

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment Recording Form Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

PART 1 – BASIC INFORMATION

Before you complete an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) you must read the guidance notes and, unless you have a comprehensive knowledge of the equality legislation and duties, it is strongly recommended that you attend an EHRIA training course.

Name of the proposed new or revised policy, strategy, project, activity or service being assessed.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategy 2025-28

Policy owner(s) responsible for completing the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment.

Louise Patrick
Strategic Planning and Partnerships Coordinator
Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications

Colleagues and/or other partners involved.

Kirsty Jamieson
Planning and Performance Officer

E&D Practitioner/Support

Parveen Khan
Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Date Commenced

27 December 2024

Please complete the following questions.

1. Develop a clear understanding of your aims, objectives and the intended outcomes of the policy, strategy, project, activity, or service.	
Briefly describe the main aims, objectives and purpose.	<p>The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Strategy 2025-28 outlines the steps the SFRS will take over the next three years to deliver our Vision; and contribute towards the seven priorities within Scottish Government's Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022.</p> <p>The Strategy will also help deliver the priorities outlined within the SFRS Long-Term Vision document as well as setting out how the Board and management team of the SFRS will embark on a programme of development for the organisation over the next three years.</p> <p>This Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been developed as part of the process to support the implementation of the SFRS Strategy 2025-28 and to fully consider equality, diversity, and inclusion from the very beginning of the development process.</p>
What results/outcomes are intended?	<p>The primary goal of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is to make people safer. The SFRS Strategy 2025-28 will provide an overview of the high-level commitments for the next three years and will illustrate how we intend to prioritise our resources to improve community safety, wellbeing, and resilience.</p> <p>In addition, the SFRS Strategy 2025-28 will provide the link between the National Performance Framework, the Justice in Scotland Vision and Priorities, the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022, the SFRS Long-Term Vision and the Strategic Outcomes of the SFRS.</p>
Who is intended to benefit and in what way?	<p>Scottish Government, SFRS Board, SFRS personnel, people, and communities of Scotland through a clear understanding of what the SFRS longer term ambitions are and what it sets out to achieve over the next three years in pursuit of those.</p>
Does it link with any other function/policy/activity/project?	<p>The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022 outlines the Scottish Government's expectations of the SFRS which need to be reflected in the SFRS Strategy 2025-28 and Local Plans. Further detail on the specific strategic actions we will take to meet the priorities set out in these will be presented in Three Year Delivery Plans, Annual Operating Plans and Directorate Plans. The SFRS Strategy 2025-28 is related to all SFRS strategies, plans, activities, policies, and initiatives by setting the overarching operating parameters for the SFRS.</p>
What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	<p>Detract factors that could pose a high risk due to their potential impact and likelihood of occurrence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A failure to align the SFRS Strategy 2025-28 and underpinning planning framework with the Fire

	<p>and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - failure to communicate content, purpose and operating model to appropriate personnel and stakeholders - Lack of resources to deliver outcomes - Environmental/operating landscape changes - Political changes
Who will be responsible for implementation?	SFRS Board and Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) are primarily responsible for overseeing and implementing the SFRS Strategy 2025-28.

PART 2 – ESTABLISHING RELEVANCE

- This section is designed to determine if there is relevance between the function/policy and equality and Human Rights legislation.
- This section is designed to determine if there is relevance between the function/policy and the Protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010, other equality characteristics or Human Rights.
- Initial screening will provide an audit trail of the justification for those functions that have been deemed not relevant for impact assessment.

Q1A. The function/policy will or is likely to influence SFRS' ability to....

General Equality Duty	Yes/ Potential	No	Don't Know/Don't Have Enough Evidence
<i>* If required, further information on General Equality Duty can be accessed here.</i>			
Eliminate discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q1B. The function/policy will or is likely to be relevant on the grounds of....

Please tick as appropriate.

** If required, further information on the protected characteristics can be accessed here.*

	Yes/ Potential	No	Don't Know/Don't Have Enough Evidence
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring Responsibilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care Experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership (answer this only in relation to point a above)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion and belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex (gender)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social and Economic Disadvantage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Island Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q1C. If you have selected 'No' for any or all of the characteristics above, please provide supporting evidence or justification for your assessment that no relevance has been established and therefore a full impact assessment is not required.

The Strategy is unlikely to be relevant on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership unless an activity relates to employment.

Due to the strategic nature of this document, its broad reaching scope and its reliance on the interpretation of its ambitions through associated strategies, plans, policies and practices, the SFRS Strategy 2025-28 does not lend itself well to analysis under the equality impact assessment process. The Strategy does, however, play a crucial role in directing future initiatives and corporate decisions which may themselves be more directly relevant to the general equality duty.

In recognition of the role the SFRS Strategy 2025-28 plays in directing activity of the SFRS and the potential for those activities to further the aims of the general equality duty the Strategy 2025-28 is being screened as relevant to the general equality duty and relevant for progressing to equality impact assessment and Island Impact Assessment. The focus of the island equality impact assessment will be on outlining the broad equality context within which the SFRS operates.

Q2A. Is the function/policy relevant to the Human Rights Act 1998?

* If required, further information on the Human Rights Act 1998 can be accessed [here](#).

Yes **No** **Don't Know**

Q2B. Is the function/policy relevant to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?

* If required, further information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child can be accessed [here](#).

Yes **No** **Don't Know**

Q2C. If you have selected 'No' for Human Rights and/or Children's Rights above, please provide supporting evidence or justification for your assessment that no relevance has been established and therefore a full impact assessment is not required.

N/A

Concluding Part 2

Outcome of Establishing Relevance	Please Tick	Next Steps
There is no relevance to Equality or the Human Rights Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proceed to Part 4 Monitoring

There is relevance to some or all of the Equality characteristics and/or the Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Proceed to Part 3 Impact Assessment
It is unclear if there is relevance to some or all of the Equality characteristics and/or the Human Rights Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proceed to Part 3 Impact Assessment

PART 3 – IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Describe and reference:

- relevant issues
- evidence gathered and used
- any relevant resolutions to problems
- assessment and analysis
- decision about implementation
- justification for decision
- potential issues that will require future review
- the results of any consultation required

Characteristic	
<p>Age</p> <p>Consider: Children, young people, and adults. Education, retirement, physical health, mobility, access and egress, specific needs in relation to fire safety, communication needs and/or barriers.</p> <p>Mental Health: Different impacts both positive and negative dependent on life stages around participation, relationships, poverty, education and training, opportunities to succeed and physical health.</p>	<p>Older people</p> <p>Data from Scotland’s 2022 Census shows how the population is changing, and with that the opportunities and challenges facing modern Scotland. This includes evidence on key issues such as: our ageing population, the impact of migration, and local population differences.</p> <p>Scotland’s population is getting older. There are now over one million people aged 65 and over in Scotland (20.1%). This is over a quarter of a million higher than the number of people under the age of 15.</p> <p>If past trends continue it is projected that by 2045, Scotland will have a smaller and older population.</p> <p>By 2045, it is projected that there will be fewer children (-22%); roughly the same number of people of working age (-2%), and more people of pensionable age (+21%).¹</p> <p>As the population continues to age, older people are increasingly living alone or in smaller households. In particular, older women are most likely to live alone.</p> <p>We know that older people are more at risk from fire incidents. As people get older, it can become more difficult to detect and respond to fires. For example, it can become harder to hear smoke alarms, smell smoke, detect changes in heat and turn off appliances. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that older people may be more likely to possess older appliances, which have a greater potential to be faulty and increase the risk of fire. Although social/local authority landlords have a duty to PAT test such electrical items, this is not the case for private renters/owners.</p>

¹ Scotland’s Population 2023 – the Registrar General’s Annual Review of Demographic Trends).

