able to evaluate prevention programmes was recognised but there was a lack of knowledge and skills on how evaluation works and no systematic, independent evaluation process of prevention activities in place.²⁷ Similar challenges are faced in all the international case study areas.

In the West Midlands, as in the other case study areas, prevention is viewed as being an important part of the future firefighter role including targeting vulnerable community members. However, the West Midlands’ interviewees have also identified a difficulty in evaluating prevention activities and then explaining their value to the UK Government.

²⁷ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 3 Partnership, Innovation and Prevention Year Three Case Study published February 2018, Scottish Government
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-thematic-case-study-partnership/pages/3/>

Key Informants Report published May 2018, Scottish Government
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-national-key-informants-report/>

“Prevention is absolutely the way forward effectively....we recognise the importance of ensuring that we can get out to those communities at the early stages – so targeting those groups or individuals to ensure that we can work with them to prevent what comes later on down the line...What we find hard is the evaluation of our activities to support that, and then support that story at Government level. That is difficult for us.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

The evaluation of prevention activities can also focus on measurement of the number of activities and the number of people who have been part of a prevention programme, rather than focusing on the impact of the intervention. For example, in New Zealand, it was explained that the prevention activities in schools are measured by how many children have taken part rather than the impact and effectiveness of the programme. The schools programme has been developed by the fire service but is run by the teachers and they are now planning to adopt a new way of evaluating the programme by capturing the teacher’s perspective to try and understand who uses the programme, who is not accessing it and how it could be improved.

10.4.2 Who should take on the prevention role?

An issue identified in New Zealand, is who should be taking on the prevention role. It is a challenge sparing operational firefighters from operational duties, but they are questioning how much they can ask of their volunteers. This is something they say they will be addressing in the near future, with a suggestion from one interviewee that they could create a new volunteer role who serves as a Community Safety Officer, a role entirely dedicated to prevention work. This however, raises questions regarding training and remuneration for this role given the lack of funding for prevention compared to frontline provision

In Alberta securing funding for prevention ‘...these kind of back of house if you will programmes’ (Interviewee: Alberta) can be challenging as most of the funding which comes to the fire service is allocated to frontline firefighters.

10.4.3 The need for a different skillset for firefighters

One of the challenges associated with moving from a purely response role to one that includes preventative duties is that not all firefighters wish to take on these new roles or feel that they have the skills or experience to do so. This is also described as an issue in relation to recruiting new firefighters. In Alberta, it was stated that advertisements for new recruits show firefighters running into burning buildings despite this being less than 10% of their role. When one interviewee asked classes of new recruits if they would have applied for community safety officer posts, he states that less than 10% said they would. This led to an explanation in the class that community safety and prevention is the biggest part of the firefighter role, with the interviewee explaining that a change in mind-set is required about what they are doing with prevention and why they’re doing it.

However, a further view from Alberta is that there is now a newer generation of firefighters coming into the service who are seen as being more open to a wider role in the community and as such the mind-set in the service seems to be changing which opens up more opportunities for prevention work.

“As the service gets younger and we have our turnover, you have more of the millennials, and newer generation who understand more those social, environmental causes and have their philosophies on that as opposed to some of the older school firefighters who were there just to run into a burning building. So I think some of the mind-set is changing.” (Interviewee: Alberta)

11 Fire: Learning from international perspectives

Key findings: Learning from international perspectives

- Communicate honestly with both staff and external stakeholders about reform (e.g. the reasons for reform, the outcomes being sought) and meaningfully engage with them from the beginning of, and throughout, the change process.
- To remain relevant the fire service needs to evolve beyond the firefighting role, to include wider activities such as prevention and safety. Culture needs to change to accept this which can begin with new recruits but also needs to embrace existing firefighters.
- Give space and responsibility to local stations and have faith and trust in local personnel.
- Keep focused on what you're trying to achieve with reform for your service and country and do not get distracted, always keep looking to the end outcomes.

This report has explored the role of firefighters internationally and the impact of the changing role of the firefighter, changes in partnership working, the move towards more prevention working and relationships with the local community.

This chapter draws together the wider lessons learned from the West Midlands in England, the Netherlands, Alberta in Canada and New Zealand, as well as the advice that the interviewees would give to other countries experiencing organisational change.

It should be noted that the international case studies had differing experiences of organisational change with the Netherlands and New Zealand both undergoing structural reform. However, each of the case studies had experienced a widening of the role of the firefighters. It is these experiences which will be drawn on in this chapter.

11.1 Prioritise communication

The need to communicate effectively with both staff and external stakeholders was a common theme in all four international case studies.

Become a listening organisation: It was viewed as important to communicate effectively both internally with staff but also with external stakeholders. It was seen as key to engage with stakeholders, including the community, early in the change process. In New Zealand there is a view that they have “often only given lip service to consultation or actual discussion with the community” (Interviewee: New Zealand).

Have open and honest communication: It is seen as important to have a clear strategy and to communicate this effectively. It is important to be honest with key stakeholders and the community about what you can achieve, particularly when undergoing change, this includes being honest about response times.

