



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

Aberdeenshire Area Local Fire and Rescue Plan Review 2017



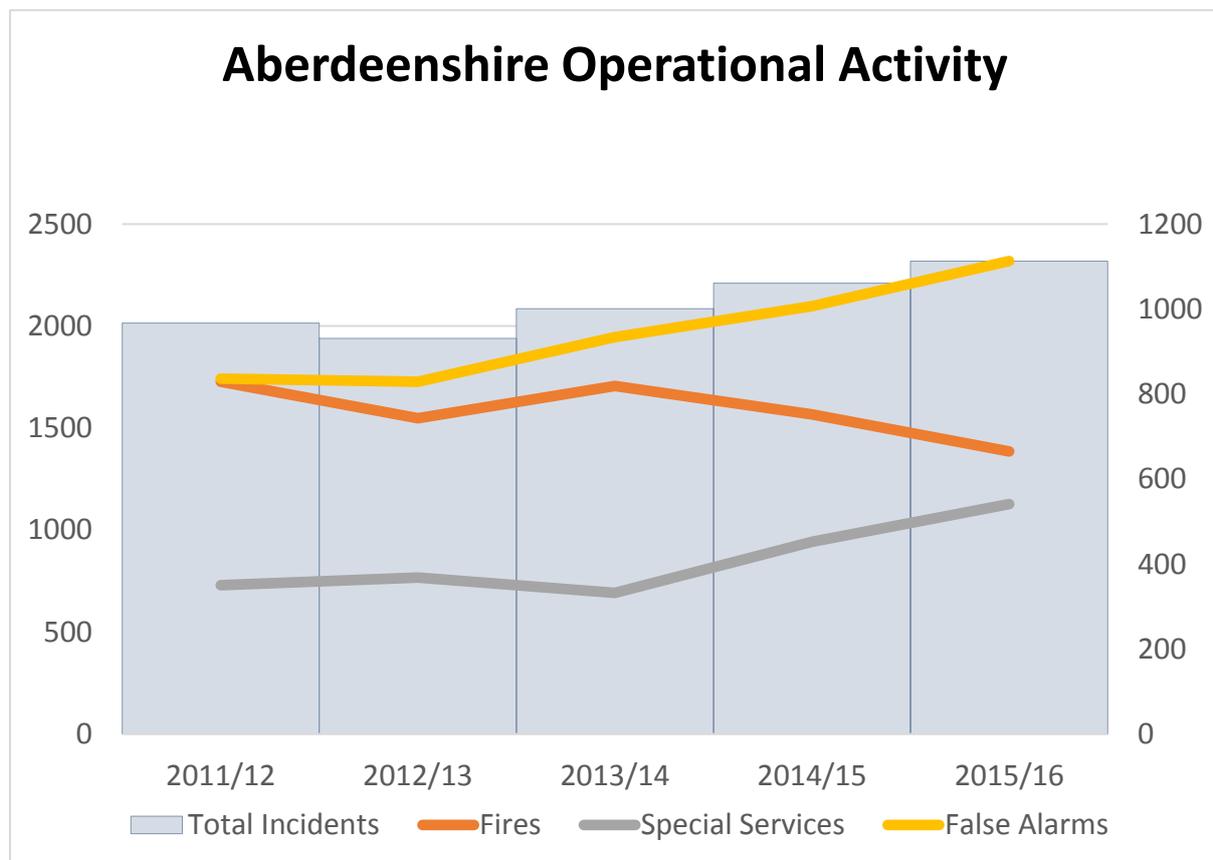
INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is required under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 as amended to prepare Local Fire and Rescue Plans for each local authority in Scotland. Following the publication of our Strategic Plan in our inaugural year, our first Local Plans were published in April 2014.

These plans were developed to direct the Service through its initial transformation journey and have helped to forge our place as a national organisation with a strong sense of local accountability. Against the drive of public sector reform, the local planning landscape continues to evolve to provide a greater focus on protecting the most vulnerable and improving community outcomes through collaborative working.