Our [Incident Statistics for 2023-24](#) show a strong relationship between age and rates of fatal casualties per million population rates.

Those aged below 39 have a rate of fatal casualties below average, with those aged 0-4 years having a rate of 0.0. Those aged 80 and over have a rate considerably higher than other age categories, with those aged 80-89 having a rate 2.6 times the Scotland average and those aged 90 and over having a rate 6.1 times higher than the Scotland average. Ten-year averages have been used to give a robust comparison as one-year figures can vary a lot.

The fire fatality rate in people over 60 has remained consistently higher than for any other age group and the 60+ age group is the most vulnerable. This age group is more likely to be a fatal fire victim than any other age category. There has been an increasing year on year trend for the over 60 age group over the last two years and this is cause for concern. This may be due to the population increase over 60s living longer lives, but other lifestyle factors such as isolation, mental health issues, mobility and medication use are factors impacting on individual's safety. Statistically, the older you are the more likely you are to become a fire fatality.

Living longer lives further increases the scope for us to work with our partners to deliver effective prevention measures through a more holistic approach to assessing risk and acting to reduce or remove harm. Local Plans will help us to focus on prevention activities based on the risk profile of a particular local authority area, including the collation and sharing of information about the diverse needs of older people in our communities.

By sharing information with other agencies, we can work to reduce risk from harm. Our reviewed Home Fire Safety Visits look to build on our current Home Fire Safety model and incorporate wider health and social care considerations, allowing us to do more for the people of Scotland.

The SFRS engages with agencies, other organisations and authorities who work with older people, to identify and target those in need of assistance and advice on fire safety. This type of multi-agency targeted approach is particularly important for older, vulnerable people, who may not be able to obtain information via the usual channels – for example they may not have access to the internet or understand mainstream fire safety material. Information may need to be provided in

accessible formats, such as easy read or large font. There are several initiatives, such as installing smoke/heat detectors or linked alarm systems, which also aim to reduce their vulnerability to fire. To ensure that our resources are effective we will make better use of communication tools to engage with older people in their preferred way. Our approach to communicating with the public can be found in our [Corporate Communications and Engagement Strategy](#).

While people living longer lives is a positive indicator, as people grow older it is likely that they may require new forms of support to keep them safe from harm. An aging population will increase levels of long-term medical conditions for example. This will generate new demands as Scotland seeks to support the population to age well in safe and resilient communities. Current trends in moving from care in institutional settings towards home-based care will increase the number of people who are potentially at risk of fire and other forms of preventable harm, such as slips, trips and falls, within the home environment.

This further increases the scope for us to work with our partners to deliver effective prevention measures through a more holistic approach to assessing risk and acting to reduce or remove harm. We will also focus on prevention activities, including the collation and sharing of information about the diverse needs of older people in our communities. A new Prevention Strategy is currently being developed which will detail how we wish to develop and enhance our prevention activity.

However, age is not necessarily the only factor which contributes to making people more at risk from fire. The Scotland Together report on fire safety in 2009 stated that 90% of older people involved in a Fatal Fire Survey had other contributory factors, such as mobility problems, disability, mental health issues or alcohol involvement. Social deprivation was also highlighted as a key factor related to an increased risk from fire, which may be a particularly important issue in the current financial climate. Changes in health and social care place a greater emphasis on enabling people to stay in their homes safely, and we have made strides in recent years in partnership working to address the challenges posed by dementia and an ageing population. We also work closely with care homes and sheltered housing providers to make sure the right safety measures are in place and that the duty holders know what they should look to provide a secure environment for their clients/tenants.

We need to work with our partners to understand the risks that people will face in their communities and will

	<p>undertake a collaborative approach to ensure the safety and wellbeing of individuals. Our Safe and Well Project is a prime example of this and will allow us to signpost high-risk individuals to our partner organisations for further support and advice to reduce harms identified from a Safe and Well visit. In addition, living alone tends to increase the risk of fire injury or death – 53% of accidental fire death incidents occur in single occupancy households and 51% occurring in flatted accommodation. As such, an ageing population, with an increasing number of people living alone, has the potential to lead to an increase in accidental dwelling fire deaths (Scotland Together).</p> <p>The SFRS Strategy 2025-28 will not detract from the many prevention projects that are carried out across Scotland.</p> <p>Younger people The SFRS takes forward schools programmes and a formal national accreditation qualification for youth engagement programmes to educate young people on fire safety and decrease fire related anti-social behaviour (e.g. attacks on crews and fire hydrant damage). Many of these are delivered through a multi-agency approach, led by our Community Action Teams, who are located across Scotland. Topics of learning can include a range of issues, such as home fire safety, the dangers of making hoax calls, dangers of deliberate fire setting, road safety, alcohol and drug awareness, first aid and healthy eating.</p> <p>Modified versions of courses are delivered to young people with disabilities. In addition, station-based personnel carry out activities with youth groups and schools. Road safety, fire safety and general outreach programmes are also run.</p> <p>The SFRS operate a Youth Engagement Framework and will increase the number of initiatives that we run which are aimed at getting young people involved in activities where they can build valuable knowledge and life skills to prepare them for the future, such as our Youth Volunteer and Modern Apprenticeship schemes. We will also positively engage with young people to support them into work within the Service.</p>
<p><u>Caring Responsibilities</u></p> <p>Consider: Carers for elderly relatives, individuals with a disability, children under 18. Times/Days of meetings and</p>	<p>Caring responsibilities within the scope of the impact assessment process relates to employment and other work practices that may discriminate against those who have responsibilities for caring for young children or other dependents such as those with a disability or elderly parents. It generally does not apply to service</p>

events, changes in working patterns, young carers and care experienced individuals.

Mental Health: Juggling work and caring responsibilities can be both rewarding but also extremely stressful. 71% of carers have poor physical and mental health. Differing outcomes and barriers for groups (such as care experienced people and young carers) including education, poverty, lack of inclusion and life opportunities.

provision unless it can be demonstrated that the conditions of the service provision disadvantages those with responsibility for caring for someone with a disability.

We don't have a national picture of those with caring responsibility as the dispersal rates are not consistent across Scotland and some areas such as Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire have higher levels of this kind of care provision which are also the local authority areas with higher ratings in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). These local authorities are the same areas with higher rates of unpaid care provided by a relative or friend with at least 4% of the population providing more than 35 hours unpaid care work each week.

Such high levels of care indicate substantial levels of dependency, and it may also be indicative of risk for those being cared for when the carer is absent even for short periods of time. Those receiving unpaid care may not be known to partner agencies and even when they are known our partner agencies may not consider the risk of fire and other emergencies and omit to pass on a referral.