Create internal belief in the need for change: Communicating with staff so that they understand the change that is happening and taking them with you on the journey of reform is identified as a key piece of advice. Central to this is ‘creating the internal belief of a need for change’.

Include firefighters in decision-making: In the Netherlands, there is a view that firefighters should be involved in policy decisions. It is identified that there is a distance between management and firefighters. But, it is believed that firefighters should be included in policy decisions and that even when a service has reformed there should be less of a gap between management and staff.

11.2 Remain relevant

Think beyond the firefighting role: Due to the nature of the firefighting role widening over the last 10 years, particularly with the decrease in fires, these international case studies have shown that for the fire service to remain relevant there is a need to think beyond the firefighting role, potentially to prevention and safety. In the West Midlands, it is acknowledged that the fire service has much to offer in terms of the wider public service agenda, and the fire service needs to drive this forward and evolve as a service.

“That is definitely something that I have awoken to certainly in the past 5 years. We will not remain as we are. We’ll not exist as we are in 10 years’ time, so we need to kinda keep up with the times I suppose, and evolve as other services are, and that means evolving outside of what the traditional role of the service and a firefighter is....And we have so much to *offer* as a Fire Service as well, but no one can see that unless we push it forward.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

Establish the mind-set at recruitment: Fire services have faced challenges in changing the culture of the fire service to embrace the changing role, given that many firefighters join to fight fires. There is a suggestion that this widening role needs to be established during recruitment when potential firefighters need to be made aware of the range of different activities that they will be asked to carry out. In Alberta, they are trying to break some of the cycles by providing community safety training, including diversity and inclusion, during their basic recruitment training.

Accept change: With the widening role of firefighters, there is a view in the West Midlands that reform is necessary and inevitable and that if they do not reform, the service will “go out of existence”. As part of this process, people in the fire service must be willing to accept change rather than trying to stop it.

“I would definitely say that you can’t control the pace of change, that’s one thing we’ve learnt. You have to...be willing to accept that change is happening and try and lead and guide that change rather than stopping it. Reform is coming, it has to come, it is happening.” (Interviewee: West Midlands)

11.3 Develop staff skills

Draw on knowledge within the organisation: In New Zealand it has been identified that specialists have been brought in to help with the change programme, but they believe they have missed some opportunities to learn from existing knowledge and information in the organisation. A view from the Netherlands was that it is important to trust staff at the local level and that it is important to give space and responsibility to local stations and to have faith and trust in local personnel.

Educating leadership: It was suggested that the key to a successful future within the fire service, is providing education to the leadership including up and coming leaders as well as existing leaders.

11.4 Be outcome focused

Focus on end outcomes: Keep focused on what you’re trying to achieve with reform for your service and country and do not get distracted, always keep looking to the end outcomes.

Improve evaluation: A challenge which has been identified is a lack of evaluation on the impact of reform and how to do it. In the West Midlands, case studies in partnership working and prevention have been collated, however, very few of them have had a “robust evaluation methodology attached to them”. It is viewed that the evaluations are descriptive when they need to be more analytical to better understand impact and outcomes.

12 Conclusions

Key findings

- There are a set of shared experiences across the international case studies considered in this report of the challenges associated with police and fire reform. These range from the complexities of designing new structures and processes for the operation of the reformed organisations to strategic questions regarding the balance between centralised and local functions.
- Although the focus has been on reform, what is described in this report is a process of planned organisational change and therefore the wider research literature on organisational change is highly relevant to understanding the different challenges and opportunities likely to be encountered during the reform journey.
- There are a set of wider lessons to be drawn from the analysis in this report which are relevant not just to police and fire services but also to organisational change in other public services. These wider lessons relate to issues of expectations management, the sequencing and ecosystem of organisational change, risk mitigation, and the opportunities to develop as learning organisations through the reform journey.

12.1 Shared experiences of organisational change internationally

Throughout this report, there has been a clear focus on what conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the international experience of reform of police and fire and rescue services and the following section attempts to synthesise this learning into a set of wider lessons for police and fire services as well as wider public services undergoing or planning reform.

Before elaborating on these lessons, however, it is important to make the following points that emerge from the analysis presented here:

- Despite differences of context, there is a strong sense across the international case studies considered here of similarities in the experiences of reform, and in particular the challenges associated with reform. These have included the designing of new police and fire districts, establishing new processes for the distribution and accessing of resources, and rebuilding relationships with partner organisations and stakeholders following periods of significant organisational change.

- Furthermore, it is also clear that Scotland's reform of its police and fire and rescue services has followed a very similar path and encountered many of the same challenges as those in the international case studies considered in this report. Scotland is not unique, for example, in trying to establish an effective working relationship between centralised functions and local delivery; Scotland is similar to other places in trying to develop effective partnership working between service providers; and Scotland, like other places and other services and sectors, continues to seek robust ways of measuring preventative and partnership activity.
- There are, of course, also some important differences between Scotland and the international case studies considered and arguably the most relevant relates to the financial context of reform. Against the background of wider UK economic and fiscal pressures, a key driver for reform in Scotland has been to establish more financially sustainable models of service delivery. This has meant that the pace and direction of reform in Scotland has been informed by budgetary considerations which have been of less relevance in many of the other case studies presented here such as the Netherlands and New Zealand.
- Although in all the case studies considered in this report, as well as in Scotland, the language used has been about 'reform', what is being attempted is a process of planned 'organisational change'.

