



Police and Fire Reform Evaluations

Annual evaluations of the police and fire reform, which aim to assess if the aims of the reform have been met, identify lessons for future public service reform and evaluate the wider impact of the reform. The evaluations are produced by What Works Scotland, the Scottish Institute for Policing Research and ScotCen for Scottish Government.

Summary: The evaluation of police and fire reform in Scotland began in February 2015 and is being undertaken by What Works Scotland, the [Scottish Institute for Policing Research](#) (SIPR) and [ScotCen Social Research](#).

The main aims of this evaluation are to:

1. Assess the extent to which the three aims of police and fire reform appear to have been met, namely:
 - To protect and improve local services despite financial cuts, by stopping duplication of support services eight times over and not cutting front line services.
 - 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.
 - 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.
2. Identify lessons from the implementation of reform that might inform the process of future public service reform
3. Evaluate the wider impact of the reform on the justice system and the wider public sector

In 2016, the first report on the evaluation of police and fire reform in Scotland reported that there was plausible and credible evidence of progress being made towards achieving the long-term aims of reform and strong evidence of the establishment and functioning of new processes, structures, projects and programmes. But the Year 1 report also highlighted some important evidence gaps.

The documentary evidence was largely process rather than outcome focused; oriented to ‘producer’ rather than ‘consumer’ perspectives; focused on strategic rather than operational matters; and offered national rather than local perspectives. It was also noted that senior representatives of Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) frequently

invoked the notion of a reform journey that begins with ‘preparing’, moves on to ‘consolidating’ and ‘integrating’, and concludes with ‘transforming’. At that time both services saw themselves in the consolidation and integration phase of the journey.

Against that backdrop, the four local case studies drawn on in this Year 2 report form a key element of the evaluation, providing the opportunity to hear the voices of those experiencing reform ‘on the ground’, exploring how national changes are playing out at a local level and examining the extent to which different contexts play a part in facilitating (or hindering) the objectives of reform.

This report provides insights into the local experiences of consolidation and integration. In each case study area, qualitative interviews and focus groups were used to capture the experiences and perspectives of different stakeholders in the reform process including local police officers and firefighters, the public, councillors and council staff, and community and third sector organisations.

The Year 4 report, published May 2019, 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.

Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-of-police-and-fire-reform/>

Read the publications

The evaluation reports are available on the Scottish Government website.

Year One

- [Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 1 Summary Report](#)
- [Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 1 Annex 1 – Evidence Review](#)

Published 27 June 2016

Year Two

- [Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 2 Report](#)
- [Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 2 Report Annexes](#)

Published 10 August 2017

Year Three

- [Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 3 Thematic Case Study – Partnership, Innovation and Prevention](#)

This report on the Scottish Government website presents the findings from a thematic case study focusing on issues of partnership working, innovation and prevention in four geographical areas.

Published: 9 February 2018

- [Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 3 National key informants report and summary of](#)

evidence

This report on the Scottish Government website presents the findings from the third year of the evaluation which focuses on interviews with national key informants. Annex one provides an overview of Policing 2026, annex two presents a summary of evidence from 2017 and annex three provides an overview of key findings from the evaluation of Dutch and Norwegian police reforms.

Published: 18 May 2018

Year four

- [Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 4 - International Perspectives on Police and Fire Reform](#)
- [Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 4 - Summary of Evidence Published in 2018](#)
- [Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 4 - Summary of Key Findings and Learning Points from the Evaluation](#)

Published: 23 May 2019