In the broader UK population, there are approximately seven million carers with responsibility for a dependent who has a disability or other long-term impairment or health condition – approximately 42% are men and 58% are women. The 2022 Census outlines that there were 627,700 unpaid carers in Scotland. This was an increase of 27.5% (135,500) people since 2011. Over the same period there was a 15.7% increase in the number of people with a health problem or disability that limited their day to day activities a lot (up 79,600).

The [Carers Census 2023-24](#) for Scotland highlights that in Scotland the overall number of carers is approximately 759,000 – 17% of the population, 59% of carers are women and 41% are men. 56% of all carers are employed or self-employed. An estimated 4% of the under 16 population are carers.

In the broader UK population women are more likely to be primary carers for dependents (children, elderly parents, or other family members) than men. There is some evidence within the fire service that wholtime men identify as being primary carers of young children in higher levels than female wholtime firefighters. This may be due to the particular model of shift pattern used which may require and afford a different division of childcare responsibilities.

	<p>In terms of our practical support for carers, we have various projects nationwide which aim to provide them with the information they need to keep their homes and their dependents safe including useful online tools like checklists.</p> <p>In terms of our staff and ensuring a suitable work-life balance we have several policies and frameworks that support flexible and agile working, including our Flexible Working and Homeworking Policies.</p> <p>The Strategy 2025-28 will not detract from the many carer-related projects that are carried out across Scotland. SFRS use local risk profile to develop local service provision priorities.</p>
<p><u>Care Experienced</u></p> <p>Consider: Different types of care (Residential, Kinship, Foster, At Home). Corporate Parenting responsibilities. Barriers around housing, education, employment.</p> <p>Mental Health: Higher instance of mental health concerns than peers. Difficulties and losses in family relationships, disruption to schooling and changes in care placements (including multiple geographical locations) can make it difficult to form good social and personal relationships.</p>	<p>As a Corporate Parent under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 the SFRS has a responsibility to work with partners to improve the life chances of children and young people who are care experienced. There is no evidence to indicate that this group is more or less at risk from fire related incidents than other groups. However, there is data that suggests that fire setters and young offenders may also be care experienced.</p> <p>Corporate Parenting for young people in or leaving care has been and continues to be a priority for us, SFRS try to provide better life chances for this traditionally disadvantaged group. Our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023-26 includes a rolling action log to record progress against the actions and activities to meet Corporate Parenting Plan Outcomes. These actions include: continuing and expanding existing mentor schemes; identifying opportunities for people who are Care Experienced to co-design policy, practice and/or projects with SFRS; engaging with people who are Care Experienced to identify if they are aware of the services offered by SFRS and what accessibility looks like for them; and providing more training on Corporate Parenting for SFRS staff.</p> <p>There is an opportunity through our Corporate Parenting Plans to collaborate on initiatives that will make a positive impact on care experienced children and young people. One such initiative, the National House Project, takes place in East Dunbartonshire and helps young people leaving care become more independent in their own home and integrate into the community in which they live.</p> <p>Our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023-26 highlights our commitment to helping people with lived experience of</p>

	<p>care to fulfil their potential. This document was considered when actions were developed for the Strategy 2025-28 and this will assist further development of localised plans which consider local need and risk, including the needs of care experienced members of communities.</p> <p>The SFRS Strategy 2025-28 will not detract from the many youth-related projects that are carried out across Scotland.</p>
<p><u>Disability</u></p> <p>Consider: Accessible communications, buildings and facilities, travel needs, medication, confidentiality, needs around fire safety, support mechanisms available, opportunities to promote life chances, e.g., employment, and housing and social inclusion.</p> <p>Mental health: Life chances (notably education, employment and housing), social inclusion, support, choice, control and opportunities to be independent are factors that will influence the mental health of people with disabilities both positively and negatively.</p> <p>* SFRS 'We are Positive about Disability' can be accessed here.</p> <p>* Link to the Events Planning Checklist here.</p>	<p>'One Scotland' states that around one fifth of Scotland's population define themselves as disabled. The term disability includes any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions). The definition covers a wide range of impairment types and conditions including movement, vision, hearing, cognition, thinking, remembering, communicating, mental health, social relationships and neurodivergent conditions such as ADHD and autism. It is important to recognise that disabled people are not a homogenous group and will have an extensive and diverse range of needs and experiences.</p> <p>The dispersal across Scotland is not evenly split with Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire and Glasgow City local authority areas having higher proportions of their population with a disability.</p> <p>These also broadly correspond with the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) rankings and there is some evidence that families with at least one disabled member were more likely than families without a disabled member to live in relative poverty after housing costs.²</p> <p>Social and economic factors often increase the fire risks for disabled people, particularly where people have restricted financial resources. As such, the support required by disabled people varies depending on the relevant social and economic factors which are prevalent in each geographic area. Disabled people in more isolated areas may be especially reliant on public service provision to decrease their isolation and engage in public life.</p> <p>SFRS data capture does not make clear the extent to which the presence of a disability has contributed to the occurrence of fire nor to the outcome of the</p>

² Scotland Wellbeing: National outcomes for disabled people (2019)

incident. Through referrals from partner agencies and case studies regarding the individual we can identify specific needs that require to be addressed.

It is noted, however, that the presence of a disability does not automatically mean that the individual is at increased risk. In addition to the nature of the disability held by the individual there are other influencing factors to consider such as personal coping strategies, applied assistance programmes and tools, as well as their living environment. Such issues suggest that it is unlikely that a national or regional assessment of disability would provide useful information regarding the location and deployment of SFRS resources.

Alternatively, it is likely that individual assessment carried out at a very localised level to identify needs and implement preventative measures is more appropriate. Only at the level of personal assessment, for example, would the presence of oxygen cylinders in the home be identified.

The SFRS works with other groups, organisations, authorities and agencies to identify disabled people who may be vulnerable, helping to make their premises safe as well as improve their awareness of fire safety. For example:

- work undertaken with social care services and health agencies has helped identify mental health patients at risk from fire. The SFRS can then perform a risk assessment and provide specific advice to assist in this respect; specialist fire alarms (which use lights and vibrating pads) can be installed to alert people who are deaf to the occurrence of a fire.
- heat/smoke detectors can be installed in linked alarms (which alert emergency services directly and can be installed in peoples' homes where they may not be able to telephone for help).
- the SFRS could place BSL video clips on websites and provide easy-read and accessible information on fire safety.
- deaf awareness and sign language courses have been run in response to local need.
- local voluntary and other organisations work in partnership with the SFRS – for example, to ensure older and disabled people have a working fire alarm. Voluntary and other such organisations often have access to people who may feel uncomfortable contacting public bodies or authorities, and are a valuable resource for reaching some of the most vulnerable people within communities; and
- the SFRS provides general information and advice

on fire safety to a wide range of people, for example guidance to businesses about safe emergency evacuation from premises for wheelchair users.

The range of conditions and complexities associated with disability make developing a generalised approach to risk management across the full range of potential hazards (flooding, fire, RTC etc) for application at a national level inappropriate. As noted above, it is through a more local and personal level of intervention that the SFRS can make the most impact.

We believe that people are safer when they know more about the risks they face and have the capacity and resilience to help themselves. To ensure that everyone in our communities are safe from harm we will engage with people who have disabilities and will understand their specific needs. We will work alongside communities and groups representing people with disabilities for them to voice how they want services designed and delivered to meet their future needs.

