

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

2026 - 2029

NA H-EILEANAN SIAR

Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.

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Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2026 - 2029 for the Western Isles. This sets out our priorities for improving community safety, whilst helping to address inequalities and enhancing the overall wellbeing of the communities of the Western Isles. In developing this plan, we have been mindful of the range of activities the SFRS might have to undertake on any given day. These might include fitting a smoke alarm in the home of a vulnerable person, visiting a school to educate young people on the dangers of fire, rescuing someone involved in a road traffic collision or dealing with large wildfires similar to those experienced in recent years.

Over the next three years, it is anticipated that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) will continue to operate in a challenging environment shaped by financial pressures, evolving risks, and the need for organisational change. Alongside many of our partners, workforce capacity, particularly in rural areas where our staff are predominantly On Call, remains a key challenge, whilst we balance the need to support staff wellbeing, skills and to provide strong leadership.

Scotland's risk profile is shifting, with fewer dwelling fires but increased demand from climate-related incidents such as flooding and wildfires, as well as ongoing social and demographic vulnerabilities. In response, the SFRS is prioritising prevention, collaboration, and early intervention through its Prevention Strategy (2025 - 2028), focusing on reducing harm, protecting vulnerable communities, and managing demand.

This Local Fire and Rescue Plan translates our national priorities into locally tailored actions to deliver effective prevention, protection, and response services while supporting broader public service reform and community resilience.

Western Isles is a thriving place to live, rich in culture, heritage and cohesive communities. It is widely considered a safe place to live and regularly tops UK quality of life surveys within Highlands & Islands. It does however present many local challenges and vulnerabilities to the SFRS and our partners. Western Isles has a distinctively older population profile compared to the rest of Scotland, with the average age of 51 and a half years, which is about 11 years higher than the UK average. The 70- to 79-year-old age group is the fastest growing demographic which presents ongoing challenges in maintaining and recruiting staff to provide local community-based emergency response.

Over the period of this Local Fire and Rescue Plan we aim to continue building upon our already strong partnerships, enhance our prevention work and to seek innovative solutions to ensure that our communities are safer, more resilient and sustainable for the future.



Andrew Wright
Local Senior Officer
Area Commander
Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland

National Context and Challenges

Scottish Ministers set out their specific expectations for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in the [Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022](#). This Framework provides SFRS with seven strategic priorities and objectives, together with guidance on how the delivery of our functions should contribute to the Scottish Government's Purpose.

The Framework also defines the SFRS purpose as:

'To work in partnership with communities and with others in the public, private and third sectors on prevention, protection and response to improve the safety and wellbeing of people throughout Scotland.'

The SFRS Strategy 2025-28 has been designed to have regard to these national expectations. Set against a complex and evolving backdrop, our Strategy supports delivery of our Purpose, Mission and Vision.

To achieve our ambitions, we have identified five strategic objectives and outcomes. Each objective holds equal value in driving our Strategy forward. As a collective, they define our overall direction and will be central to how we plan our activities and our budget over the next three years.

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME
Safer Communities through Prevention	Through our work with communities and other organisations, the safety and wellbeing of the people of Scotland improves.
Safe and Effective Response	We are an effective and trusted Fire and Rescue Service where our communities and people are safe.
Investing in our People	Our people feel valued and are supported by a culture that embraces diversity and inclusion, empowerment and accountability.
Improving Performance	Our organisational performance, productivity and resilience continually improves.
Innovation and Investment	We are more innovative and achieve sustained investment in our technology, equipment, estate and fleet, making us more effective and efficient.

This Plan is a statutory Local Fire and Rescue Plan. It sets local direction to meet the strategic objectives and outcomes outlined above; and supports delivery of the SFRS Prevention Strategy. It demonstrates how we will contribute to Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) within the Local Authority area.

National Challenges

Over the next three years, SFRS will operate within a challenging and rapidly evolving national context. This Local Fire and Rescue Plan is developed against a backdrop of sustained financial pressure, changing community risk, and the need for organisational change to ensure services remain effective, sustainable and focused on prevention.

SFRS continues to face real-terms financial constraints despite funding uplifts, with rising costs, inflationary pressures and a substantial backlog in capital investment. Ageing fire stations, fleet and operational systems require modernisation, while the Service must also deliver recurring savings. This national financial environment directly shapes decisions about service delivery models, asset rationalisation and the prioritisation of resources at local level.

Workforce capacity remains a critical national challenge. Recruitment, retention and availability, particularly within the on-call duty system are under increasing pressure, especially in rural and remote communities. Supporting staff wellbeing, skills, training and leadership capacity is essential to maintaining safe and reliable emergency response while adapting to new and emerging risks.