The publication of our new Strategic Plan 2016-19 in October 2016 now instigates a timely requirement to carry out a mandatory review of all Local Fire and Rescue Plans. This review will provide us with information on how well we are performing against our existing priorities as well as highlighting areas for continued improvement and opportunities for change against the growing needs of our communities.

Figure 1. Performance Data – what the figures told us



The graph above clearly shows whilst there has been a reduction in incidents involving fire there have been an increase in both special service calls and false alarms across the area with the overall level of activity across the area increasing over the last 3 years.

In carrying out the review of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire we firstly looked at the priorities that we had agreed for the Local Plan from 2014-2017, these were:

- Local Risk Management and Preparedness
- Reduction in Accidental Dwelling Fires
- Reduction in Fire Casualties and Fatalities
- Reduction of Deliberate Fires
- Reduction of Fires in Non-Domestic Property and Secondary Fires
- Reduction in Casualties from Road Traffic Collisions, Flooding and other Special Service Calls
- Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals.

Looking at each of priorities we can now provide both quantitative and qualitative information to demonstrate the progress that has been made.

LOCAL RISK MANAGEMENT AND PREPAREDNESS

This priority relates to ensuring that we reduce risks to our communities and ensuring that they receive the best possible service. The management of risk within our communities means:

- Identifying the risks to the community which fall within the scope of responsibility of the SFRS.
- Undertaking a process to prioritise these risks.
- Ensuring that appropriate Local and National resource capability and trained Fire Service Personnel are in place to address the risks.

Throughout the period of this plan we have made good progress against this priority and have contributed to risk planning through Scottish Fire and Rescue Service internal processes and procedures, Grampian Local Resilience Partnership and The Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership.

An important element in achieving this priority is ensuring that we have enough staff with the right skills in the right place at the right time to deliver our services when communities need them. We have achieved this throughout this plan and continually work at a local level to maintain our establishment and ensure that we recruit staff where needed. The Retained Duty System has proved challenging with turnover of staff due to changing personal circumstances and retirements but local managers have worked tirelessly to ensure that appliance availability is maintained and improved upon by running local recruitment campaigns to maintain numbers.

Recruitment (RDS) 2014-2017

During the period 2014 -2017 we had a significant turnaround of staff within the Aberdeenshire area with a through flow of staff (both recruitment and resignation/retirement) of 103 staff members with a net gain of 28 staff members across the 24 RDS stations.

This reflects the continued challenges within the area to maintain establishment levels across all RDS stations.

During this review period we introduced a 5 Watch Duty System for our staff Peterhead (this is part of a national system) this will see resilience increased within our only Whole-time Station in Aberdeenshire and provide greater flexibility for development and community engagement activities.

REDUCTION OF ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES

Throughout Aberdeenshire, dwelling fires occur within a wide variety of home types; this includes both the private and rented sectors. Ward based analysis reports show that a high percentage of fires start in the kitchen when the occupier is cooking in the home.

Accidental dwelling fires can have a significant negative impact upon both the individuals and the wider community and are financially costly to house holders and housing providers in terms of repair and the reinstatement of homes. Key contributory risk factors include:

- Lifestyle including smoking, consumption of alcohol and prescribed and non-prescribed drugs.
- Individual capability and vulnerability.
- Ageing demographics

We are progressing against this priority and when comparing Aberdeenshire with the other 31 Local Authorities in Scotland we have the 11th lowest number of Accident Dwelling Fires per 10,000 population, averaged over the last five years.

The table below shows the number of accidental dwelling house fires in Aberdeenshire for this period;

Table 1. Accidental Dwelling Fires

2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
198	163	173	191	180

By far the biggest cause of accidental dwelling fires is cooking within the home that accounted for 579 (64%) of the 905 accidental dwelling fires that occurred over the last five years.