To assist SFRS staff in considering and responding to the needs of disabled people, the SFRS provides training on equality and diversity, including Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments. For example, a programme of Mainstreaming Equality training is ongoing across the SFRS specifically targeting those personnel key in ensuring embedded equality.

Fire and rescue service workforce – disability equality issues

Overall, 0.85% of SFRS staff were recorded as disabled. (Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Report 2023).

However, it should be noted that there are some people who may not feel comfortable disclosing that they are disabled to their employers and therefore were not accounted for in these figures. Likewise, there will be a proportion of staff who are living with disabilities that are undiagnosed, and the figures also do not account for these.

As part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and as a 'Disability Confident' employer the SFRS has made a commitment to create a workplace which is positive about disability where we have removed unfair discrimination and bias and where we encourage all employees to treat others equally. We have a dedicated Mental Health Strategy and have established a Wellbeing and Inclusion sub-group which works to promote mental health and wellbeing

awareness with an agreed planned programme of information and supports events throughout the calendar year. This has included campaigns such as: A Festive Mental Wellbeing campaign; 'Time to Talk Menopause' sessions on World Menopause Day; LGBT History Month; and 'March the Month' for Prostate Cancer UK. This work is also supported by our cadre of Mental Health Champions.

From the very beginning of the employment journey within the SFRS, we ensure that the Equality Act 2010 is considered. Our Recruitment and Selection Policy is in place to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly and consistently within our recruitment and selection processes and that the most suitable candidates are appointed using objective selection criteria and methods relevant to the post. This includes the provision of reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process being made for applicants who have disclosed any disability or specific learning difficulty at application stage. This is also the case for care experienced individuals who are applying for posts with a 2 stage interview.

Throughout employment, in creating the ["We are Positive About Disability - Guide to Reasonable Adjustments and Supporting Staff with a Disability"](#), the SFRS demonstrates to all our employees, and prospective employees, that we are committed to fulfilling our legal and moral obligations in being a diverse and inclusive employer. The inclusion of disability related information helps managers to consider the challenges faced by people, across a broad range of disabilities, including hidden disabilities, enabling them to create a much more inclusive and empowering workplace which values difference and diversity. This guidance is supported by a range of policies that promote fairness within employment including the Attendance Management Policy and the Capability Policy.

For those who have become disabled or are diagnosed with a condition/impairment in employment which determines that they can no longer carry out their original role, our Redeployment Policy and supporting procedures ensures that all employees are treated in a fair and consistent manner and in accordance with relevant employment legislation.

Each of our employment policies and practices is assessed through our Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment process to identify and respond to the different needs based on the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

	<p>These policies and practices are also supported by the aspiration to give staff a voice and empower them to have a positive influence on workplace culture, inform decision making and contribute to improving the ambitions of the service.</p> <p>The SFRS has a process for establishing employee networks for colleagues who want to come together and create their own Employee Network which are employee-led and connect colleagues who have a common interest in sharing their experiences, supporting others, raising awareness and contributing to the service's understanding of issues arising from a protected characteristic or another equality group. We currently have a Disability Employee Network and a Neurodiversity Employee Network.</p>
<p><u>Gender reassignment</u></p> <p>Consider: Confidentiality, decency, appropriate facilities, and transitioning support.</p> <p>Mental Health: Transgender people's mental health can be affected positively and negatively by all of the other characteristics in this document. They may face additional challenges around stigma, harassment, hate crime and can be at an increased risk for some mental health issues.</p> <p>This includes individuals under the umbrella of Transgender who identify as non-binary and gender non-conforming.</p> <p>* Link to the SFRS Guidance for supporting employees who are transitioning can be accessed here.</p>	<p>There is evidence that individuals transitioning or who have transitioned gender are targeted for abuse that would be classified as a hate crime. In 2023/24, 84 transgender hate crimes charges were reported to the public prosecution service Scotland, compared with the previous year when there were 67 (Statista).</p> <p>There is no evidence that these instances have involved the use of fire related activities such as fire setting but there remains the possibility that this could arise.</p> <p>Crews may be called to an incident such as a dwelling fire that is the result of hate crime associated with trans-phobic intolerance.</p> <p>There is some evidence that individuals with gender dysphoria and other gender identity issues are more at risk to mental health illness and this in turn may present an increased risk of harm from fire and other emergencies³.</p> <p>The Scottish Transgender Alliance has indicated to the Fire service that some Trans* people may experience distress if they are involved in a situation where they are required to leave a property without being able to publicly present themselves in their preferred gender. This point is noted but it is viewed that the benefits of emergency evacuation of premises outweigh any short-term discomfort experienced.</p> <p>We will work continuously to educate people and empower them to take responsibility for their safety and wellbeing. This includes working with partners and</p>

³ Health needs assessment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and non-binary people (NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, NHS Lothian and Public Health Scotland)

	<p>groups representing people who have reassigned their gender in order to understand their specific needs and barriers to inclusion. We will work to empower transgender people to engage with us so that we have a reliable understanding of the potential risks facing this community.</p> <p>We aspire to become an employer of choice that reflects the communities that we serve. We seek to promote a career in the fire and rescue service in a way that is attractive and inclusive to a wide range of people from across our society. We want to create opportunities so that each individual can fulfil their full potential.</p> <p>We fly our rainbow flags at our National Training Centre and Service Delivery Headquarters to demonstrate our visible support and celebrate trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people in our workplaces and in the communities we serve. We have specific guidance documents for colleagues who are transitioning and to managers to support their colleagues.</p>
<p><u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u></p> <p>Consider: Work policy and practice(s) to ensure they are not discriminatory.</p> <p>Mental Health: Good social and personal relationships are central to wellbeing and good mental health. A breakdown in these relationships can have a negative impact on mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>The characteristic of marriage and civil partnership only enjoys protection in relation to discrimination within an employment context. Although the Strategy 2025-28 has a primary aim of the protection and safeguarding of the health and wellbeing of communities within Scotland, there is also a recognition that we are focused on becoming an employer of choice and therefore we will treat all employees fairly regardless of their marriage or civil partnership status.</p>
<p><u>Pregnancy and maternity</u></p> <p>Consider: Safety of the Mother/Birth Parent & Fetus, PPE and uniform, pregnancy related appointments and absences, KIT Days, breastfeeding/chestfeeding facilities and mobility as it relates to fire safety.</p> <p>Mental Health: Possibility of Ante-natal and Post-natal depression. Access to support whilst on maternity leave. Concerns around return to work. Impact on both parents if there are complications or bereavements linked to the pregnancy.</p>	<p>Some pregnant women may be less mobile than if they were not pregnant. There may be health concerns regarding a pregnant woman and/or fetus arising from the situation that differs from the same situation of a non-pregnant woman, e.g., extrication from a vehicle following a Road Traffic Collision or the treatment of injury. The SFRS notes these issues and addresses them within the appropriate training and operating guidance.</p> <p>The health and safety considerations of pregnant and breastfeeding personnel and those on maternity leave are considered within the appropriate Health & Safety, terms and conditions of employment and operating procedures.</p> <p>There is no evidence that women who are pregnant or on maternity leave are at more risk from fire and other emergencies compared to the general population.</p>

