

Ministear airson Slàinte Coimhearsnachd agus Cùisean Lagha
Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs

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Ms Sandra White MSP
The Scottish Parliament
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Dear Sandra,

Thank you for your letter of 14 January in which you ask for the Scottish Government's position regarding possible mutualisation of fire and rescue services in England.

We are not clear what, if any, benefits mutualisation might offer: and given our own extensive programme of reform around the creation of the single Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, further changes to the statutory basis of the service could be counter-productive.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is a public service – it is not a business and it will not be privatised. Our single service approach is the only way to protect the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service against Westminster budget cuts.

Changes south of the border would of course have potential implications for Scotland – in particular on cross-border mutual aid arrangements. As this issue is still at an early stage, no formal consultation with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has taken place, however my officials have written to DCLG to clarify our own position, and to request formal engagement with DCLG to ensure these implications are fully taken into account.

I hope that this is helpful. I have also copied this letter to Grahame Smith, STUC and John Duffy, FBU for their information.

Roseanna Cunningham