

FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Area of Assessment:	Fire and Rescue Plan Development
Date of Assessment:	12.9.2024
Owner:	Darren Horsman
New or existing policy/function:	New Strategy
Stage 1 – Detail of policy, function, project or proposal	
Briefly describe the aims, objectives and outcomes of the policy/function	
<p>The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex is responsible for securing and maintaining an efficient and effective police service for the people of Essex and since October 2017, has also been responsible for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (PFCCFRA).</p> <p>More information about the role of the PFCC regarding policing and crime can be viewed here and about fire and rescue here. Both constitutions are available on the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner’s website at www.essex.pfcc.police.uk. Both Essex Police and ECFRS have their own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategies.</p> <p>The PFCC’s vision is that <i>safe and secure communities are the bedrock on which we build success and wellbeing for all</i>. Embedded in this vision is a need to work with, alongside and for local communities.</p> <p>At its heart this vision relies on the successful implementation of the three general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put an end to <u>unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act 2010</u>, including discrimination, harassment and victimisation. • Advance equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. • Foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. <p>As a public authority and in order to successfully achieve our vision for Essex we must have due regard to these.</p> <p>Developing the Fire and Rescue Plan and Police and Crime Plan are key statutory responsibilities and will provide direction to the relevant service and guide the Commissioner’s own actions over the term of their election.</p> <p>The PFCC is currently developing the Fire and Rescue Plan to cover the period 2024-2028 and this has been developed with the community and will contribute to the delivery of the Commissioner public sector equality duty.</p> <p>The Fire and Rescue Plan must also be prepared and published by the Authority in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.</p>	

The Plan sets out the Authority's strategic vision, priorities and objectives, for the period covered by the document (2024-2028), in connection with the discharge of their functions. The Commissioner must have regard to both the Fire and Rescue Plan and the Police and Crime Plan when carrying out their functions. The Chief Fire Officer must, in exercising functions which are delegated to them, have regard to the Fire and Rescue Plan.

In developing the Fire and Rescue Plan, the Authority must make arrangements for obtaining the views of the community.

The Fire and Rescue Plan should inform the Community Risk Management Plan, which should in turn outline how the Authority's priorities will be met.

Community Risk Management Plan

A Community Risk Management Plan ("CRMP") will be prepared and published by the Authority in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The function of preparing and issuing an CRMP for Essex has been delegated to the Chief Fire Officer, however the Plan must be approved by the Commissioner as the Authority.

The CRMP will set out an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the Authority and proposals, including about the allocation of resources, for the mitigation of those risks.

The CRMP must:

Reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the Authority;

Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources;

Outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;

Set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat;

Cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England;

Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners, and
Be easily accessible and publicly available.

It is in the development of the CRMP that the operational decisions will be consulted on that will have more direct impact on people and communities across Essex and a separate full EQIA is being developed for that stage of the project.

The Fire and Rescue Plan and Community Risk Management Plan Governance

The Fire and Rescue Plan and CRMP are closely aligned and for the public are part of the same dialogue with the Authority. Together the consultation and engagement in forming and developing these two documents are a principal element of the PFCC's statutory responsibility to be the local link between the fire and rescue service and local communities.

Constitutionally this dialogue starts with the PFCC election. Each candidate set out their offer to the public and then the public get to choose who they wish their PFCC to be. In Essex 346,353 turned out to vote. This democratic mandate sets the scene for the development of the Fire and Rescue Plan and then, led by the Chief Fire Officer, the development of the CRMP.

The Plan aims to create safe and secure communities within Essex and sets six priorities. These are listed below but are also included in the full plan accompanying this EQIA.

Ensure vulnerable people are protected (Ensure we protect vulnerable people and prevent harm)

How we plan to do this: be out in our communities, engaging with the public, identifying those at risk and working with partners to keep people safe

Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to Zero

How we plan to do this: work with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) to prevent harm on our roads through education and identifying and dealing with emerging risks

Promote a positive culture and develop the workforce

How we plan to do this: continue to build a positive culture within the fire and rescue service, attract talent from across our communities, and invest in our workforce through more training and development opportunities.

Make buildings across Essex safer

How we plan to do this: extend fire protection and enforcement, improve targeted protection and help shape safer new housing and industrial developments.

Improve productivity (Improve the effectiveness of operational response)

How we plan to do this: invest, modernise and reform the fire and rescue service, including its approach to operational resourcing, to make it more efficient, effective and fit for purpose.