	<p>While there is no data collected for this group there would be no method of anticipating and projecting national pregnancy rates.</p> <p>Some pregnancy related conditions may make removing oneself from harm problematic.</p> <p>There is no evidence that pregnancy is a particular consideration, and it could only be assessed at the level of the individual woman.</p>
<p><u>Race</u></p> <p>Consider: Participation, language barriers, cultural differences, recruitment, and selection. Life chances (notably education, employment, and housing).</p> <p>Remember: Gypsies and Travellers are a racial group as defined in s9 Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Mental Health: Language barriers, racism, socio-economic factors, diagnostic bias, cultural differences, unconscious bias, institutional discrimination, mental health stigma and poor uptake of health services.</p>	<p>In 2021, there were approximately 397,000 non-British nationals living in Scotland, accounting for 7.4% of the population. Of these 397,000 people, 58% were EU nationals and 42% were non-EU nationals⁴.</p> <p>Some parts of Scotland have reasonably large numbers of people from minority ethnic groups living in them. There are significant regional variations in this respect, with Glasgow having the most ethnically diverse population in Scotland and some rural areas having very low minority ethnic profiles. Some of the largest minority ethnic populations in Scotland are comprised of long established and well-integrated communities; while some newer communities are less integrated, smaller, more dispersed and can retain some customs that may present as a fire risk (e.g. methods of cooking). Travellers that are settled and transient can also be reflected here particularly in semi and rural areas, as well as new migrant communities e.g. there is a Syrian community in South Ayrshire.</p> <p>Migrant workers including those associated with seasonal work, many of whom are young and not British nationals, may be at risk due to their living accommodation. Workers may have a registered address different to their actual place of residence. Accommodation may be unsuitable such as poorly maintained caravans or mobile homes or apartments exceeding their intended capacity. Established communities often have a significant profile at regional and national levels, with longstanding relationships with the SFRS. Newer communities are less likely to be aware of public services in general and are more likely to move residence. This poses specific issues in supporting them and keeping their properties safe from fire.</p> <p>We will ensure that we are committed to making people safer from experiencing the effects of harm, much of which is driven by social and economic inequality. We will target our prevention activities to those most in need and will use the principles of the</p>

⁴ National Records of Scotland

Scottish Government's open data agenda to share information with partners to enable the development of a more comprehensive understanding of the specific issues and barriers to engagement that people from minority ethnic backgrounds face. With this understanding we can utilise our resources more effectively in empowering communities to improve their safety, wellbeing and resilience.

Travelling communities, whether in permanent and static or non-static or semi-static residences, often have reduced access to services, may be vulnerable to fire risk and may experience isolation from the broader population. Therefore, establishing trust with individual local communities and building personal relationships is particularly important. The SFRS works with community groups and organisations, stakeholder representatives and equality organisations to target, protect and educate ethnic minority communities. The SFRS also participate at events such as the annual Mela in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The SFRS provides equality and diversity training which includes specific information to help address race equality issues.

The SFRS has a statutory duty under Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 to provide advice and enforce fire safety regulations in most non-domestic buildings across Scotland. We are also aware that a significant proportion of minority ethnic communities own their own business so we will ensure that we recognise specific cultural and linguistic needs when completing audits and providing advice.

Workforce – race equality issues

Of Scotland's Fire and Rescue Service staff, 1.78% were recorded as belonging to a minority ethnic group. (Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Report).

We want to be an employer of choice that reflects the communities that we serve. We recognise that the proportion of staff who belong to a minority ethnic group is lower than the national proportion. We are looking at ways to address this through positive action initiatives.

Our [Positive Action Strategy 2019-22](#) supports our commitment to strengthening the diversity of our workforce.

The strategy outlines the benefits of diversifying our workforce and details the priority actions that we intend to progress. This includes improving our methods of attraction of candidates from all underrepresented

	<p>groups to the SFRS, engaging with local community groups to understand and address the potential barriers which may prevent such groups from considering a career with us, and supporting career development and progressions opportunities, and networks for internal staff.</p> <p>Our engagement with local community groups also allows us to discuss other matters that are important to them. This allows targeted prevention and protection messaging based on local community profiles and includes established Scottish Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities as well as responding to the very specific needs of Scotland's newest communities such as new migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Commitment to increasing the diversity of our workforce profile continues with re-energised Positive Action in recruitment campaigns aimed at addressing the under-representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.</p> <p>The FBU has a specific section of the Union for uniformed staff who are from a minority ethnic background, where support and advice can be sought.</p>
<p><u>Religion and Belief</u></p> <p>Consider: Uniform, prayer/reflection areas, dates/times of religious festivals for event planning and fire safety information. Dietary requirements.</p> <p>Mental Health: Religion and belief(s) can have a positive impact on mental health through the support they can provide. A breakdown of this could impact mental health. Studies also show that there can be negative impacts on mental health around religion, particularly as it relates to upbringing and/or a difference in life views.</p> <p>* Link to the Events Planning Checklist here.</p>	<p>For the first time in Scotland's Census, the majority of people said they had no religion. In 2022 51.1% of people had no religion, up from 36.7% in 2011.</p> <p>The increase in people with no religion in Scotland coincided with a decrease in people who said they belong to the Church of Scotland. In 2022 20.4% responded 'Church of Scotland', down from 32.4% in 2011 and from 42.4% in 2001. This is a fall of 610,100 people since 2011, and over 1 million since 2001. However 'Church of Scotland' remained the largest group among those who said they had a religion. The next largest religious groups were 'Roman Catholic' (13.3%), 'Other Christian' (5.1%) and 'Muslim' (2.2%). These groups saw smaller changes since the last census than 'Church of Scotland'. The number of people who described themselves as Roman Catholic decreased by 117,700 since 2011, whilst the number in the Other Christian category decreased by 12,000. The number of people who described themselves as Muslim increased by 43,100 over the same period.</p> <p>Males (53.8%) were more likely to have no religion than females (48.6%).</p> <p>Religion and belief do not provide particularly useful indicators of risk, influenced as they both are, by cultural factors that prevent us drawing conclusions based on religion alone. Religion is particularly susceptible to personal interpretation. Other than</p>

Christmas, New Year, Diwali, Chinese New Year and bonfire night there is no evidence of increased levels of SFRS activity associated with religious or cultural festivals. Festivals increase the risk of fire and fire related injury as they use fireworks and, therefore, we ensure a safety message is available at these times.

The relationships established by local personnel and both majority and minority faith groups are, in many areas, a key feature of local engagement activities. A good example of this can be seen during the public consultation exercise that was held with faith groups regarding the introduction of Smoke Hoods. During this consultation we contacted the four main potentially impacted faith groups namely: the Jewish, Sikh, Muslim and Hindu communities via their respective Councils. Contact was also made with both Interfaith Glasgow and the Scottish Refugee Council. Often, local contacts proved more fruitful than national contacts. As well as sending out targeted emails with the relevant Fire Escape Hoods information sheet; a short video link - How to put a fire escape hood on; step by step pictures displaying how to use a fire escape hood; some additional considerations and a short four question survey with a dedicated email address, we also had two requests for in person demonstrations.

There are very few issues arising from religion in isolation of other cultural factors or relating to race, ethnicity, or nationality. Sectarianism remains an issue to varying degrees within Scotland, and one that the SFRS is aware of.

