

STRATHCLYDE FIRE & RESCUE

Youth
Engagement
Plan 2011-2013



making our communities safe places to live, work and visit



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I. INTRODUCTION

Youth engagement is central to Strathclyde Fire & Rescue's (SFR) Community Safety initiatives, and encompasses a wide range of activities engaging children and young people. This work is led by the Youth Engagement Team (YET) situated within the Partnership Unit; one of three functional portfolios that comprise the Community Safety Directorate.

Youth engagement is a vital element of our overall strategy for improving lives and promoting safer communities. This plan highlights the importance of the work carried out by operational crews, through interaction with children and young people at our Community Fire Stations or off site, contributing to a significant reduction in service demand. All of our Wholetime stations will be integral to the delivery of youth engagement activities.

We also aspire to involve Retained Duty System and Volunteer Firefighters, where this meets with service delivery priorities.

This Youth Engagement Plan outlines the future direction of youth engagement for the period 2010-2013 and supports the Community Safety Strategy, IRMP and Vision 2020, whilst also contributing to the recommendations outlined within the 'Scotland Together' report.

Key to our success will be our Corporate Priorities, which are set out in more detail in the following section.

We recognise that the creation of new and innovative initiatives will do much to support our interaction with children and young people and, in so doing, shall assist in improving the chances and choices available to them.

Our programmes and initiatives will become key aspects of SFR's service delivery and will help to achieve our Community Safety objectives. We will also use these to support both local and national outcomes thus assisting in making our communities safer places to live, work and visit.

We acknowledge that our success depends on the support of partners from across the Community Safety network. In this respect, we will continue to engage so as to deliver appropriate programmes which aim to have a lasting effect on children and young people.

Programmes and initiatives will be designed to maximise our impact and will be evaluated to ensure that they remain effective and relevant. We will indicate the value of our preventative investment and, in doing so, will demonstrate our contribution to making communities safer, healthier and stronger.

2. OUR CORPORATE PRIORITIES

SFR's corporate priorities contained within Vision 2020, which are vital to this plan, are outlined below:



Community

We exist to make our communities safe places to live, work and visit. We work closely with the communities we serve to ensure that the service we deliver is tailored to their expectations and is targeted towards areas of greatest need.



People

Our personnel are our greatest asset. We believe that by investing in their future, we can make our organisation stronger, more efficient and more effective. We work hard to maintain our reputation as a good employer and provide a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity, fairness and respect.



Protection

Our role is to protect the communities we serve. We deliver a service that works proactively to reduce the incidence of fire and other emergencies and one that responds with dedication and professionalism whenever and wherever the need occurs.



Partnership

Strong, productive partnerships are central to our service. By co-operating closely with our partner agencies, we are able to deliver an integrated approach to safety in the community and the most effective service possible. We know that by working together, we have much to offer and much to gain.



Environment

We have a duty to protect our environment. We are committed to taking positive steps to reduce the environmental impact of our business. We will strive to reduce our carbon footprint by increasing environmental awareness across all parts of our organisation and by doing all that we can to minimise and mitigate the effects our operations have on the planet.

3. OUR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Our key objective is to provide a framework which enables the delivery of highly effective and excellent programmes. Moreover, we will define the future direction of youth engagement. This will be delivered to support the principal of shared working and intervention which is targeted and evidence based.

Area Commanders are responsible for local service delivery which is detailed within Area and Station Plans and supports Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning arrangements. The Community Safety Directorate, through the YET, will develop guidance and good practice and provide the required advice, support and assistance.

Service delivery will focus on two aspects; the SFR Schools' Programmes and specific programmes delivered by specialist trained and operational employees, in conjunction with partner agencies. Furthermore, Retained Duty System (RDS) and Volunteer Firefighters have an extremely valuable contribution to make and we will commit to increasing their involvement over the three year life span of this plan. This acknowledges the special conditions and demands placed on RDS and Volunteer colleagues.