Adapt to our changing environment

How we plan to do this: work together to reduce our environmental impact and address the consequences of extreme weather.

What policies/procedures/functions are relevant to this area?

No other policies are directly impacted but the Chief Fire Officer and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner both legally have to have due regard to the plans. As such, all policies and

procedures will flow from this Plan including as set out above the Community Risk Management Plan.

Stage 2 – Consider the Evidence

Which individuals and organisations are likely to be affected by the policy/function and in what way?

As this policy will set the strategic direction for the PFCC and inform the strategic direction of the Fire and Rescue Service this process will have an impact on all residents in Essex, staff and wider partners. However, its impact will not be even across all members and there will be people who are more impacted than others.

In developing the plan an engagement process was designed to help partners, the public and the services understand and be able to contribute.

Certain groups are at more risk of fires than others, more likely to be killed or seriously injured and more likely to interact with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. Due to this there will be people more significantly impacted than others.

The Service does not currently collect data about people who use the service, however, research around those killed or seriously injured in house fires shows that individuals who are physically disabled, hard of hearing or with hearing loss or have mental health issues are more likely to be at risk of dwelling fires. Other indicators such as living at home, drinking heavily and smoking are also factors in assessing how impacted people may be.

In terms of fatal dwelling fires ECFRS research has show that the following characteristic make people more likely be involved in these incidents.

- People who live alone
- Older people
- People living in private property
- Major life events, that create challenge in key risk areas, including ill health, bereavement, loss of some sort (job, licence, victim etc)
- When an individual has both a decreased likelihood of escape, *AND* an increased likelihood of ignition, this is highest risk of fatality.
- People who are living complex lives when it comes to their health and wellbeing...
 - *Challenge in their physical health and wellbeing*
 - *Challenge in their mental health and wellbeing*
 - *Challenge with their home environment*

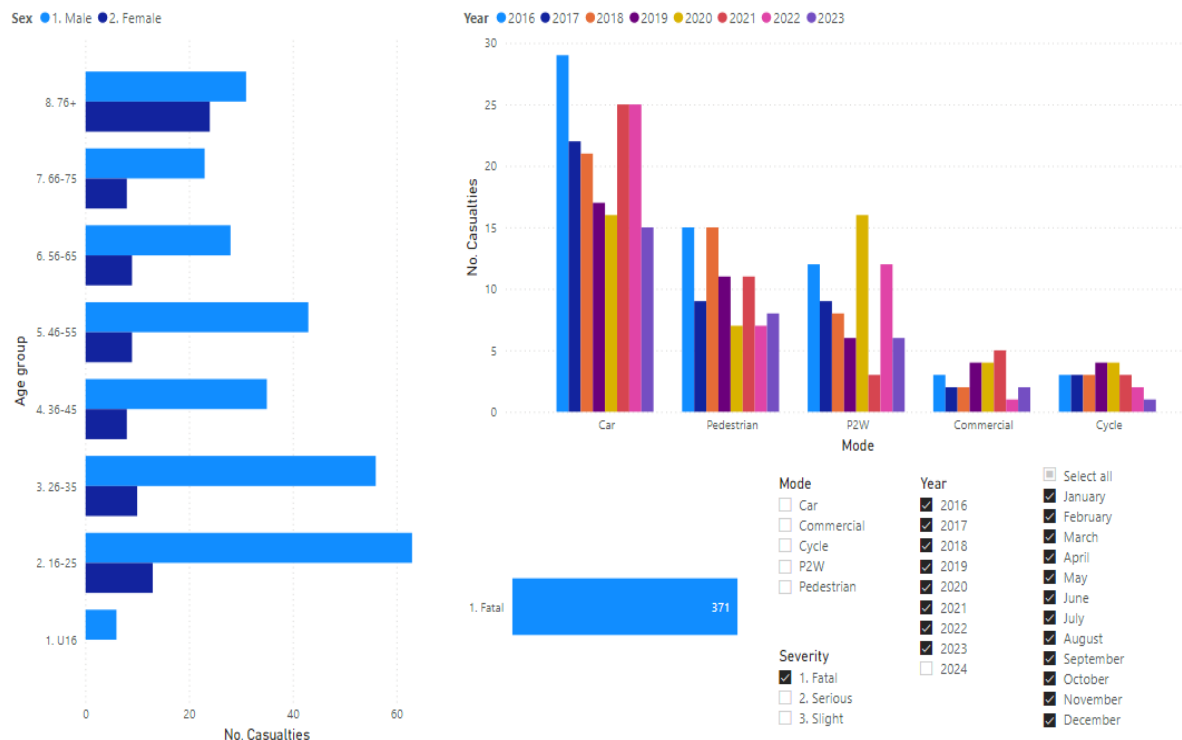
Challenge in more than one area simultaneously, is a strong indicator of risk of fatal fire.