In practice, however, the kind of organisational change described in this report involves a complex interplay between both planned, top-down approaches to change and more emergent approaches involving continuous adaptation to changing circumstances and conditions. From this perspective, much of what is being recommended on the basis of these international perspectives echoes and underlines the findings from a long tradition of organisational change studies (for example, the need for a vision and strategy; support for strong leadership; open and honest communication; the development of enabling structures; and the need to anchor new approaches in the culture of the new organisation). Although from the perspective of organisational change studies, the experiences and lessons detailed in this report might therefore not be considered as surprising or unexpected, when planning or undertaking reform of police and fire services, this research has shown how experiences from other services and sectors can be valuable in shaping planning and delivery of organisational change.

12.2 Wider lessons of police and fire international experience of organisational change

Drawing together the various elements from the experiences of the different international case studies of police and fire reform provides some pointers towards wider lessons for future organisational change in police, fire and other sectors.

These wider lessons include:

- **Expectations management** – the language and discourse around reform can sometimes be unhelpful and lead to unrealistic expectations regarding how quickly and at what scale change can be achieved. This partly reflects perceptions that reform is an event rather than a process.

While some aspects of reform do happen quickly – for example, the appointment of new leadership teams, the renaming and rebranding of organisations – more fundamental changes around culture, vision and strategy, governance, investment in an enabling infrastructure – are often the focus of complex processes of negotiation, contestation and implementation, may take months and years to achieve and where the pace and direction of change will often depend on a range of financial, political and organisational factors.

Against this background, the language of reform may be unhelpful if it is used to imply rapid transformational change when the reality may be slower, more incremental and developmental change. Looking ahead, findings from this evaluation and drawing on experiences from the international case studies and Scotland, the language of change rather than reform may be more helpful for services planning or undertaking organisational change.

- **The sequencing of organisational change** – a strong metaphor running through the narratives of reform articulated by a range of stakeholders is the notion of reform as a journey, which takes time, and is a process of planned organisational change rather than a one-off event.

This has then informed a notion of ‘stages’ on the reform journey, typically in the Scottish context in terms of phases of ‘integration’, ‘consolidation’ and ‘transformation’. What this obscures, however, is what constitutes the main strategic focus during these different phases and here there are important choices to be made. For example, in some jurisdictions (notably Scotland) the priorities during the early phases of reform have centred on establishing new structures and processes (rather than on the knowledge and skills of staff which have come later), while in other places (notably Norway) the focus has been on people and investing in new training, skills and equipment for frontline staff.

- **The ecosystem of organisational change and interdependencies between police and fire services and other parts of the public sector/ other sectors (e.g. third sector)** – both the police and fire and rescue services are embedded in a complex ecosystem of relationships with a wide range of partner organisations which means that there are strong networks of inter-dependencies. Periods of reform can create significant tensions within these networks. This is partly because the organisations undergoing reform may be changing at a pace which partner organisations may find challenging to adjust and adapt to but also because during periods of reform the organisational focus of police and fire services may be on prioritising internal change rather than on maintaining external relationships. This can mean

partner organisations may be unaware of what is happening and therefore unable to react quickly to the emergence of new approaches and priorities.

Findings from this research have illustrated the importance of prioritising external relationships with stakeholders during periods of organisational change to ensure that they can be maintained and developed further during and following organisational change. In the international case study areas and in Scotland, evidence from this evaluation found that police and fire services were working collaboratively with a wide range of public, third and private sector partners.

- **Risk mitigation and on-going risk management** – the cumulative evidence from the evaluation of police and fire reform in Scotland and internationally is that there are a range of strategic risks associated with this process which need to be carefully managed. These risks include those associated with communication (both internal and external), performance, skills (particularly relating to the range of skills needed to execute large scale organisational change) and leadership (recognising that different styles of leadership may be required at different stages of the reform journey).

For services planning reform, this research has found that the careful mapping of risk at the outset of the reform process in order to mitigate the most serious risks identified and then the continuing review of risk needs to be an organisational priority.

- **The opportunity for police and fire services to develop as a learning organisation** – while periods of structural reform present significant challenges, they also provide important opportunities for organisational development beyond the specific aims of reform.

In particular, reform creates an environment in which there can be a strategic focus on the use of evidence (drawn from both professional experience and research) to inform decision-making, reflection on the inter-relationships within and between organisations to develop a theory of change, and the routine use of evaluation to assess whether the changes introduced are yielding the anticipated outcomes.

In this way reform provides the opportunity for police and fire services to develop as learning organisations, skilled in creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and modifying their culture and behaviour to reflect new knowledge, insights and contexts. There is, then, active management of the knowledge process and scope for learning to translate into new ways of operating.