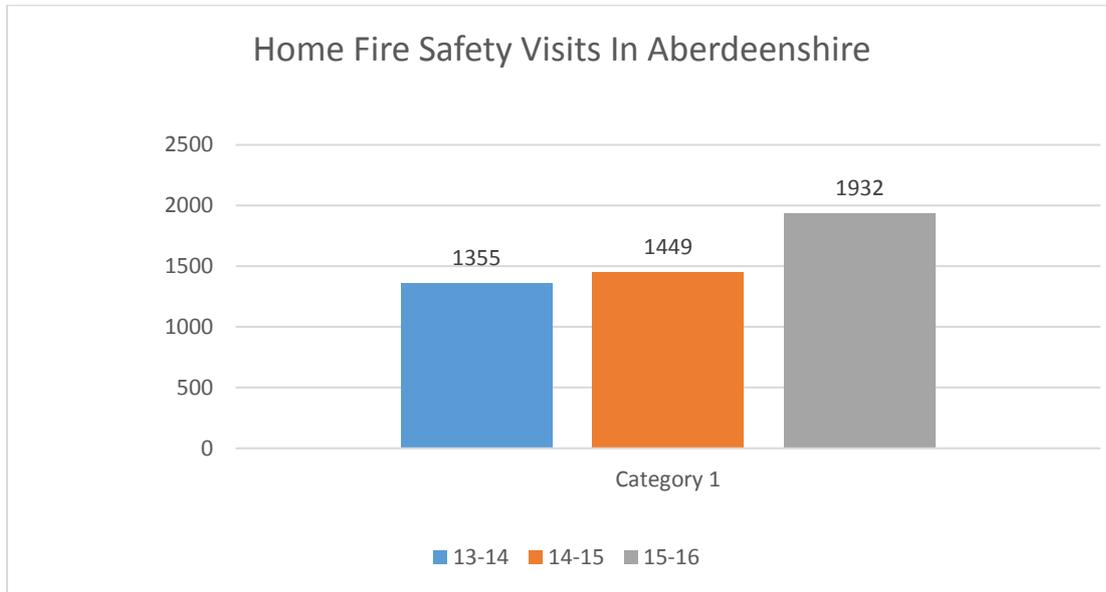
Out of the 905 incidents alcohol were determined to be an influencing factor on 83 occasions (9%).

Of the 905 incidents 628 (70%) required no action from firefighters on arrival other than removing the item from the heat source and providing reassurance and community safety advice.

Out of 905 incidents firefighters assisted with evacuation from the building at 265 incidents (29%).

A key element in reducing the number of accidental dwelling fires has been partnership working and the increased number of high value Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV's) delivered by both local crews and our dedicated staff in our community action team. The chart below shows the continued improvement in the number of HFSV's delivered since the beginning of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;

Figure 2. Home Fire Safety Visits Delivered



As can be seen the chart above the area has seen continuous improvement in the delivery of HFSV's with an increase of 577 (43%) visits delivered when comparing 2013-14 with 2015-16.

REDUCTION IN FIRE CASUALTIES AND FATALITIES

The reduction of fire casualties and fatalities is clearly linked with our priority to Reduce Accidental Dwelling Fires. The reduction of fire fatalities and casualties is at the core of our preventative and early intervention activities carried out by the SFRS in the Aberdeenshire area.

Significant contributory factors associated with the number of fire casualties and fatalities include:

- Lifestyle including smoking, consumption of alcohol and prescribed and non-prescribed drugs.
- Individual capability and vulnerability.
- Ageing demographics

We are progressing against this priority however when comparing Aberdeenshire with the other 31 Local Authorities in Scotland we were the 11th highest local authority area for the number of accidental dwelling fire casualties per 10,000 population averaged out over the last five years.

When comparing the area against the other Scottish Local Authorities in relation to fatalities resulting from accidental dwelling fires we are 13th highest of the 31 Local Authorities when averaged out over the previous 5 years.

The table below shows the number of fire casualties and fatalities in Aberdeenshire for this period;

Table 2. Casualties and Fatalities

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Casualties	36	43	41	43	40
Fatalities	2	3	3	2	2

As can be seen in the table above the area is making progress with the small reduction of fire casualties. Fire fatalities have shown a static pattern across the period with low numbers of fatal casualties

158 (73%) of the 215 casualties reported occurred as a result of a dwelling fire.