People new to the UK have a higher risk of being harmed in a fire as they may be less familiar with UK fire safety practices. This can be linked to differences in the preparation of food, norms from their country of origin or expectations of housing and living facilities.

In terms of other areas, the Fire and Rescue Service support all of those who use the road network in Essex and as such they will be impacted by the level of support provided through SERP

to keep Essex’s roads safe. This is especially true of young people and those who drive motorbikes who are more at risk of being fatally injured on our roads.

In terms of fatal collisions on our roads we know from our work with Safer Essex Road’s Partnership that those most likely to die on our roads have the following characteristics.



At a national level we know:

Overall, in UK 2023:

- 75% of fatalities and 61% of casualties of all severities were male
- 4% of fatalities and 10% of casualties were aged 16 years old and under
- 24% of fatalities and 29% of casualties were aged 17 to 29 years old
- 23% of fatalities and 8% of casualties were aged 70 years old and over
- Males are more at risk than females
- Young people are more likely to be involved.

The car is the vehicle most involved in fatalities, followed by pedestrian, then motorcyclist. The “fatal four” are key behaviours involved in causation of injury and fatality: not wearing a seatbelt, drink and drug driving, speeding and using a handheld mobile phone.

Emerging risks include the use of new vehicles and the growth of micro journeying and electric cars.

As flooding becomes more prevalent this will also become more of a risk in Essex.

In terms of drowning the Service knows that males are more at risk than females with 83% of accidental fatalities. Inland waterways, continue to be the leading locations for accidental

drowning, accounting for 63% of deaths in locations including rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, and quarries.

There is also a significant seasonal impact with 236 accidental fatalities in the UK in 2023; 28 occurred in June, with 20 in July and 21 in August

Everyday activities like walking and running accounted for 48% of accidental fatalities and many of those who lost their lives were not intending to enter the water, 88 of the fatalities (37%) were walking or running before the accident.

There are also clearly evidence inequalities within the risk:

- Over 40% of children from low-income households cannot self-rescue
- Children from low affluence families are half as likely to be able to swim 25metres.
- 39% of black children cannot self-rescue

National Water Safety Forum is working to better understand water-related self-harm and suicide.

To gain further insight into who is most likely to need the Service, ECFRS are developing stronger mechanisms to track who is using their service and the characteristics or situations that make somebody more likely to need the service or be impacted by it.

In the meantime, along with the Service the Commissioner has commissioned a public perception survey that seek independent views from the public. This was commissioned earlier in the year.

While still early in its implementation the survey is providing the following insights.

Awareness

Most Essex residents understand ECFRS respond to fires, but are less aware of other services without being prompted.

Feelings of Safety

Electrical faults are considered the biggest single risk to home fires, followed by cooking. Over nine-in-ten Essex households claimed to have smoke alarms in their house, but less than half checked them at least once per month, with 15% never checking them.

In the local community, road traffic collisions and home fires were considered the most concerning fire and rescue related risks, although over a quarter did not perceive any risks. Over half think the Service provides enough information about what risks there may be in the community, although this is significantly lower for residents with disabilities.

Perceptions

Most feel ECFRS does a good job, provides good value for money and are confident the Service will respond effectively in an emergency.

Three-quarters think ECFRS and partners do a good job supporting vulnerable and at-risk people, although less than a third knew how to access specialist support for such people. Safety Advice.

Around two-thirds seek out fire safety advice, with the ECFRS being the most popular resource

Over half share fire safety advice with friends, family and others.

Prevention & Protection

Two-thirds are confident ECFRS is doing enough preventative work to reduce incidents on the roads and avert accidental drowning.

Almost all residents who work in Essex are confident employees in their workplace are aware of fire safety measures, including over half who are very confident.