The international context discussed in this report is important in this regard because of the opportunities it opens up for comparative analysis, sharing practice and building networks. It also provides important insights into what we have learned so far about the outcomes of reform in different jurisdictions and where there are still gaps in our knowledge.

Appendix A: Police case studies

Case Study 1: New Zealand

Demographic information

New Zealand consists of two main islands, the North Island and the South Island, and approximately 600 smaller islands. It is located south east of Australia, in close proximity to the Pacific island area. There are 4.8 million people living mainly in urban areas on the North Island, with one third living in Auckland.

New Zealand covers a total area of 268,000 km² and has a 15,000 km long coastline. New Zealand also has one of the largest exclusive economic zones in the world, covering more than 15 times its land area.

Structural organisation of the police

In New Zealand there is a single police service that's responsible for policing the country. The chief executive of Police is known as the Commissioner and is appointed by the Governor General. The Commissioner of Police is accountable to the Minister of Police for the administration of police services but acts independently in carrying out law enforcement decisions.

There are 12 districts, which are administered from Police National Headquarters in Wellington, and a number of national service centres that provide administrative and specialised support, such as forensic services, the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Diplomatic Protection Service. Each of the 12 districts has a District Commander and a team of Area Commanders who manage the day-to-day operations. Each district is divided into areas and has a central station from which subsidiary and suburban stations are managed.

Shape and size of police workforce

New Zealand police currently serve a population of 4.8 million with over 12,000 police staff, approximately 1 officer per 400 in the population.

New Zealand Police is divided into 12 districts, 9 in the North Island and 3 in the South. These districts vary in the geographical area they cover. Auckland City is the smallest district and Southern Police District is the largest covering a quarter of the country's landmass in total. Some specialised services are situated within these districts, e.g. there are Fingerprint Sections in Auckland, Hamilton and Christchurch as well as in Wellington.

Brief history of police structural reform

When reform took place

The most recent police reform began in 2011 and was called Policing Excellence. At the core of the reform was the National Operating Model which emphasised a move from a model of enforcement to prevention. The new model is called Prevention First.

Why reform occurred

Police reform in New Zealand occurred within the context of an independent investigation into policing, published in 2007. This was concerned with the way in which the New Zealand Police had dealt with allegations of sexual assault by members and associates of the Police. The investigation reflected on the need for a culture change in the police. After this report, and informed by other factors, the government made an additional investment in policing.

Main aims of reform

In New Zealand, the aim of reform was to move towards a new Police model with a prevention first focus. To achieve this there was an aim to build stronger relationships with local communities. Part of the reformed approach has included training police officers in how to more effectively engage with the public.

Where they are on reform journey

Reform in New Zealand has led to a refocusing of policing, preventing people entering the criminal justice system by working in partnership and sharing data with other agencies to solve issues at a community level. While the crime rate in New Zealand is near the lowest rate it has ever been, the demand for police services hasn't dropped in the same way. Police are facing increases in non-crime demand areas such as mental health and family harm. This reflects wider pressure on all social agencies and changing expectations of the police.

In 2017 as part of ongoing police reform, further resources started to be invested in improving police visibility in the community and communication between the public and the police. To achieve this, the police are moving towards having a single non-emergency number for the public to call and investing in infrastructure to enable online reporting of (more) crimes. New Zealand police have also invested heavily in mobile technology which is used to reduce the gap between demand and available resources and support police visibility in the community. Investment in mobility solutions has made an important contribution to frontline capabilities over the past 4 years.

Case Study 2: Norway

Demographic information

Norway covers a total landmass of 385,252 square kilometres and has a population of 5,302,778 people. The country shares a border with Sweden to the east, Finland and Russia to the north-east, and the Skagerrak strait to the south. Norway's extensive coastline faces the North Atlantic Ocean and the Barents Sea. Norway's core territory constitutes the most western and northerly area of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Its largest urban populations are found in the capital city of Oslo, as well as in Bergen and Stavanger.

Structural organisation of the police

The Norwegian Police Service is the country's civilian police agency. It is made up of a National Police Directorate, seven specialty agencies (the National Criminal Investigation Service, Norwegian Police University College, National Police Computing and Material Service, National Mobile Police Service, Norwegian Border Commissioner, National Police Immigration Service and the National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime) and 12 police districts. Each of these districts is led by a chief of police and within these districts there are police stations in urban areas and sheriffs' offices in rural areas. Sheriffs (or "Lensmann") staff the rural offices and have a long tradition in Norway dating back to the 13th Century; though they have a different title to police officers they hold police jurisdiction over the areas they serve. The government agency is subordinate to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. The Police Department and the Directorate of the Police constitutes the central authority for the police.

The prosecution service is integrated with the Police. The Higher Authority is a separate government body responsible for serious crime and appeals, while the Lower Authority of police prosecutors is responsible for all other offences.

Shape and size of police workforce

There are currently 16,000 people working in the police, approximately 9,000 of these are Police Officers, and the rest are civilians (responsible for tasks such as border control, highway patrolling and search and rescue). With a population of 5.3 million, there is currently 1 member of the police for every 331 members of the population and 1 police officer for every 589 members of the population. With the latest reform the police force is now made up of a central National Police Directorate and 12 police districts.

