



CFRS focus groups: December 2019

Agenda

What	Duration	Total time
Welcome	4 mins	4 mins
Warm up and introductions	5 mins	9 mins
Perceptions and understanding of public service organisations	15 mins	24 mins
Remit and vision of the Fire Service	15 mins	39 mins
Exploring the Fire Service's strategic aims	25 mins	64 mins
Prioritising emergency response	25 mins	89 mins
Close	1 mins	90 mins

Resources and equipment:

- Voice recorder & spare batteries
- Flipchart and pens
- Brand logos printed
- Printed statements
- Paper and pens for each participant
- Name stickers
- Attendee list

1. Welcome (4 minutes)

EM and RA to welcome participants and thank them for giving up their time.

Thanks for taking the time to join us to talk to us today. My name is Emma McMillan, and this is my colleague Rachel Allerton. We're from a communications consultancy called Athene, and we'll be facilitating this focus group today.

As you might have guessed from our location, today's discussion is to gather your opinions of and attitudes towards the Fire Service in Cambridgeshire.

This focus group is one of three that we're holding in the region, and the purpose of the group is to reflect on the priorities and services of the Fire Service, and how they can best serve communities across the county.

Ground rules

Before we start our session, I'd like to quickly run through some ground rules to help our conversation flow:

- We don't have long – just an hour and a half – so if it feels like we're drifting off topic or going too in-depth into a particular area, then we might move the conversation on to make sure we get through our agenda
- We want to make sure everyone has a chance to speak, so we might ask people who have not spoken up to comment
- Please respect each other's opinions. There's no right or wrong answer. We want to hear what each of you think even if you are the only one who feels this way
- We will capture the conversation today using our voice recorder – this is to make sure that we don't miss any of your comments, and to aid our analysis after the session. We'd ask that only one person speaks at a time – it's difficult to follow the conversation if



everyone's talking at once. Any input you give us is completely anonymous so we won't attribute any comments to you personally

- We want you to be open and honest with us, so the conversation today will be confidential. We won't attribute any comments made to specific individuals. It may be best if you don't use anything directly identifying when you talk about your experiences, and we'd be grateful if you didn't discuss other participants' responses outside of this group
- And finally, please make sure your mobile phones are off or on silent

Any other health and safety notices for each site – CFRS to advise

Are there any questions so far?

2. Warm up (5 minutes)

Short activity to help get people talking to each other and engaged in the subject – getting people to think about what they could achieve with an unlimited budget.

To help us get to know one another, it would be great if we could quickly go around the table to find out a bit more about you.

Tell us your name, what keeps you busy during the day, and for some fun, imagine you had unlimited funds in your bank account, what would be the first thing you would do with the money?

RA to capture on flipchart paper. EM to facilitate brief reflection on any themes that emerge.

3. Perceptions and understanding of public services (15 minutes)

As you know, we're going to be talking about Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service. Every four years, the Service develops a new plan that sets out its focus for the next four years. At the moment, the Fire Service is planning for 2020-2024 and we want to test some of their thinking on you.

Before we delve in too deeply, we want to get you thinking more generally about public service organisations and the role they play in your community.

Can you name public service organisations that you are aware of? By this we mean, organisations and services that are publicly funded and provided to people living in Cambridgeshire:

- *Go around the table*
- *Facilitator to put cards on the table of organisations that have been mentioned*
- *Make sure Fire Service, Police, Ambulance have been mentioned*
- *Facilitator picks three organisations, including the Fire Service*

We want to talk a little about the assumptions you make about these different public service organisations and the role they play in your community.

Firstly, looking at organisation #1 (pick health related organisation mentioned by the group), what words would you associate with that organisation and the work it does?

Keep this brief – just 4/5 words from the group. RA to write words mentioned on the flipchart.

Now, looking at organisation #2 (pick education/young people related organisation mentioned by group), what words would you associate with this organisation and the work it does?

Keep this brief – just 4/5 words from the group. RA to write words mentioned on the flipchart.

Finally, looking at the Fire Service, what words would you associate with this organisation and the work it does?

RA to write words mentioned on the flipchart. EM to make sure everyone has responded. Facilitate short conversation to explore rationale behind the words.

4. The remit of the Fire Service and exploring its vision (15 minutes)

CFRS' remit

We're going to spend a little more time now thinking about the role that the Fire Service plays in Cambridgeshire, and your views on what it's there to do.

We've got a few cards here, with different activities on them.

- *Visiting the homes of vulnerable people who are at greater risk of a fire in their home and fitting smoke alarms*
- *Fall prevention support*
- *Winter warmth checks*
- *Fire safety training for businesses*
- *Responding to fires*
- *Attending road traffic accidents*
- *Rescue from height*
- *Responding to flooding*
- *Visiting young people who play with or have a fascination with fire*
- *Animal rescues*
- *Dealing with flooding*
- *Run schemes for young people to encourage more positive life choices and build self-esteem*
- *Visiting schools for educational talks*
- *Training carers to understand fire risk for the people they care for*
- *Facilitate visits from brownies/cubs etc*
- *Rescuing people from water*
- *Attending community events to give fire safety advice and promote the fire service as a career choice*
- *Attending fire alarms*

Which of these activities do you think the Fire Service should be responsible for?