Interaction

Only one-in-ten Essex residents had any contact or interaction with the Service in the past 12 months, with this most likely to be a school / workplace visit or responding to an emergency.

Almost all were satisfied with the service provided by ECFRS after the interaction.

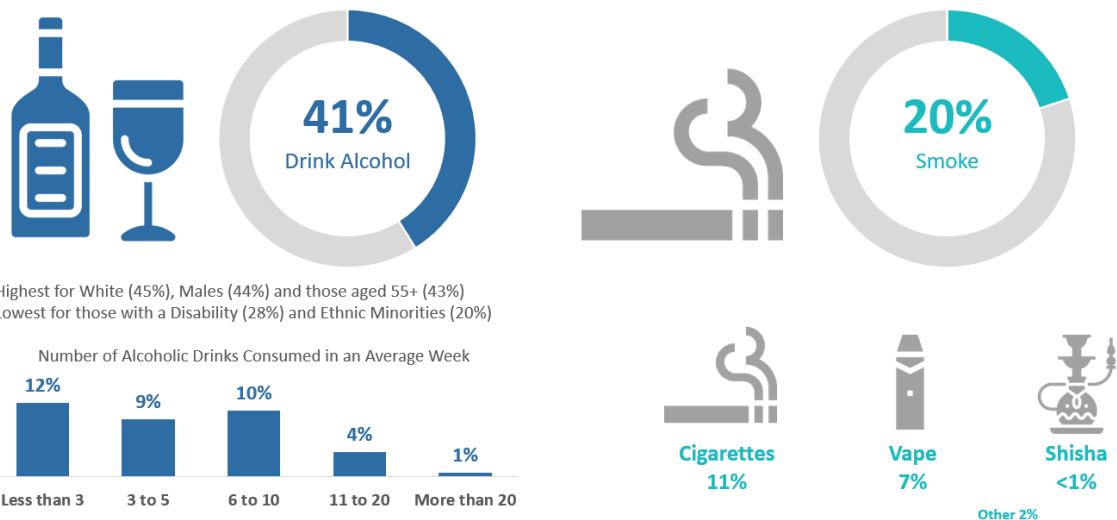
Communication

Two-thirds feel informed about what ECFRS is doing, although less than a fifth feel very well informed.

When it comes to what residents are interested in learning more about, personal safety and preventing home fires are the most popular topics.

Over a third use social media to keep informed about ECFRS, with Facebook being the most popular network.

Respondent Lifestyles Q4 2023/24



Percentages based on the total sample (n=1,927)

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In summary, from what we understand at the moment the following people with the characteristics below have been identified as being those that would be most impacted by the Fire and Rescue Plan.

- Young people, especially men, below the age of 25.
- People over the age of 70.
- Hard of hearing or hearing loss.
- Heavy drinkers or those with an addiction.
- Smokers.
- Recent migrants to the UK.

- Those from low social economic groups.
- Black families where children are statistically more at risk of drowning.
- People who are living complex lives when it comes to their health and wellbeing...
 - *Challenge in their physical health and wellbeing*
 - *Challenge in their mental health and wellbeing*
 - *Challenge with their home environment*
 - Challenge in more than one area simultaneously, is a strong indicator of risk of fatal fire.
- There is also evidence that people living in private property.

How these individuals are impacted will depend to a large degree on how the Plan is operationalised through the Community Risk Management Plan. Further engagement and operational issues will be shared through the CRMP process as at this stage we are primarily focused on setting the strategic direction.

What relevant quantitative data has been considered?

As well as the quantitative data included above the 2021 Census showed that Essex has a population of 1,860,000 people. 906,200 identify as male and 953,700 identify as female (rounded up figures). The South of the County is heavily populated while the North is more rural. Essex has a number of heavily populated conurbations including Southend, Chelmsford, Basildon, Colchester and Harlow.

The ethnic make-up of the county at the time of the 2021 Census was Asian 4.2%, Black 3.4 %, Mixed 2.6% and Irish Traveller/Other White 6%. The population had a slightly older population than the national average. 16.7% were recorded as having a disability.

Christianity is the most common religion in Essex, 47.9% of residents listed Christianity as their main religion. Following Christianity, the next most common responses were No Religion (42.1%) and Not Answered (5.7%). Other religions make up the remaining 4.3% of residents, with Muslim (1.63%) and Hindu (1.0%) being the most common religions in Essex.

What relevant qualitative data has been considered?