Brief history of police structural reform

When reform took place

The first reform was in 2001, and it was called “Police Reform 2000”. In 2012/13 a further reform took place following criticisms of the police after the 2011 terrorist attack in Norway.

Why reform occurred

Police reform in Norway has been ongoing since the late 1990s and is linked to wider public sector reforms. The aim of public sector reform was to make services more efficient by adapting to respond better to modern society and modern social problems.

Main aims of reform

The main aim of the first wave of reform in 2001 was to re-organise the structure of the police by reducing the number of police districts from 54 to 27. At the same time the number of local police stations was also reduced.

Further police reform was planned in 2011 but was halted by the terrorist attack. The inquiry report into the terrorist attack criticised the Norwegian police leadership and culture and said there were failures in communication. This prompted a new White Paper on police reform, “The Police Analysis”, which came out in 2012/13. The reform that followed had 6 main aims:

1. A more accessible and present Police, anchored in, and cooperating with, local communities
2. A more uniform police, delivering the same level of services with improved quality across the country
3. A Police that has a clearer focus on prevention, investigation, and a force ready for deployment
4. A Police with improved competence and capacity, sharing knowledge, and able to learn from experience
5. A Police that gets better results in a culture of openness, trust and good management and employee involvement
6. A Police that works more efficiently by utilising better methods and new technology

Where they are on reform journey

Police reform in Norway resulted in the centralisation of the police force. The process of implementing this reform was focussed on combining existing districts into fewer, larger districts. Offices were not closed down and the intention was not to reduce police involvement within municipalities. The first wave of reform introduced in 2001 reduced the number of police districts from 54 to 27, as part of the latest wave of reform Parliament decided that this should be reduced further to 12. The specialist agencies were centralised and became subordinate to the National Police Directorate.

Case Study 3: Netherlands

Demographic information

Netherlands is a country located mostly in Western Europe with a population of 17.2 million. Together with three island territories in the Caribbean (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba), it forms a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The European portion of the Netherlands consists of twelve provinces and borders Germany to the east, Belgium to the south, and the North Sea to the northwest, sharing maritime borders in the North Sea with Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

'Netherlands' literally means 'lower countries', referring to its low land and flat geography, with only about 50% of its land exceeding 1 metre above sea level.

Further, the Netherlands has a long history of social tolerance and is generally regarded as a liberal country, having legalised abortion, prostitution, and euthanasia, while maintaining a progressive drug policy.

Structural organisation of the police

Police reform in the Netherlands has created a national police force with three organisation levels: national, regional and local police teams.

The police consist of ten regional units (not autonomous), districts as a sort of intermediary level and about 145 local basic police teams. Further, there is the National Unit and the Police Service Centre. The management is in the hands of Chief of Police.

Law enforcement in the Netherlands operates primarily through governmental police agencies. The law-enforcement purposes of these agencies are the investigation of suspected criminal activity, referral of the results of investigations to the courts, and the temporary detention of suspected criminals pending judicial action. Law enforcement agencies, to varying degrees at different levels of government and in different agencies, are also commonly charged with the responsibilities of deterring criminal activity and preventing the successful commission of crimes in progress.

How local policing is organised

In the Netherlands, the approach to local policing varies by municipality. Some areas set up weekly or regular meetings in the community where members of the public can meet and raise issues with local police officers. In others, they link in with local services such as schools, to conduct visits and build relationships. One national initiative is the Community Police Officers (CPO). For every 5000 inhabitants there is a legal requirement to have a CPO for that area. CPOs

generally have a broad role that includes prevention work, working on neighbourhood problems and cooperating with partners. It is also their role to link between the community and the police and other local services including social services, health services, and local businesses.

Community policing remains one of the main policies of policing but set within 10 larger regions instead of 25 smaller regions.

Shape and size of police workforce

Before reform took place there was one national force and a regionalised police system with 25 regional police divisions which were semi-autonomous. Reform reduced the number of regional police divisions from 25 to 10 and police management and administration was centralised to take place at a national rather than regional level. However, the power to make decisions about what the police should do is still at the local level, shared by the mayor and the local public prosecutor. The combination of national and local powers means that the Netherlands police have a dual structure of governance.

In addition to the 10 regions, the police have one national department for special police tasks and 145 local basic police teams. Approximately 65,000 people work for the police in the Netherlands.

Brief history of police structural reform

When reform took place

Police reform in the Netherlands took place in 2013 when the police was centralised creating one national police force led by the Chief of Police.

Why reform occurred

The reasons for undertaking a police reform in 2013 were to:

- stop organisational fragmentation
- establish more standardised police procedures and work processes
- shift power from local/regional to national level
- Improve police infrastructure (e.g. computer system)

Main aims of reform

The main aim of reform was to move towards a more standardised and centralised structure and improve IT infrastructure.

Where they are on reform journey

While an evaluation of the 2013 police reform has taken place²⁸, the implementation of the reform is ongoing and has undergone amendments. This, among other things, has resulted in a delay in the finalisation of the reform process.