Crews may also be called to an incident such as a dwelling fire that is the result of hate crime associated with religious intolerance.

To ensure that all our communities are safe we will work to increasingly understand the specific needs and requirements of our communities that stem from their religious or other beliefs. We will make use of this information to ensure that our decisions are based on robust evidence that responds directly to the holistic needs of our communities. For example, there is some evidence that certain religious practices and cooking habits (e.g., frying at high temperatures, deep fat cooking) may increase the risk of domestic fires, as well as the practice of using lanterns at Chinese New Year and fireworks at Diwali. It may be useful to target fire safety advice to religious groups especially around the time of festivals or other events.

Attacks on crews may be related to the religion of the crew. There is some historical evidence that religion

	<p>has been a motivating factor on attack on crews. There is a recorded example of attack on crew within at least one former FRS area where the perceived religion of the crew was protestant, and this was the aggravating factor for the aggressor. Across the country, we have many initiatives with local communities that are designed to foster stronger relations and explain the impact that such acts of violence can have on firefighters and wider communities. These do not however, focus on religion.</p>
<p><u>Sex (gender)</u></p> <p>Consider: Dignified facilities, sanitary provisions, appropriate PPE, menopause, individuals who are non-binary, domestic abuse, gender specific illness, e.g., prostate cancer for men, endometritis for woman.</p> <p>Mental Health: Gender has a significant impact on risk and protective factors for mental health and the way in which the experience of mental distress is expressed. Depression, anxiety, attempted suicide and self-harm are more prevalent in women, while completed suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, crime and violence are much more prevalent among men. Women are much more vulnerable to poverty and unemployment, and are more likely to suffer domestic violence, rape and child abuse. Men experiencing abuse as children or adults may find it more difficult to disclose this.</p>	<p>SFRS and historical fire data shows that, in terms of fire incidents, males are more likely than females to be injured in a fire; need to be rescued from a fire; or die in fires. This has been a consistent trend over the last decade.</p> <p>Of the 42 fatal fire casualties, 23 (54.8%) were male and 19 (45.2%) were female. Males have consistently had a higher rate of fatal fire casualties than females in previous years. There was a rate of 7.7 fatal fire casualties per million population in 2023-24. For males, this rate was higher at 8.6 and females had a lower rate of 6.7.</p> <p>A similar pattern is seen for non-fatal casualties, with males having a rate of 168.2 casualties per million population in 2023-24 and females having a rate of 121.2 casualties.</p> <p>The gender of the casualty may be less relevant than other influencing factors such as lifestyle, home environment and the use of alcohol and smoking materials. In recent years, the difference between fire injuries between men and women has reduced.</p> <p>In terms of gender equality issues affecting women, domestic violence has the potential to be related to a fire incident. Where gender information was recorded, just over four-in-five (81%) incidents of domestic abuse in 2023-24 involved a female victim and a male suspected perpetrator. This was the same as in 2021-22 and 2022-23 highlighting that women are more likely to be the victim of domestic violence</p> <p>In 2023-24, 15% of domestic abuse incidents involved a male victim and a female suspected perpetrator (where gender information was recorded). This decreased slightly from 16% in 2022-23.</p> <p>In 2023-24, the 31 to 35 years old age group had the highest incident rate for both victims (267 incidents recorded per 10,000 population) and suspected perpetrators (233 incidents recorded per 10,000 population).</p>

	<p>(Domestic Abuse Recorded by Police in Scotland 2023-24).</p> <p>To help combat this, the SFRS have undertaken some work on Violence Against Women – raising awareness and ensuring that personnel know what to do if it is identified during a Home Fire Safety Visit.</p> <p>Workforce – gender equality issues In 2023-24, the SFRS workforce was made up of 85.6% males and 14.4% females. This is a similar balance to what has been reported in recent years, with 85.7% of staff being male last year and 85.5% of staff being male in 2021-22.</p> <p>Wholetime Operational, Retained Duty System, Volunteer and Retained Full-time are predominantly made up of male staff, making up 93.6%, 92.9%, 84.4% and 85.5% respectively.</p> <p>Control staff are made up of predominantly female staff, with 83.0% of staff being female in 2023-24.</p> <p>Support staff have historically had a more even balance between males and females.</p> <p>The same is true for 2023-24, with 54.3% of staff being female and 45.7% of staff being male. Since 2018-19, the number of female Wholetime Operational staff has risen by 12.2%, and the number of male Wholetime Operational staff has decreased by 6.9%. The number of female Retained Duty System staff has decreased by 5.0% over the same time period, and the number of males in this staff group has decreased by 7.9%.</p> <p>The SFRS undertakes equality and diversity training to help address equality issues, raise awareness and ensure good practice in the workplace. This includes providing information on gender equality. The SFRS are also leading a project on behalf of the Justice Board to improve the representation of women and other under-represented groups across the Justice sector. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has a specific section of the Union for uniformed female staff, and Unison has a women’s section, where support and advice can be sought. Additionally, our staff have formed a SFRS Employee Network for Women.</p> <p>The SFRS Board is taking positive action to support Scottish Minister’s ambition of a 50:50 gender split of Board membership. As of 2022 there are five females (including Chair of the Board) and seven male Board members.</p>
Sexual Orientation	It is difficult to obtain accurate data on this equality

Consider: Confidentiality, heterosexual bias in language, use of pronouns, policy development, recruitment, and selection practices.

Mental Health: Some studies suggest that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are more vulnerable to certain factors that increase risk of poor mental health (e.g., being bullied, discrimination and verbal assault) – and more likely to report psychological distress than their heterosexual counterparts.

group; however, the most recent estimates from the UK-wide 2020 Annual Population Survey found that 3.1% of respondents self-identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, which increased from 2.7% compared to 2019. Similarly, the Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2019 (SSCQ) found that 94.2% of the Scottish populations identified as heterosexual and 2.9% as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.

As of 2022 it is estimated that around 148,500 gay people live in Scotland. Anecdotal evidence from Stonewall suggests that people identifying as LGBT are less likely to approach uniformed emergency services due to the image of emergency services as being ‘unwelcoming’ – although the LGBT community is very diverse, and the experiences of individuals can differ from area to area.

Some examples of good practice in helping break down these barriers, and encouraging community engagement, include the SFRS: becoming members of Stonewall’s Equality Champions programme; working with LGBT Youth Scotland and the Equality Network; participating in Edinburgh and Glasgow Pride; engaging with local groups/organisations; and ensuring that community safety messages are inclusive and widely distributed.

There is some evidence that LGBT people from more rural areas often relocate to one of the large cities as they reach adulthood. Moving is not generally an option for those young people still in school or those with limited social mobility. Issues affecting people outside large metropolitan areas can be different to those within; therefore, engagement to address needs has to occur at a local level.

We will be looking to work alongside the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities, our partner agencies, and groups that represent LGB people to develop a more detailed understanding of the barriers that face this community and prevent them from being empowered to know more about the specific risks they face. We will seek to engage with these communities to focus on prevention activities that will improve outcomes for everyone.

Fire and rescue service workforce – LGBT equality issues

It is difficult to obtain reliable information on the numbers of LGBT individuals employed in the workforce, particularly given that some LGBT people may not wish to disclose this information.