We want you to sort the cards into two piles – one for activities the Fire Service should deal with and another for activities you think the Fire Service shouldn't deal with?

Group works to sort the cards. EM to facilitate conversation about why they've been sorted in this way, picking up on a couple of activities and questioning rationale.

In fact, the Fire Service carries out all of these activities! Is this surprising to you? If so, why?

Facilitate conversation among the group. RA to jot down any key words.

CFRS' vision

Display flipchart paper with CFRS vision statement.

The vision of the Fire Service is for safe communities where there are no preventable deaths or injuries from fire or other emergencies.

Does this vision feel right to you? Given what we've just been talking about, do you think the Fire Service is likely to achieve its vision?

Participants to chat to the person next to them, and then feed back to the wider group. EM to facilitate conversation among the group.

RA to capture feedback on flipchart paper.

5. Exploring the Fire Service's strategic aims (25 minutes)

We've talked a little about the role and the vision of the Fire Service. The Fire Service has four strategic aims that it's going to focus on to help it achieve the vision it has set for itself.

We've got a number of different pieces of card here – each of them has a different factor written on it which the Fire Service needs to consider in order to achieve those aims.

People (blue text)	Community Safety Excellence (green text)	Operational Excellence (red text)	Value for Money (black text)
<i>Keeping our people safe</i>	<i>Working with partners to identify those most at risk of fire</i>	<i>Developing our on-call crews to make sure we can keep the public safe</i>	<i>Introducing new technologies to help us be more effective</i>
<i>Developing a diverse workforce and making sure it's accessible to all</i>	<i>Educating and positively influencing young people</i>	<i>Making sure our vehicles and equipment meet our needs</i>	<i>Working with other emergency services</i>
<i>Giving our staff the opportunity to develop and reach their potential</i>	<i>Helping businesses to comply with fire safety rules</i>	<i>Making sure we understand what the local need is for our services and what resources we need</i>	<i>Keeping an eye on what we're spending, making sure we're as efficient as possible</i>
<i>Improving how we support our employees' mental health and wellbeing</i>	<i>Working with developers and local authorities to increase public safety</i>	<i>Making sure we have enough resource in our control room</i>	<i>Introducing more effective ways of working for our staff</i>
<i>Making sure we engage with and listen to our employees</i>	<i>Work with partners to reduce the number of deaths and injuries on our roads</i>	<i>Making sure we meet national standards to improve the safety of our firefighters</i>	<i>Making sure we plan for the future</i>

We want you to have a good look through them all, and then select eight aims which you think are particularly important for helping the Fire Service to achieve its vision.

Once you've all chosen we'll take a look at what you've selected, and why.

Enough cards available for everyone to choose each option. Participants sift through and select their cards.

EM to facilitate discussion on why they have chosen certain aims.

Also identify which aims haven't been picked and discuss why.

Is anything missing? What other aims might they have expected?

RA to capture number of times each element has been chosen and any relevant qualitative feedback.

6. Prioritising emergency response (25 minutes)

We now want to think about a slightly different topic. To help set the scene, we want you to think about what you know about the police and ambulance services.

We're going to give you a couple of scenarios, and in the first instance we want you to think about whether you'd expect the police to respond more quickly, less quickly or in the same time to these scenarios?

- A fight is currently taken place in the street and you're worried someone might get hurt
- You come home to find your house has been broken into (but there's no sign of whoever did it)

Ask the group to consider this in pairs and feed back to the group.

Great, ok. Now here's a similar exercise but we want you to think about the ambulance service:

Would you expect the ambulance service to respond more or less quickly to:

- Someone who is having a heart attack
- Someone who has fallen and broken their wrist

Have a conversation in pairs and report back to the group.

Why might there be a difference between these scenarios? Why would the police/ambulance service respond quicker to one situation than another?

Now we want you to apply that thinking to the fire service. Can you come up with examples of where the fire service might respond more quickly to a fire than others?

Examples as prompts:

- Cigarette put in bin has caused contents to start smouldering (eg, no flames, but there is smoke)
- Occupied house on fire, residents will struggle to escape safely

In fact, every call the fire service receive about a suspected fire has to have an emergency response, regardless of whether there's a threat to life or not.

Is this a surprise to you? How would you feel if the fire service was to introduce a similar triage type system? Would you agree with this in principle? What might the benefits be?

Ask participants to chat with person next to them, before sharing with the wider group.

7. Close (1 minute)

We've come to the end of our session now, but before we close, does anyone have anything else they'd like to say?

Thank you so much for giving up your time to join us for this session today. It's been great to get your feedback and hear what you have to say.

Thank you all so much again.