The following sections outline our planned programme of initiatives and provide some detail of those areas considered vital to the continued success of youth engagement within SFR.



4. EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Our new Schools' Programme will include five packages - separated by Curriculum Levels - of computer based resources that are current, interactive, challenging and in line with 'A Curriculum for Excellence'. The YET will provide comprehensive resources to support all aspects of the programme from Early Level to Senior Phase, seeking to develop children and young people's understanding of:

- The role of SFR within the community.
- Basic fire safety information.
- The consequences of fire related anti-social behaviour.

Our Schools' Programme aims to provide enjoyable and educational experiences, whilst embracing the clear values, purposes and principles set out by the new National Curriculum and the emphasis on a coherent education for ages 3 - 18.

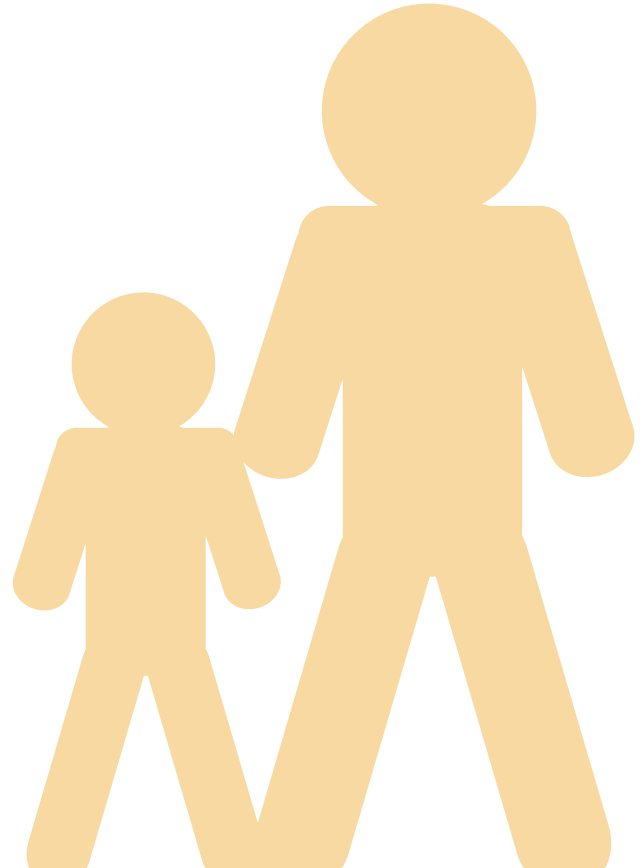
In addition to our Schools' Programme, our Education Programmes will include:

Community Links

An important feature of our activities will be to welcome young visitors to Community Fire Stations. Additionally, we will reciprocate in order to afford Station based colleagues an opportunity to engage with children and young people within their schools and other establishments.

Targeted Provision

Priority schools, identified by Areas, will receive the support and experience of Community Safety Teams in order to reduce service demand and incidences of fire related anti-social behaviour.



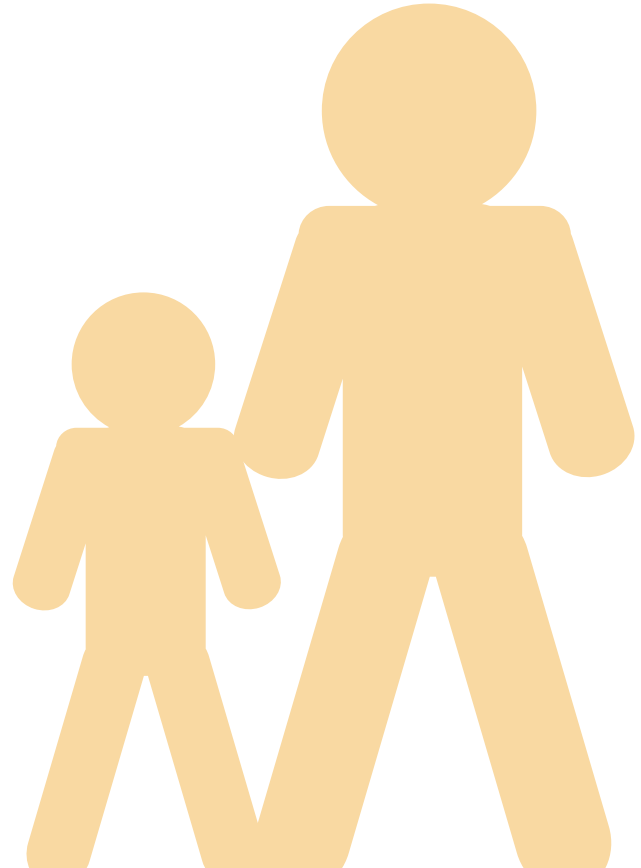
In the next 3 years we will:

- Develop support packages for operational employees who are involved in visits to Community Fire Stations by children and young people, or off site visits to schools/youth groups.
- Support targeted provision. Areas will identify priority schools; these schools will receive the support and experience of Community Safety Teams and operational employees, who may directly deliver Corporate SFR school packages.
- Develop our Schools' Programme, which can be delivered by partners, in particular teachers. These packages will provide lesson plans and resources that can be utilised to enhance work already being carried out by our partners.
- Support the development of good practice where this can have an impact on service demand and represents best value.



We will have succeeded if, by 2013:

- More schools around the SFR Service Area are delivering our fire safety Schools' Programme and including a fire safety theme in their yearly curriculum planning.
- Areas have made strong links with priority schools, and their Community Safety Teams are working here to reduce service demand and fire related anti-social behaviour.
- Every station within the SFR Service Area has access to support packages for staff involved in youth engagement activities.
- More children and young people are aware of fire safety and the consequences of fire related anti-social behaviour.



5. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

We understand the responsibility we have to work within the framework of the Scottish Government's aspirations to enable children and young people's progression to positive destinations and develop their capacities as: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors to society. Our development programmes can also be used as part of the wider partnership approach to support the transition of young people from school to employment and in developing their skills to sustain employment.

We have a unique role in Scotland's youth work landscape by developing bespoke initiatives and programmes, not normally available within mainstream education. These initiatives will allow us to engage with, and allow the development of, children and young people locally in their communities. Through

this work, we endeavour to promote full understanding of the consequences of anti-social behaviour and encourage positive changes in behaviour. FireReach has proved to be our most successful initiative and shall be used as the basis for further development.

FireReach

This key framework supports SFR youth engagement initiatives and is adapted from Firefighter training drills. FireReach provides a range of risk assessed activities delivered in conjunction with partners and is fully adaptable to meet local needs. The aim of FireReach is to increase confidence, self-discipline and develop citizenship, as well as promote more positive attitudes towards education and employment. Through delivery of FireReach modules, children and young people will also be provided with key messages about

fire safety and the consequences of fire related anti-social behaviour, in order to reduce service demand. FireReach has been internally evaluated and has received positive feedback from partner organisations. Since its introduction, a number of successful FireReach derivatives have formed, of which Junior FireReach, recognised nationally as good practice, is an example.

Junior FireReach

Junior FireReach is a three hour course aimed at children aged 7 - 12. This programme allows SFR employees to make an early intervention and target primary age pupils. Delivered by SFR uniformed employees, Junior FireReach introduces the Fire and Rescue Service to children, and allows positive relationships to be developed, by enabling them to participate in a range of practical fire and rescue related activities.

“My pupil thoroughly enjoyed the FireReach course and was highly praised by the FireReach Team. He is noticeably more confident and is more likely to speak out in groups. He is more focused on his goals”

By carefully developing FireReach, and continuing to link with national and local priorities, we will enhance the lives of children and young people, and in turn make communities safer.