11 (91%) of the 12 fatalities that occurred were as a result of a dwelling fire.

Of the 203 non-fatal casualties 41 of them required to be rescued from the fire (21 by firefighters and 20 by other people before the arrival of the fire service).

Of the 203 non-fatal casualties there injuries can be further broken down into the following categories:

17 casualties went to hospital injuries appeared to be serious

74 casualties went to hospital, injuries appeared to be slight

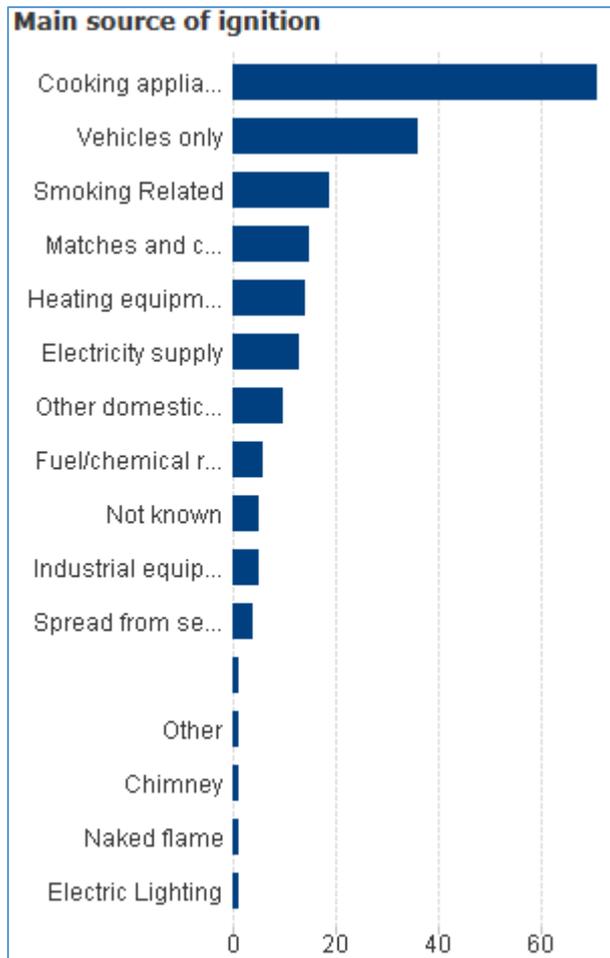
91 casualties were given first aid on scene

21 casualties received a precautionary check up on scene.

The main cause of fires with non-fatal casualties was cooking appliances that accounted for 71 (35%) of casualties. 19 (9%) of casualties resulted from fires caused by smokers materials.

Figure 3. Main Ignition Source

The chart below shows the main source of ignition for fires involving non-fatal casualties:



Of the 203 non-fatal fire casualties 41 (20%) were determined to be suffering impairment due to drugs or alcohol.

Of the 11 fire fatalities, 6 (54%) occurred in the Living Room. 2 (18%) occurred in the bedroom and 1 (9%) occurred in the kitchen.

Like in our previous priority partnership working and the delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits are a key element in reducing fire casualties.

REDUCTION OF DELIBERATE FIRES

In Aberdeenshire evidence reflects that deliberate fires are a problem in specific areas that can be closely linked to antisocial behaviour. Secondary fires (refuse and grass) are on a downward trend in Aberdeenshire; however they still account for a high percentage of our operational activity.

Table 3. Deliberate Fires

The table below shows the number of deliberate fires in Aberdeenshire for this period.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
Deliberate Dwellings	9	16	9	9	12	55
Deliberate Other Buildings	24	10	16	26	15	95
Deliberate Vehicle	20	21	13	13	16	83
Deliberate Other Primary	12	11	9	15	13	60
Deliberate Secondary Refuse	82	87	75	67	53	364
Deliberate Secondary Other	81	33	66	43	39	262
Total	228	178	188	173	148	

 ***3 year low and post introduction of the Local Plan**

As can be seen in the table above the area is making good progress in reducing the number of deliberate fires with figures for the last two years showing consecutive five year lows.