²⁸ Articles relating to police reform in the Netherlands can be accessed here: Terpstra, J. (2018). Local policing in a nationalized police force. A study on the local teams of the Netherlands' National Police. *Policing: A journal of policy and practice*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pay037>.

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Case Study 4: Manchester, England

Demographic

Greater Manchester is a metropolitan county in North West England, with a population of approximately 2.8m people. It encompasses one of the largest metropolitan areas in the United Kingdom and comprises ten metropolitan boroughs (Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan, and the cities of Manchester and Salford).

Greater Manchester spans 1,277 km². It is landlocked and borders Cheshire (to the south-west and south), Derbyshire (to the south-east), West Yorkshire (to the north-east), Lancashire (to the north) and Merseyside (to the west). There is a mix of high-density urban areas, suburbs, semi-rural and rural locations in Greater Manchester, but land use is mostly urban. It has a focused central business district, formed by Manchester city centre and the adjoining parts of Salford and Trafford, but Greater Manchester is also a polycentric county with ten metropolitan districts, each of which has at least one major town centre and outlying suburbs.

Structural organisation of the police

Greater Manchester police is made up of 10 local districts that mirror the 10 local authority areas in Greater Manchester. Across Greater Manchester there are 4 Chief Superintendents. For each of the 10 districts there is a Police Lead (Superintendent) who report to a Chief Superintendent. Each district has a varying number of Neighbourhood Policing Teams based on the size of the area. Neighbourhood Teams are led by an Inspector, below which there are Neighbourhood Sergeants, Neighbourhood Beat Officers, Neighbourhood Police Officers and Police and Community Support Officers. In addition, Greater Manchester police has a number of specialist / protective services including: Major Crime Investigation, Forensics, and Serious and Organised Crime.

How local policing is organised

Local policing has been restructured a number of times in response to reform. The impacts of reform have in the main been on local policing and how the police deliver a multi-agency response to tackling serious and organised crime. Greater Manchester Police are moving towards the integration of the neighbourhood policing function alongside other public services that deliver at a neighbourhood level including Housing Officers, ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) Officers, Community Development Officers, Health Visitors and Social Workers.

Shape and size of police workforce

Greater Manchester has a police force made up of over 10,000 staff: 6,237 police officers, 512 Volunteer Special Constables, 606 Police Community Support Officers, and 2,961 members of police staff. The workforce has shrunk in the context of public service reform, restructuring and austerity measures.

Brief history of police structural reform

When reform took place

Police reform in Manchester, is part of a wider public service reform that began in 2012 and is ongoing. Greater Manchester Police are central to the 'Public Service Reform' programme and are engaged with partner agencies across the conurbation focussing on how service delivery can be more effectively delivered through the reform and integration of services, functions and structures.

Why reform occurred

The main drivers for reform being introduced are a need for both increased effectiveness and efficiency; due to increased demands, complexity and expectations while a decrease in funding. There has been a growing realisation that the Police are often the service of both first and last resort. Policing, the demands of it and the way of responding to these, has changed significantly from 10-20 years ago. The various devolution deals that have been provided to Greater Manchester as a region have also impacted on why reform has occurred.

Main aims of reform

The aim of public service reform is to integrate public services, functions and structures across Greater Manchester, so they are delivered more effectively and efficiently. This includes responding to and reducing demand at a local level by building on community assets and addressing the root causes of demand. The Police reform is to follow the general shift towards a 21st century, citizen-centred mentality of the public services.

Where they are on reform journey

Reform in this case study area has been an ongoing process. Greater Manchester Police is currently in the process of delivering 5 strategic programmes that will take it to the realisation of its Target Operating Model; which has been significantly influenced by the Greater Manchester Reform Programme.

Appendix B: Fire case studies

Case Study 1: New Zealand

Demographic information

New Zealand geographically consists of two main islands, the North Island and the South Island, and approximately 600 smaller islands. It is located south east of Australia, in close proximity to the Pacific island area. There are 4.8 million people living mainly in urban areas on the North Island, with one third living in Auckland.

New Zealand covers a total area of 268,000 km² and has an extensive 15,000km long coastline. New Zealand also has one of the largest exclusive economic zones in the world covering more than 15 times its land area.

Structural organisation of the fire service

Fire and Emergency New Zealand is New Zealand's main firefighting organisation. Its jurisdiction covers almost all New Zealand's land mass, with a couple of exceptions such as land owned by the Defence Force or the Department of Conservation.

The Chief Executive of the Fire Service reports to the Chairman of the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Board. Members of this Board are appointed by the Minister of Internal Affairs. Terms of appointment to the Board are typically for three years, and members are eligible for reappointment.

Reporting to the Chief Executive, there is a National Commander responsible for urban areas and a National Manager responsible for rural areas.

Shape and size of the fire service workforce

Fire and Emergency New Zealand serve a population of 4.8 million people with 1,734 career firefighters, 8,161 urban volunteers and 3,134 rural volunteers.

In total this is 13,029 firefighters or 1 for every 368 members of the population.