Moving Forward with FireReach

SFR Areas will continue to identify local priorities and, supported by the YET, will use FireReach modules in the best way to meet these priorities. Below are some of the ways we can address important national objectives:

Employability

In order to aid the creation of a healthier, more prosperous Scotland, we must work towards the Scottish Government's drive to enhance employability skills in children and young people. We will use the successful modules of FireReach to ensure that we

address employability, for example through structured Work Experience schemes and by accrediting some of our youth engagement programmes. We are currently exploring three forms of suitable accreditations:

- 40hr Core Skills—Problem Solving, British Safety Council—Entry Level Award in Workplace Hazard Awareness,
- 160hr Skills for Work—Uniformed and Emergency Services course.

As well as facilitating these courses, SFR employees may also support courses being run in conjunction with colleges/schools. Accredited courses will allow young people to build a variety of skills and attain further qualifications away from the formal school environment.

Citizenship

Incorporating the development of citizenship within our youth engagement programmes is another way to build better communities and reduce service demand. Citizenship emphasises children and young people's rights and responsibilities and allows them to make better, more informed choices in life. The Junior Watch Member programme, in which young people become "part of" a watch within a Community Fire Station, allows them to develop life skills whilst being mentored by an SFR employee.

Health and Well-being

The Scottish Government's recent push to build a healthier Scotland has seen the introduction of many new initiatives, such as the 'Active Nation' campaign and the importance of embedding 'Health and Well-being' in schools as part of 'A Curriculum for Excellence'. This

drive is also important for future youth engagement work within SFR. For example, FireReach modules can easily be adapted to incorporate a health and well-being focus, as was seen with the Fire Fit programme.

Working with Families

Bringing families together is key to building better communities. Encouraging families to positively support their children and young people - as can be seen in national initiatives, such as The Positive Parenting Programme - will allow us to further develop our youth engagement work.

Family FireReach aims to be an enjoyable day which can be used to engage whole families, whilst also educating them on our key messages. This kind of initiative will also allow us to further deliver our Community Safety messages, with the aim of reducing service demand.

In addition to FireReach, we deliver other youth engagement initiatives, which have a positive impact on children and young people's lives and their development as responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. These programmes also allow them to build relevant skills for life choices and chances.

Young Firefighters

The Young Firefighters (YFF) initiative is aimed at young people aged 13 - 18 who attend their local Community Fire Station one night per week on an ongoing basis. YFF Units are staffed by volunteers and are currently in operation within Kilmarnock, Dumbarton, Cambelton and Gigha. Recently, a number of young people have progressed from FireReach programmes to the YFF. By undertaking this initiative, students have the chance to participate in a number of opportunities, over a long period of time,

in order to increase skills in learning, communication and team work. YFF encourages and supports young people in becoming positive role models for their peers, becoming more confident, being good citizens, leading healthier lives and motivating them towards achieving life goals.

The YFF initiative aims to create positive relationships between SFR and young people, as well as providing positive role models for participants. It also aims to provide a fire service training programme linked to recognised accreditations, in order to promote employability.

“ I have been a Young Firefighter for the past few years and the most enjoyable parts are getting to meet new people and learn new skills ”



In the next 3 years we will:

- Support the delivery of a series of Youth Engagement Training Modules for operational employees.
- Develop a suite of Youth Development programmes, in order to meet local needs; such as Firefighter for a Day, Family FireReach and Work Experience.
- Develop a Youth Engagement Guidance and Procedure Manual for operational employees delivering youth engagement programmes.
- Continue to promote good citizenship in children and young people, whilst encouraging, and allowing opportunities for, progression in to positive destinations.
- Support the delivery of nationally recognised accredited courses for specific youth engagement programmes.



We will have succeeded if, by 2013:

- Training is provided to staff delivering youth engagement programmes.
- All Wholetime Community Fire Stations will deliver Youth Development programmes and will have access to the relevant resources from the corporate suite.
- A Youth Engagement Guidance and Procedure Manual for operational employees has been produced and is accessible by all Areas.
- Resources to support the delivery of accredited courses, as outlined in 'Scotland Together', are available to all Areas.
- A positive impact is being made on children and young people's lives, facilitating the opportunities to build skills and resilience which they may not necessarily find in mainstream education.
- The Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives for Scotland, such as the emphasis on a healthier nation, are being contributed to through SFR's youth engagement programmes and initiatives.



6. INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

We recognise the benefits of offering specialist information and intervention initiatives in order to keep children and young people safe and reduce unnecessary service demand.

Our Intervention Programmes are:

Fire Setter Intervention

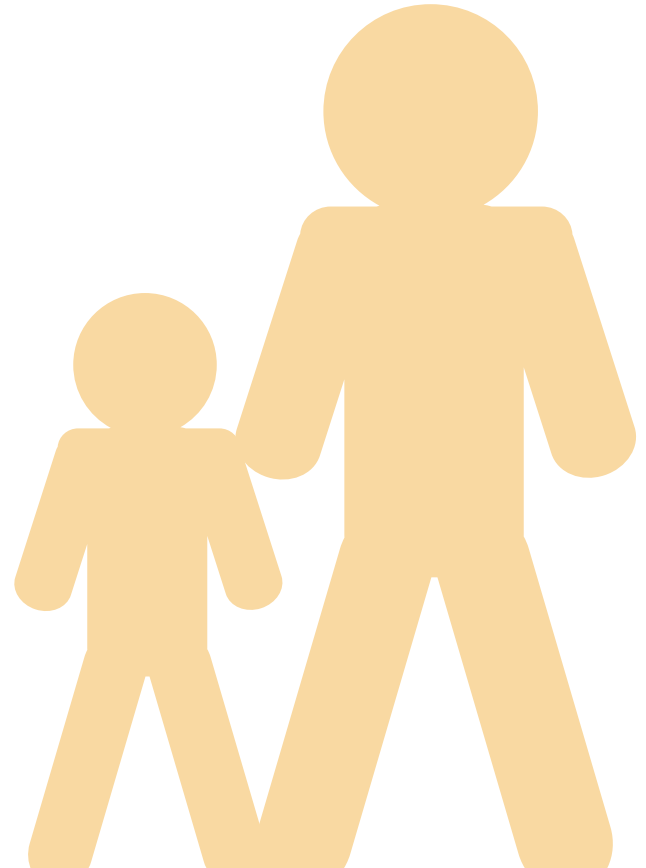
This programme works with children and young people who have demonstrated an unsafe or concerning interest in fire or Fire and Rescue Service related anti-social behaviour. The Fire Setter Intervention programme provides individual learning experiences which raise awareness of the consequences of dangerous actions.

Educational Drama

This initiative involves theatre plays based around the theme of fire related anti-social behaviour. These plays have been mainly delivered to P.4 to P.7, with a typical audience of at least 100 per show. With strong evidence of local success, this initiative has been recognised nationally as best practice, as the plays allow children and young people to realise the effects of their actions, not only on themselves, but also in the wider community. The use of drama offers an alternative method of reinforcing key messages, while also providing a fun, entertaining, interactive educational experience. These plays enable us to deliver numerous Community Safety messages to a great number of people, is high impact and does not require the participation of SFR personnel.

Social Networking

The YET are currently exploring the potential of using Social Networking to deliver key Community Safety messages in an appropriate and relevant format to children and young people. This could take the form of photo, video, audio and data sharing through mediums, such as Blogs, Web Chats, and Internet Forums. This provides us with the opportunity to reach both small and large audiences and can be used to support other youth engagement programmes.