During the reviewing period the service within Aberdeenshire has attended 915 deliberate fires 626 (68%) of these have been deliberate secondary fires (Refuse or Grass).

REDUCTION OF FIRES IN NON-DOMESTIC PROPERTY AND SECONDARY FIRES

The SFRS has a statutory duty to promote fire safety under Part 2 (section 8) of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) to include provision of information and publicity aimed at preventing fire and reducing fire deaths and injuries, restricting fire spread and advising on means of escape from buildings. All workplaces and business premises involved in fire are classed as Non-Domestic Fires. Sleeping risks are seen as a particularly high fire risk since most fatal fires occur at night when people are less vigilant and at their most vulnerable. Residential care homes, student accommodation, Houses in Multiple Occupation and self-contained sheltered housing make up the greatest proportion of these risks within the Aberdeenshire area.

High fire risk properties are audited on a yearly basis by our staff to ensure that the fire precautions within the property are to a suitable standard.

Secondary Fires include fires involving agricultural land, forestry and moorland. These areas of Aberdeenshire contribute substantially to the local environment by providing economic benefit through tourism, employment and industry.

Table 4. Non-Domestic and Secondary Fires

The table below shows the number of Non-Domestic and Secondary Fires that have occurred in Aberdeenshire during the review period.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
Non-Domestic Fires	93	89	88	105	81	456
Secondary Fires (accidental)	130	85	160	111	92	578
Secondary Fires (Deliberate)	163	120	141	110	92	626
Totals	386	294	389	326	265	

REDUCTION IN CASUALTIES FROM ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS, FLOODING AND OTHER SPECIAL SERVICE CALLS.

A core part of SFRS's activity locally is responding to emergencies such as Road traffic Collisions (RTC's) other rescue situations and flooding. Firefighters are trained to a high standard and have at their disposal the most modern equipment for extricating people in rescue situations and administering first aid to casualties.

The SFRS has a crucial role at a local level in contributing to the wider road safety agenda, as statistically fire and rescue operational activity continues to be an area of concern within Aberdeenshire, National statistics identify that the most at risk group is young male drivers.

Aberdeenshire has experienced significant flooding events in recent years. The SFRS has a duty to respond to and support communities in recovering from these incidents. The development of Water Rescue Teams strategically located across the area has significantly improved emergency response and public safety.

Table 5. (Casualties from RTC's, Flooding and other Special Services).

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
RTC	217	167	218	221	196	906
Other Rescue / Release of Person	8	7	13	8	6	42
Other Transport Incident	0	0	3	1	0	4
Rescue or Evacuation from Water	0	4	2	0	4	10
Medical Incident	66	47	56	62	59	290
Removal of Objects from People	0	0	1	2	1	4
Hazardous Materials	12	4	1	1	0	18
Assist Other Agencies	2	3	13	12	19	49
Effecting Entry	4	2	14	19	22	59
Suicide Attempt	0	0	1	1	3	5
Totals	309	234	322	327	310	1502

Table 6. Fatal Casualties (from RTC's, Flooding and other Special Services)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
RTC	9	10	16	21	10	63
Assist other Agencies	0	0	2	4	4	10
Effecting Entry	1	0	2	2	4	9
Suicide	0	0	1	0	5	6
Other Transport	0	0	1	0	0	1
Rescue or Evacuation from Water	0	0	1	0	2	3
Medical Incident	8	2	2	6	13	31
Other rescue / release of person	0	0	1	2	1	4
Totals	18	12	26	35	39	127

REDUCTION OF UNWANTED FIRE ALARM SIGNALS

The SFR's aim is to reduce the impact of unwanted fire signals generated by automatic detection systems on service delivery, business and commerce. By doing this we aim to improve the safety of Aberdeenshire communities by ensuring that our service is more readily available for genuine emergencies. An Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal (UFAS) is defined as a signal transmitted by an Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) system reporting a fire where, upon arrival of the fire service, it is found that a fire has not occurred. UFAS are entirely avoidable through good system design, management practice, procedure, maintenance and the appropriate use of space within buildings.