Brief history of fire service structural reform

When reform took place

Fire and Emergency New Zealand was established on 1st July 2017, from the amalgamation of the New Zealand Fire Service, the National Rural Fire Authority and 38 rural fire organisations.

Why reform occurred

Two reviews of the fire service in 2012 and 2015 paved the way for reform. They identified a lack of co-ordination and leadership between the then separate urban and rural services, which led to resourcing and training that was often not matched to community needs, especially in rural areas.

Main aims of reform

The main aim of the reform was to improve service at a community level through the creation of a single, unified service with co-ordinated leadership that could allocate resources effectively. To this end the Chief Executive has redefined the Senior Leadership Team and recruitment for a more streamlined team who will drive and support a more strategy led organisation is now underway.

The amalgamation also enables Fire and Emergency New Zealand to hold expanded functions, including call-outs to road accidents and medical emergencies.

Where they are on reform journey

Although Fire and Emergency New Zealand was officially established on 1st July 2017, they are currently in the “Integration” phase of amalgamating the relevant bodies. This phase lasts between 1st July 2017 and 30th June 2020, when available transition funding ends.

Many of the systems and processes of the bodies that are being amalgamated into Fire and Emergency New Zealand were initially unintegrated. These included procurement, fleet and asset management and fire permitting to name a few. However, these and many others are now integrated, and their processes are being brought together in a way that is required for Fire and Emergency New Zealand to work as one body. This will lay the foundation for the full amalgamation stage, which will take another ten to twenty years as Fire and Emergency New Zealand operates as a single organisation.

Case Study 2: Canada

Demographic information

Canada is a large North American country lying between the United States to its south and the Arctic Circle to its north. It has a population of 35.5 million people, with large urban populations around the major cities of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Its official languages are both French and English.

Covering a total land area of almost 10 million km², Canada is the second largest country in the world after Russia. Two-thirds of the population live within 100km of the southern border, and its population density of 3.5 people per square kilometre makes it one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world.

Structural organisation of the fire service

Fire services in Canada operate for the most part on the municipal level: municipal governments run their own services rather than there being a federal service that covers the whole nation. The exceptions are parts of the country which are under federal jurisdiction such as military bases and various aboriginal or indigenous communities. Consequently, the organisational structure of each service may be different in each municipality. Within each province or territory, a fire commissioner reports to the provincial government and serves as advisor and technical expert.

At the national level however, the fire service organises and unites. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) is an independent, voluntary association that brings together approximately 3,500 of these local fire departments through two mechanisms. The mechanism is through individual departmental leadership, irrespective of whether the department is large urban, small rural, volunteer, career or composite. The CAFC's National Advisory Council which is composed of all the national affiliate organisations as well as the provincial and territorial fire chief associations, including representation from the Canadian Council of Fire Commissioners and Fire Marshals. The sector has a strong culture of collaboration.

Shape and size of the fire service workforce

Latest figures show an estimate of approximately 152,650 firefighters in Canada, serving a population of 35.5 million people, 1 firefighter for every 233 members of the population. Of these firefighters, approximately 83% were volunteers. The majority of the career firefighters work in areas that protect over 50,000 people, with most of the volunteer firefighters working in areas protecting fewer than 50,000 people. The largest firefighter union in Canada is currently the International Association of Firefighters.

In total, there is an estimated 3,672 fire departments in Canada. Of these, 66 (2%) have all career firefighters.

Any changes to the structure of the fire service and discussion of reform

Any change to the organisational structure of the Canadian fire service, especially a move towards a service run at the national level, would likely encounter two key difficulties. The first is due to expectations of how different levels of the Canadian government should interact. Federal, provincial and municipal governments hold distinct roles that are ultimately grounded in the country's Constitution. Therefore, suggestions of a change in the organisational structure of the fire service face the immediate issue of disentangling jurisdictional responsibilities that are well-established.

The second difficulty is related to Canada's very low population density. With a population so sparsely distributed, questions would immediately arise as to how a nationally run service could be as attuned to local requirements as one run at the municipal level.

As a consequence of these difficulties there is likely very little motivation for organisational reform at the national level and there have been no significant structural changes in the Canadian fire service recently.

The federal government has more recently become quite active in the many areas relevant to the fire service: from mental health to interoperability, heavy urban search and rescue, wildfires to building codes to transportation. Recent disasters in the areas of rail safety and extreme weather events to (e.g. the Lac-Mégantic rail disaster and wildfires) have prompted discussions on what the proper roles of each level of government ought to be in these cases. These discussions often focus on the nature of a national response within the existing framework, such as what the chain of command ought to be and how resources can be most effectively organised from different municipal departments. Increasingly however, the discussion is moving towards the national role that the country's fire departments play particularly in light of the high reliance on volunteer departments. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs has been on the record for a national fire advisor secretariat to maximally coordinate the development and impact of the many important initiatives that various federal departments are involved.