ECFRS did an in-depth assessment of the cases that resulted in deaths in Essex over a twelve-month period. This research reinforced the relevance of the elements that increase vulnerability that is highlight above. This has been included in the analysis of those impact set out above.

Through the development process direct engagement was also undertaken with representatives of many of the groups listed above include those living alone, the elderly and people who are registered death or blind. Through this engagement we tested the draft priorities, the level of impact they felt it would have on them and their ability to engage with the survey and willingness to work with us as we finalised the Plan and the Service worked up the proposal for the Community Risk Management Plan.

Has the function/policy been subject to consultation? If no, why not? If yes, which individuals and organisations were consulted and what form did consultation take?

The PFCC included the high-level priorities in their manifesto which formed the basis of the election for a PFCC for Essex on the 2nd of March 2024. The priority areas have then been developed with partners during June and July with a public survey being used to gather further input during August and July alongside further engagement.

Specific targeted workshops were undertaken with groups over 70, those living alone and people with dementia and their carers. We also engaged the Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services who organised and ran a youth orientated workshop for us to look at the perception of young people. We engaged with professionals working in the road safety space, professionals working in the equality and diversity space and those working on stopping violence against women and girls.

We also undertook targeted workshops with representatives from the Trans community and from the black community. We ran a dedicated piece of research with people with hearing loss and their communities and representatives of the blind community.

These workshops helped inform the development of the draft plan but also informed the specific consultation undertaken. As a result of the engagement, we amended the plan to reflect the positive impact it can have on these groups to help them mitigate the risks they face. This includes specific amendments around data sharing, community engagement and the ability to work with people from all communities across Essex.

We have also been able to identify new connections to provide ongoing feedback. We were able to target those groups who may not have engaged with our survey and provided hard copy surveys to networks supporting the over 70s, those with dementia and those in need of care. We have also been able to access the trans community and, through health, a wide range of those who are receiving or at least are known to the health care system in Essex.

Were any gaps in information identified? If so, what consideration has been given to commissioning work where required?

During the Plan development process we identified the area below as gaps and we adapted our engagement activity prior to the launch of the public survey to reach out to representatives from these groups, gain their insight into the draft priorities, test whether our assumptions that they are more likely to be impacted is correct and how best to engage with them throughout the process.

Young people, especially men, below the age of 25. – This was addressed by a specific workshop for young people and targeted social media activity at this demographic.

People over the age of 70. – this was addressed by a series of focused workshops and the use of a support network to provide hard copy surveys to users of these services.

Hard of hearing or hearing loss. – We ran a dedicated workshop with this group, we used their help in designing our survey to ensure it was accessible and clear, taking on feedback as necessary. We also took up the offer from this group for them to share the survey with other

contacts within their community and the participants have also offered to support the Service's work on developing the Community Safety Risk Management Plan.

Heavy drinkers or those with an addiction. – We didn't manage to workshop specifically with this group but did engage with partners within ECFRS who support this group and sought their views. Reaching this group may be something that needs additional work in the CRMP process.

Smokers - We didn't manage to workshop specifically with this group but did engage with partners within ECFRS who support this group and sought their views. Reaching this group may be something that needs additional work in the CRMP process.

Recent migrants to the UK - We didn't manage to workshop specifically with this group but did engage with partners who support this group and sought their views. Reaching this group may be something that needs additional work in the CRMP process.

Black families where children are statistically more at risk of drowning. – We engaged with representatives of these groups and used this to feed into our draft plans.

People who are living complex lives when it comes to their health and wellbeing...

Challenge in their physical health and wellbeing

Challenge in their mental health and wellbeing

Challenge with their home environment

Challenge in more than one area simultaneously, is a strong indicator of risk of fatal fire.

We established a Health focused workshop where we engaged with a range of representatives from the different sections of the health sector and sought their views in forming the draft survey and sharing the consultation. This group has also offered to help throughout the development of the Community Risk Management Plan.

There is also evidence that people living in private property are more at risk. – To understand this risk and audience better we have included this in the SMSR survey undertaken by the Service and the Commissioner to allow for greater understand and development to feed into the Community Risk Management Plan development.

At a general level the information the Service currently collects about those that interact with them is limited, however, through the development process this need has been identified and measures are being put in place by the Service to collect this information in the future.