Other types of false alarm include malicious 999 calls and emergency calls made when a person genuinely believes that an emergency has occurred which requires the attendance of the SFRS, and that belief subsequently turns out to be unfounded.

Table 7. UFAS

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
UFAS	398	436	514	572	592	2512
False Alarm Malicious	25	39	26	37	32	159
False Alarm Good Intent	144	212	182	211	225	974
Totals	567	687	722	820	849	

The reduction of unwanted fire alarm signals remains a priority. All crews have been trained in the reduction of UFAS and provide advice to occupiers on every occasion that we attend a UFAS incident. Our Fire Safety Enforcement Staff monitor UFAS calls and take appropriate action at the various stages as stipulated in the SFRS UFAS Policy.

CONCLUSION

Although our current Local Fire and Rescue Plan has served us well and we are making some progress against the indicators there is scope to widen our priorities to look at the wider issues on the prevention agenda and make a wider contribution to meeting the outcomes contained within the Aberdeenshire Local Outcome Improvement Plan

Staff within the area are committed to making a full commitment to making our communities within Aberdeenshire safer.

We have made significant process in relation to the delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits and Community Safety and Engagement activity within the area since the beginning of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, this has been achieved through strong visible leadership,

staff engagement, commitment to partnership working and developing our partnerships, and a willingness from all staff to contribute to making Aberdeenshire a safer place to live, work and visit.

An area of innovative progress has been the introduction of the Community Safety Support Officer role within Aberdeenshire in the Upper Deeside area. This role will further develop and expand the partnership working within the area and provide significant opportunity to develop new relationships and support those most vulnerable in the community.

From an incident response perspective we have performed well along with partners to emergencies throughout Aberdeenshire. We will continue to build on this by working with partners through civil contingencies and the Local Resilience Partnership to ensure that joint training and exercising is conducted for the risks within Aberdeenshire and that staff are confident and competent in the roles that they undertake.

ENGAGEMENT – WHAT OUR STAKEHOLDERS TOLD US

Building on the intelligence we gathered during engagement and consultation of our Strategic Plan 2016-19 we re-engaged with our key stakeholders to seek further views on our local service delivery.

Feedback from stakeholders was positive with recognition being given to how the Fire and Rescue Service contribute to Community Safety and Community Planning Agendas within the area. Locally the Service are well represented and make an effective contribution in both Community Planning and Community Safety arenas.

There is scope to build on the collaborative approach that takes place within Aberdeenshire and there is an opportunity to reflect this in future priorities within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

Key areas of feedback that we received during engagement on the review of our plan were;

- Opportunity for greater focus on Youth Engagement and Partnership Working to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour
- Consider how we can maximise Community Safety Messages for Local Community Groups
- Service Transformation and Redesign
- Community Resilience (Safe and Secure Communities)
- Our contribution to Road Safety
- Local Service Delivery (Service Transformation and Redesign).

NEW DRAFT LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN 2017-20

It is proposed the following priorities are taken forward in the new Local Fire and Rescue Plan for the Aberdeenshire Area:

- **Priority 1:**
Unintentional harm/injury and non-fire emergencies – in the home, road safety, outdoor, water safety.
- **Priority 2:**
Deliberate fire setting – investigating fires and seeking to identify those responsible, and engagement activity to address the underlying causes of this behaviour.
- **Priority 3:**
Non-domestic fire safety – including workplaces and business premises, care homes, student accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- **Priority 4:**
Unwanted fire alarm signals – seeking to reduce the incidence and impact of unwanted fire signals, and ensuring the service is more readily available for genuine emergencies.
- **Priority 5:**
Operational response/preparedness and community resilience – ensuring firefighters have the skills and expertise to respond to incidents, that the service has the capacity to meet the needs of communities, and that the service can respond to emergencies alongside partner agencies.

The above proposed priorities will be included within the impending new draft Aberdeenshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2017-20 soon to be issued for formal consultation.