Case Study 3: Netherlands

Demographic information

Netherlands is a country located mostly in Western Europe with a population of 17.2 million. Together with three island territories in the Caribbean (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba), it forms a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The European portion of the Netherlands consists of twelve provinces and borders Germany to the east, Belgium to the south, and the North Sea to the northwest, sharing maritime borders in the North Sea with Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

'Netherlands' literally means 'lower countries', referring to its low land and flat geography, with only about 50% of its land exceeding 1 metre above sea level.

Further, the Netherlands has a long history of social tolerance and is generally regarded as a liberal country, having legalised abortion, prostitution, and euthanasia, while maintaining a progressive drug policy.

Structural organisation of the fire service

A law introduced in 2011 mandated that there be 25 fire service 'regions' in the Netherlands. Each region is comprised of approximately 20 to 30 communities that pay for their fire service. The activities of the fire brigades, e.g. purchasing of equipment and training of firefighters, are all done at this regional level.

Each fire service region has a political board, responsible for policy choices and financial decisions. This board is made up of mayors from each of the participating communities in the region.

At the national level, there is the Netherlands Fire Service that works together on issues such as fire safety education, incident control and professional competence. This is a voluntary organisation led by the twenty-five senior Fire Chiefs from each region.

Shape and size of the fire service workforce

Latest figures for the Netherlands show that the total number of firefighters is 28,214. Of these, 5,212 are career firefighters, 19,106 are volunteers and 3,896 are support staff. Given that the population of the Netherlands is 17.2 million people, this means there is one firefighter for every 610 residents.

Brief history of fire service structural reform

When reform took place

Regionalisation, the grouping of 400-450 local Fire Services into 25 fire service regions, was a structural change that occurred between 2004 and 2014. Different areas enacted this change at different speeds, with some becoming regionalised at a much faster pace than others. After 2011, it became law that these fire service regions should be in place, which provided impetus for those areas that were further behind in the process.

Why reform occurred

The roots of the reform are in two fire disasters, one in Volendam and the other in Enschede between 2000 and 2001. It was recognised that municipalities were often too small to respond to all types of major incidents in an effective way and greater co-ordination was needed between services.

Main aims of reform

The main aim of the reform was to improve the regional response to emergencies and their crisis management, and consequently create a more professional and effective service.

The intention is that, within the regions, the fire service, police, medical and municipal services can work together to provide a co-ordinated and effective response to emergencies like the ones at Volendam and Enschede.

Where they are on reform journey

Regionalisation took place between 2004 and 2014. Having successfully grouped hundreds of individual fire departments into 25 fire service regions, the Netherlands are now at the end of their reform journey.

Case Study 4: West Midlands, England

Demographic information

The West Midlands is a metropolitan county in western central England, with a population of approximately 2.89 million people. After Greater London, it is the most populous county in Britain. It consists of seven metropolitan boroughs (City of Birmingham, City of Coventry, City of Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull and Walsall).

The West Midlands covers a total area of 902 km², is landlocked and borders the counties of Staffordshire to the north and west, Worcestershire to the south and Warwickshire to the east. The county contains a mix of heavily urbanised areas such as Birmingham and Wolverhampton, as well as a large stretch of green belt known as the “Meriden Gap”. The West Midlands is a multicultural area, with 29.9% of the population identifying as Black or Minority Ethnic at the 2011 Census.

Structural organisation of the fire service

There are 38 fire stations across the West Midlands, which are under the ultimate command of the Chief Fire Officer and the Strategic Enabling Team (SET). They oversee the organisational structure of the service and its strategic direction.

These 38 stations are in turn divided into Command Areas, with 5 Ops Commanders and 3 Area Commanders assisting the Chief Fire Officer. Underneath the Area Commanders are Group, Station, Watch and Crew Commanders, then the Firefighters themselves.

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority scrutinise the SET to ensure it is performing its duties correctly and providing taxpayers with good value for money. This body is made up of twenty-seven elected councillors from across the West Midlands.

Shape and size of the fire service workforce

The West Midlands Fire Service employs approximately 1,900 staff across 38 fire stations. Alongside London and Greater Manchester, West Midlands is one of the only fire services in Britain whose firefighters all work full time. Covering a population of 2.89 million people, there is approximately one firefighter for every 1,521 residents of the West Midlands.

Reform to the role of the firefighter: discussions of reform, aims of reform and stumbling blocks

Over the previous decade, there have been discussions around how the role of a firefighter has changed given that there are fewer fires than in the past and that the West Midlands operates a full-time fire service.

This led to the introduction of a modified contract for new entrants to the West Midlands Fire Service that stipulated that their role now included prevention, protection, response and wider health work. The contract also outlined that firefighters would be responsible for falls response, that is if someone had fallen over it would be part of their role to go out, help them and signpost them to medical services if necessary. The aim of this reform was to recognise that the role of a firefighter has changed and make this explicit to new entrants.

This reform provoked opposition from the Fire Brigades Union, who balloted for strike action and lodged a trade dispute with the Fire Service. This opposition was grounded in objections to the level of remuneration offered in light of the expansion of responsibilities outlined in the modified contract. A resolution has not currently been found and as such the modified contracts have been withdrawn. The opposition of unions to the planned reform proved to be a major stumbling block.



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