In the next 3 years we will:

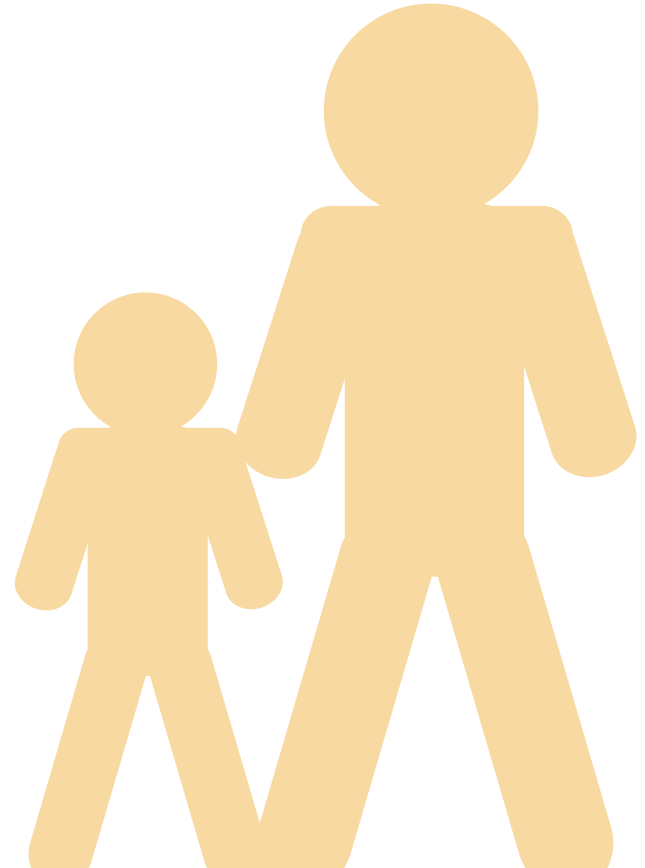
- Develop Fire Setter Intervention policy and procedures.
- Support the delivery of educational drama performances being delivered across the SFR Service Area.
- Maximise the potential of spreading our Community Safety messages through e-communications, in order to reach a larger audience.
- Develop the skills of our staff to work effectively with children and young people.

We will have succeeded if, by 2013:

- Trained SFR personnel have access to the relevant resources required to deliver any of the Intervention Programmes from the corporate suite.
- We have fully explored the success of spreading Community Safety messages through e-communications, such as Twitter, Facebook and Bebo, and have implemented these social networking mediums.
- Relevant youth engagement related Continuous Professional Development is available for all staff.



- Children and young people in our communities are being provided with the relevant information and opportunities, in order to make positive and informed choices and changes to their lives.
- More children and young people know how to keep themselves safe from harm, through the key messages we deliver to them.



7. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We recognise that working in partnership with communities, agencies and children and young people is the most effective way to successfully deliver youth engagement activities. It is important that we make links at strategic, tactical and operational levels to ensure we best utilise resources, and that services are joined up at the point of delivery. In doing this we will work with partners to further the aspirations of national drivers such as Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Curriculum for Excellence, Promoting Positive Outcomes and Bridging the Gap.

SFR's Partnership Unit allows many organisations, who share the same vision and strategic aims, to work collaboratively to achieve joint aspirations. We firmly believe that integrated and genuine partnership work will help to achieve common goals faster and is a unique approach to youth engagement in Scotland,

which will positively improve the lives of children and young people.

We currently work with various partner agencies and an underlying principle of our approach is to work closely with Community Planning Partners and link with existing service provision. Key local partners include Youth Services, Social Work, Education, Voluntary Organisations, Strathclyde Police and we will enhance these partnerships in the next three years to implement this plan. At a local level we are keen to develop our existing links with Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP).

National partners that we work with include Learning Teaching Scotland (LTS), YouthLink, and Young Scot. We will continue to develop these partnerships, and

identify other key national partners that we can work with. We also support the outcomes of 'Scotland Together' by being active partners on the Chief Fire Officers Association (Scotland) working groups.

Strathclyde Youth

A development, in making important links with the Voluntary Sector, is the strategic partnership SFR has fostered with Strathclyde Youth (SY), a voluntary youth work organisation that are located within SFR Headquarters. SY are one of the key providers of information, training, advice and support to youth workers, youth groups and young people in the SFR Service Area. Every year youth projects affiliate to SY to gain the support and guidance required to support youth projects and to deliver a programme of activities and learning to young people safely. SY can also offer advice on policies and procedures and assist in

developing initiatives which meet local and national priorities. We will continue to work closely with SY, in order to support the training of our staff and develop close links with youth organisations across the SFR Service Area.