Stage 3- Assessment of impact

		Yes/No	Comments and evidence where appropriate
Potential for differential/ adverse impact based on analysis of data and information	Race	Y	As set out in section one.
	Disability (Including physical, sensory and mental health)	Y	
	Gender reassignment	N	
	Age	Y	
	Religion or belief	N	
	Sexual orientation	N	
	Pregnancy and maternity	N	
	Marriage and civil partnership	N	
	Sex	Y	

Stage 4 – Deciding the way forward

If potential for differential/adverse impact remains explain why implementation is justifiable in order to meet the wider policy aims.

As we developed the plan, we used our initial analysis to inform the stakeholder approach and reach out to groups and charities that represent or can provide input on the specific characteristics listed above. This helped to develop our understanding around the potential impact on these groups and help the Commissioner positively impact their obligations under the public sector equality duty.

Characteristics	Engagement and Communication Response
Young people, especially men, below the age of 25.	Bespoke research commissioned through Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services to represent the view of young people under the age of 25.
People over the age of 70.	We ran three workshops with over 70 groups.
Hard of hearing or hearing loss.	Workshop undertaken with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
Heavy drinkers, smokers, or those with an addiction.	Bespoke engagement undertaken with health practitioners.
Recent migrants to the UK.	Engagement planned through UK Citizens, however this wasn't able to be undertaken during the development process.
Those from low social economic groups.	Plan survey incorporated acorn data into analysis so we can triangulate responses based on social- economic average for the group.
Black families where children are statistically more at risk of drowning.	Engagement through Water Safety Engagement Group
People who are living complex lives when it comes to their health and wellbeing... <i>Challenge in their physical health and wellbeing</i> <i>Challenge in their mental health and wellbeing</i> <i>Challenge with their home environment</i> Challenge in more than one area simultaneously, is a strong indicator of risk of fatal fire.	Bespoke engagement with health practitioners.
People living in private property are more at risk.	SMSR survey is going to incorporate acorn data into analysis so we can triangulate responses based on social- economic average for the group.

The learning from the process has also been raised with the Service so they can incorporate into the development of the CRMP the views and impact on the communities listed above. This will be measured and tracked by our ongoing engagement with the CRMP process.

Summarise any changes made to the policy to reduce or remove the potential for differential/adverse impact
<p>We have made a specific reference to working closely with health practitioners to ensure that those who have specific mental or physical health problems are known and supported.</p> <p>We have included additional emphasis on sharing data with partner organisations to ensure we reach and support those already known to other support organisations.</p> <p>We have altered the engagement element to include additional work with the voluntary sector in local communities to help identify and support those already being supported.</p> <p>We have made specific reference to helping young people contribute to their communities so young people are seen as part of the solution rather than a problem.</p> <p>We have also increased the emphasis put on education and getting prevention right in communities.</p> <p>We have included reference to the need for the Service to engage with all elements of society and people with different levels of vulnerability.</p>
If the function/policy is to be abandoned, please explain why and how the implications will be managed
Describe how the function/policy promotes good relations
<p>The Plan will support the delivery of services in a focused and targeted way to help everybody live a safe life and minimise risk across out county. By setting a strategic direction that both the Commissioner and the Chief Fire Officer must give due regard to the Plan put in place a legal duty for both to consider the level of vulnerability within communities and how these can be mitigated. Given the assessment above we know that many of those who will be identified as vulnerable may also have protected characteristics this will lead to those individuals being better able to engage productively in society and life safe lives.</p>

Stage 5 - Monitoring Arrangements
Describe how the function/policy is (or will be) monitored
<p>As part of the development of the plan, a series of measures have been developed to help support the delivery of the plan. These will form the basis of the Commissioner's scrutiny of the delivery of the plan alongside a delivery plan which is being developed by the PFCC's team to cover both the police and crime and fire and rescue plan deliverables.</p> <p>We have also taken some of the findings, for example those around people who drink alcohol excessively or live in private accommodation, and tweaked the longitudinal survey commissioned by ECFRS and the Commissioner to provide additional insight into these areas of work.</p>

Have the assessment outcomes been fed back to those consulted?			
Once the plan is approved, we will share this with all participants. We also highlighted the areas that we would adapt in the draft plan with stakeholders as we went through this as possible because of the heavy workshop based engagement approach we undertook.			
Impact assessed by:	Darren Horsman	Date:	12.9.2024
Approved by (owner):		Date:	