The SFRS, through its equality and diversity training,

	<p>will aim to raise awareness and help ensure good practice in the workplace. It includes information on the issues faced by LGBT people. We also have a LGBT Employee Network for members of the LGBT Community and provide a Wellbeing and Inclusion Calendar that marks important LGBT dates. The FBU has a specific section of the Union for uniformed LGBT members, where support and advice can be sought.</p>
<p><u>Social and Economic Disadvantage</u></p> <p>Consider: Differences in life chances such as education, employment, income, social inclusion, and access to health services. Lifestyle factors, e.g., smoking and alcohol use as they relate to fire safety information.</p> <p>Mental Health: Adults living in the most deprived areas are twice as likely to have mental health issues. Factors such as poverty, poor housing, lack of opportunity and low social status can cause stress and distress. Other impacts on well-being, may come from feelings of low self-esteem, shame, and disrespect. Link between deprivation and suicide.</p> <p>* Link to the Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance can be accessed here.</p>	<p>As noted in the 'disability' section above there is a correlation between disability and poverty. Joblessness, under-employment and welfare provisions can all lead to an increased level of fire risk arising from. For example, poorly maintained appliances which can lead to fire in the home.</p> <p>The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) highlights numerous areas in Scotland as having multiple indicators of deprivation (MID). It is important to note that more than 50% of those households considered to be financially poor are not located within areas of MID.</p> <p>There is a relationship between deprivation and fire casualty rates in Scotland. For fatal casualties, the most deprived 20% has a 4.8 times higher fatal casualty rate than the least deprived 20%, and 1.8 times higher than the Scotland average.</p> <p>The least deprived 20% is considerably below all other areas with a rate that is 2.7 times less than the Scotland average. A similar situation is seen for non-fatal casualties. The most deprived area has a rate of non-fatal casualties 5.5 times more than the least deprived 20%.</p> <p>Deprivation is a very clear factor in the historic casualty profile regardless of gender or age. Regardless of gender or age, those in the most deprived areas have a higher rate of fatal casualties per million population.</p> <p>In areas of multiple deprivation, many communities experience poorer health, lower educational attainment, lower employment, more emergency hospital admissions and reduced safety. Typically, we are called out more often to these areas and to individuals characterised as 'disadvantaged'.</p> <p>Evidence underlines the close relationship between wider social and economic issues, fire related incidents, unintentional social and personal harm, social inequality and the subsequent challenges this presents to improving the wellbeing of individual citizens. In response to this we will continue to build effective relationships with our partners, so that together, we can deliver targeted prevention activities</p>

	<p>to reduce inequalities.</p> <p>We are aware that individuals who have died because of fire have also been known to other agencies such as health, social care, or criminal justice and by sharing information with our partner agencies we can work together to minimise the risk of harm because of poverty or other socio-economic factors.</p> <p>Evidence shows that overall poverty is higher among ethnic groups than within the majority white population. Poverty levels for people in minority ethnic communities in Scotland are double the national average and rising⁵.</p> <p>The Strategy 2025-28 outlines our commitment to making people safer from experiencing the effects of harm, much of which is driven by social and economic inequalities. Local Fire and Rescue Plans mirror this commitment.</p> <p>By utilising our resources and redistributing our capability to support other agencies we can expand our prevention focus. As a trusted public service, gaining access to on average 70,000 households each year to conduct home fire safety visits, we are in a unique position to contribute to reducing such inequalities.</p> <p>By adopting a 'safe and well' approach to home visits we will create a more holistic approach in how we work to prevent unintentional harm among the most vulnerable in our society. Through our community safety work, we engage with a vast array of individuals and groups, and this has also enabled us to support work addressing wider inequalities by helping to tackle antisocial behaviour, reduce reoffending, and by working in partnership to tackle domestic violence.</p> <p>Corporate Parenting for young people in or leaving care is and remains a priority for us, to try to provide better life chances for this traditionally disadvantaged group.</p> <p>By utilising our resources and redistributing our capability to support other agencies we can expand our prevention focus. As a trusted public service, gaining access to on average 70,000 households each year to conduct home fire safety visits, we are in a unique position to contribute to reducing such inequalities. By adopting a 'safe and well' approach to home visits we will create a more holistic approach in</p>
--	---

⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation

	<p>how we work to prevent unintentional harm among the most vulnerable in our society. Through our community safety work, we engage with a vast array of individuals and groups, and this has also enabled us to support work addressing wider inequalities by helping to tackle antisocial behaviour, reduce reoffending, and by working in partnership to tackle domestic violence.</p>
<p><u>Island Communities</u></p> <p>Consider: Challenges around distance, geography, connectivity, demography, and the loss of vital skills to the mainland.</p> <p>Mental Health: Remote and rural communities can face particular challenges around the availability and access to support in times of distress. There can be feelings of isolation but also a lack of privacy when communities are particularly close knit.</p> <p>* Link to the Scottish Government Island Community Impact Assessment Guidance can be accessed here.</p>	<p>While the Strategy 2025-28 is relevant to equality because it seeks to improve the performance of the SFRS, improve outcomes for communities and relates to the workplace relationship between the SFRS as an employer and its employees the relevance to equality is indirect. The strategies, plans, policies, and practices that will underpin the Strategy 2025-28 will provide the means by which to identify, meet and measure the relevant equality issues rather than through the Strategy 2025-28 itself. With regards to this island impact assessment the important feature to note is the requirement for each of the strategies, plans, policies, and practices that are associated with the Strategy 2025-28 to be subject to island impact assessment and, where appropriate, ongoing scrutiny. The indirect nature of the relevance to equality of the Strategy 2025-28 determines that there are no specific equality issues arising from the Strategy 2025-28 itself, albeit the Plan does set out those conditions where good equality practice can thrive and could contribute towards compliance with the three aspects of the general equality duty.</p> <p>Due to the high-level nature of the Strategy 2025-28, it provides the strategic link between the expectations set out for the SFRS in the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022 and the operating processes being developed internally within the organisation. The Strategy demonstrates commitment to meeting the needs of Scotland’s diverse communities and in fulfilling the obligations the SFRS has to its employees. The Strategy provides opportunities to make a positive impact to all communities across Scotland, including those residents on our island communities.</p> <p>The potential to make a positive impact on those with protected characteristics and resident on island communities can be explored through the outcomes and Strategic Objectives identified in the Strategy 2025.</p>
<p><u>Mental Health and Wellbeing</u></p> <p>Not all people with a mental health condition have a disability. For example, someone may have a diagnosis of bi-polar disorder which is well-managed and</p>	<p>It is recognised that poor mental health can lead to higher risk health behaviours (e.g., smoking and drug misuse). This, combined with unequal access to services, can result in poor health outcomes and shortened life expectancy. Medication, even when properly administered, may have a sedating or state altering effect.</p>