In the next 3 years we will:

- Establish links with Education Quality Improvement Officers for each local authority to implement our Schools' Programmes in schools around the SFR Service Area.
- Liaise with various working groups in the development of a formal national accreditation for Fire and Rescue Youth Engagement programmes and identification of how to develop multi-agency community safety resources, as recommended in the 'Scotland Together' report.
- Fully establish partnerships with local organisations in order to ensure our Community Safety messages are received by as many children and young people, in as many relevant mediums, as possible.
- Work closely with SY to develop a staff Training Needs Analysis and Training Framework and to ensure our staff receive varied and relevant training in youth engagement.
- Develop youth initiatives in partnership with SY to combat anti-social behaviour and support SY in spreading fire safety messages to children and young people through their network.
- Improve our existing links with MSYPs at a local level.



We will have succeeded if, by 2013:

- We have developed links with Education Quality Improvement Officers and are supporting our Schools' Programmes across the SFR Service Area.
- We have attended 'Scotland Together' working group meetings and undertaken tasks in order to meet the recommendations of the 'Scotland Together' report, which will help to keep children and young people safe in their communities and promote employability.
- We are working closely with local organisations to spread our message and allow development of our Youth Engagement programmes, including FireReach modules, in order to meet our priorities and for the benefit of children and young people.

- Firefighters have received relevant Youth Engagement and Child Protection training.
- Our Community Safety messages are being delivered effectively through the Voluntary Sector and joint ventures.
- Each Area Community Safety Team has met to discuss local priorities with their MSYPs.



8. MEASURING SUCCESS

In order to ensure the successful integration of this Youth Engagement Plan, it will be important to ensure that cost and robust evaluation processes are identified.

Cost of Delivery

We currently invest £150k each year in order to fully develop our youth activities and we will seek to provide this level of funding throughout the life of this plan. We acknowledge that strong, healthy and socially responsible communities are a product of this preventative spend. Therefore, it is our intention to make best use of available resources and, as a result, we will fully evaluate the impact of our Youth Plan. In doing so, we will promote the benefits of shared working and will consider our activities to ensure that we continue to provide value for money. Whilst this is the case, we acknowledge the challenges which the current financial climate will bring and, to this end, will

continually measure the benefits of our funding for youth engagement.

Evaluation

The YET, by using the SFR Community Safety Engagement Toolkit, will continuously review and improve service delivery. This will take into account the dynamic landscape within which services are being provided. Evaluations will be made available to staff and partners to inform the planning and development of future programmes and initiatives.

Strategic Responsibilities

SFR is responsible for the delivery of fire and rescue provisions to children and young people and for the professionalism and conduct of employees and persons who volunteer to work with children and young people. In particular, SFR have specific statutory requirements and guidance to comply with in terms of employment, monitoring and referral to ensure the health, safety and welfare of children and young people. SFR must have suitable and sufficient policies and procedures in place.

SFR serves a diverse multicultural community; this fact is taken into account when planning and delivering activities with children and young people.



9. CONTACT US

We provide a vital public service for the people within the SFR Service Area. The impact our activities have on the local community is enormous and we know that if we are to meet our goal of continuous improvements, we need to keep in touch with the public we serve.

If you have something you'd like to share with us, you can get in touch in a number of ways:

- Use the feedback form on our website to send an email.
- Contact your local community fire station - details are listed on our website or in your local telephone directory.
- Contact your local Area HQ - details are listed on our website or in your local telephone directory.

Or contact us at:

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue Headquarters
Bothwell Road
Hamilton, ML3 OFD
T: 01698 402346
E: yet@strathclydefire.org

Or alternatively visit our website at:
www.strathclydefire.org

Your comments will be appreciated and treated in confidence.



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