<p>experience good mental health. However, many mental health conditions can have an impact on wellbeing.</p> <p>Consider: Crew Welfare before, during and after their involvement in a potentially traumatic incident.</p> <p>Stress factors, concern(s) of stigma and/or discrimination if coming forward.</p> <p>Life changes such as bereavement, broken- down relationships, changes in physical health.</p> <p>Poor mental health can lead to higher risk health behaviours (e.g., smoking and drug misuse). This, combined with unequal access to services, can result in poor health outcomes and shortened life expectancy.</p> <p>Higher risk in relation to Fire Safety.</p> <p>* Link to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Checklist can be accessed here.</p>	<p>The impact assessment regulations do not provide for any other considerations or categorisation of people such as by their geographic location or by general groupings out with those identified by the Equality Act 2010.</p>
<p><u>Human Rights</u></p> <p>Consider: 16 basic rights protected by the Human Rights Act and how they may relate to any policy/practice/decision.</p> <p>Mental Health: Mental health evidence relates to the Human Rights Act by highlighting the links between poor mental health and inequalities. Poor mental health can both be a consequence of inequality and result in social, economic and health inequality.</p>	<p>The strategies, plans, policies, and practices that will be developed to underpin the Strategy 2025-28 are likely to have some relevance to the Human Rights Act 1998.</p> <p>We will respect individual’s right to privacy, family life and communications, including ensuring that any information that we collect that can be traced back to individuals will be treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.</p> <p>By assisting to empower people to tackle hate crimes we are helping individuals to live their lives free from violence and harassment.</p> <p>Specific activities resulting from this Strategy 2025-28 will be subjected to an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment that will determine the relevance of human rights and ensure that appropriate action is taken to promote these rights within society.</p>
<p><u>Children’s Rights</u></p>	<p>The strategies, plans, policies, and practices that will be developed to underpin the Strategy 2025-28 are</p>

<p>Consider: General principles: Non-discrimination (article 2) Best interest of the child (article 3) Right to life survival and development (article 6) Right to be heard (article 12)</p> <p>Mental Health: Poor mental health can both be a consequence of inequality and result in social, economic and health inequality. Links between poverty and mental health.</p>	<p>likely to have some relevance to the Children’s Rights Act.</p> <p>We will respect individual’s right to privacy, family life and communications, including ensuring that any information that we collect that can be traced back to individuals will be treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.</p> <p>By assisting to empower people to tackle hate crimes we are helping individuals to live their lives free from violence and harassment.</p> <p>Specific activities resulting from this Strategy 2025-28 will be subjected to an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment that will determine the relevance of human rights and ensure that appropriate action is taken to promote these rights within society.</p>
<p>Impact on Inclusion or People in General not covered by specific characteristics</p> <p>Consider: any other inclusion points, e.g., differing impacts for employee groups or for different communities.</p> <p>Gaelic Language</p> <p>Consider: Accessibility, education/schools, training, Gaelic speaking employees, cultural & heritage awareness, signage replacement.</p> <p>The SFRS Gaelic Language Plan can be accessed here.</p>	<p>The benefits intended by the Strategic Plan are likely to have a positive impact on people irrespective of any protected characteristic those people may hold or whether they reside in one of Scotland’s Island communities.</p> <p>However, during the public consultation exercise we will ensure that our Local Senior Officers, who have responsibility for local authority areas which have island communities, have the tools they need to encourage island communities to get involved in the consultation exercise to ensure their views are fully considered and incorporated into the final version of the Strategy 2025-28.</p> <p>Final versions of the Strategy 2025-28 will be provided in accessible forms including Gaelic Language.</p>

Summary and Conclusion of Impact Assessment

The Strategy 2025-28 is a high-level document that relies on underpinning operating plans, strategies, policies, and practices to translate overarching ambitions into achievable and measurable activities. While the Strategy 2025-28 is relevant to equality because it seeks to improve the performance of the SFRS, improve outcomes for communities and relates to the workplace relationship between the SFRS as an employer and its employees the relevance to equality is indirect. The strategies, plans, policies, and practices that will underpin the Strategy 2025-28 will provide the means by which to identify, meet and measure the relevant equality issues rather than through the Strategy 2025-28 itself. With regards to this equality impact assessment the important feature to note is the requirement for each of the strategies, plans, policies, and practices that are associated with the Strategic Plan to be subject to equality impact assessment and, where appropriate, ongoing scrutiny. The indirect nature of the relevance to equality of the Strategy 2025-28 determines that there are no specific equality issues arising from the Strategy 2025-28 itself, albeit the Strategy does set out those conditions where good equality practice can thrive and could contribute towards compliance with the three aspects of the general equality duty.

Due to the high-level nature of the Strategy 2025-28, it provides the strategic link between the expectations set out for the SFRS in the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022 and the operating processes being developed internally within the organisation. The Strategy demonstrates commitment to meeting the needs of Scotland's diverse communities and in fulfilling the obligations the SFRS has to its employees. The Strategy provides opportunities to make a positive impact across all protected characteristics.

Concluding Part 3

Impact Assessment	Please Tick	Next Steps
There is no relevance to Equality or the Human Rights Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proceed to Part 4 Monitoring
There is relevance to some or all of the Equality characteristics and/or the Human Rights Act 1998 and relevant actions are recorded above in Summary and Conclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Proceed to Part 4 Monitoring

PART 4 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

This section should be completed by the Policy Owner in consultation with the relevant EHRIA Support Contact

- The purpose of this section is to show how you will monitor the impact of the function/policy.
- The reason for monitoring is to determine if the actual impact of the function/policy is the same as the expected and intended impact.
- A statement on monitoring is required for all functions/policies regardless of whether there is any relevance to Equality Human Rights.
- The extent of your answer will depend upon the scope of the function/policy to impact on Equality and Human Rights issues.

Q1 – For Functions/Policies Screened in Section 2 or 3 as Not Relevant on the grounds of Equality or Human Rights...

You must now set out how you intend to monitor and review the function/policy. You should provide an indication of when you intend to review the function/policy, the method for doing so and how you will assess that no-relevance to Equality and Human Rights continues.

N/A

Q2 – For Functions/Policies where there is evidence or justification for believing there is relevance to Equality or the Human Rights, please provide detail on the plan to achieve this by completing A – D below.

A: What will be monitored?

Given the strategic nature of the Strategy 2025-28 there are no specific equality indicators that are directly measurable. All associated strategies, plans, policies, practices and initiatives that are relevant to the general equality duty will be subject to an equality impact assessment and may require or benefit from specific equality monitoring of their implementation. The completion of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) will be recorded by the Equality and Diversity Team.

B: How will monitoring take place and who will carry it out?

The Equality and Diversity Team will use the team's internal monitoring systems to record the completion of EHRIAs and work with relevant SFRS colleagues to determine the relationship to the Strategy 2025-28.

C: What is the frequency of monitoring?

Ongoing with an annual review of all Equality Impact Assessment activity.

D: How will monitoring information be used?

To assess the SFRS's compliance with the public-sector equality duty, improve performance on the completion of equality impact assessments and contribute to the general performance assessment of equality activity.

Q3: Actions – Who will undertake any recommendations and/or monitoring actions?

Louise Patrick Strategic Planning and Partnerships Coordinator Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications

PART 5 – APPROVAL

This Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment was completed by:

Name	Louise Patrick Strategic Planning and Partnerships Coordinator / Kirsty Jamieson Planning and Performance Officer
Date	16 January 2025

This Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment was approved by:

Name	Parveen Khan Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Date	16 January 2025

Please submit a copy of the completed document to SFRS.Equality@firescotland.gov.uk