The risk profile across Scotland is changing. While accidental dwelling fires continue to decline, demand is increasing from climate-related incidents such as flooding, wildfires and extreme weather events. These incidents are often prolonged, complex and resource-intensive, requiring increased resilience, specialist capability and effective multi-agency coordination. At the same time, demographic change, health inequalities and housing conditions continue to drive vulnerability and risk within communities.

Prevention remains at the core of SFRS's national and local approach. Reducing harm, protecting vulnerable people and building community resilience are central to managing demand and delivering long-term public value. This requires strong collaboration with partners across health, social care, local government and the third sector.

The SFRS Prevention Strategy 2025 - 2028 aims to reduce harm, protect communities and firefighters, and manage demand through a universal prevention approach targeted according to risk, vulnerability and inequality. Local Fire and Rescue Plans deliver this strategy by translating national priorities into locally focused actions based on community risk, partnership intelligence and local need.

To address wider organisational challenges, SFRS is progressing its Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP). Over the next three years, this programme will modernise facilities, fleet and equipment, improve how and where services are delivered, and ensure corporate functions operate efficiently. These changes will help target resources where risk is greatest while maintaining public confidence and local accountability.

This Local Fire and Rescue Plan translates this national context into local priorities, reflecting the specific risks, needs and characteristics of communities. It sets out how SFRS will work with partners to deliver prevention, protection and response activities in a way that supports safer communities while contributing to the Service's wider strategic aims for Scotland.

By focusing on prevention, collaboration and early intervention, this plan supports public service reform and delivers better outcomes for our local communities

Local Context

The Local Fire and Rescue Plan and its associated action plans are aligned to our Community Planning Partnership structures within the Western Isles.

Through partnership working we will deliver continuous improvement in our performance and effective service delivery in our area of operations.

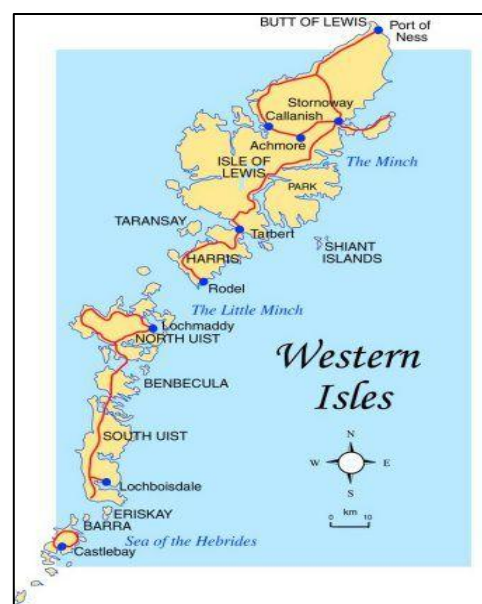
SFRS will continue to use data analysis techniques to identify risk and ensure resources are allocated to the point of need within our communities. While considering the strategic priorities of the SFRS we will develop local solutions to meet local needs and provide equitable access to Fire and Rescue resources.

Through our on-going involvement with the variety of partnership groups in the Western Isles, we will continue to develop our understanding of local needs and proactively seek out consultation opportunities with all sections of the community. Using this approach, we will ensure that the service we deliver is driven by consultation, in line with public expectations and help to build strong, safe and resilient communities.

The Western Isles is one of the 32 council areas of Scotland, a constituency of the Scottish Parliament and a lieutenancy area.

Western Isles, also known as the Outer Hebrides or Na h-Eileanan Siar, form a long chain of islands lying approximately 30–60 kms (20–40 miles) off the west coast of mainland Scotland. The archipelago consists of over 100 islands and islets, of which around 15 are inhabited, depending on the time of year and population changes.

The largest island in the chain is Lewis and Harris, which is a single landmass despite the two names. It has a combined area of 2,179 square kilometres (842 square miles), making it the largest island in Scotland and the third largest in the British Isles after Great Britain and Ireland.



Western Isles Map

The largest settlement and administrative centre is Stornoway, located on the Isle of Lewis. It is the main hub for transport, commerce, and public services across the Western Isles.

Population data released by the National Records of Scotland (NRS), shows that the Western Isles have continued to undergo significant demographic change since the 2011 census. The majority of the population live on the Isle of Lewis, particularly around Stornoway, with further concentrations in Harris, Benbecula, North Uist and South Uist. These central islands are linked by a series of causeways, forming a continuous chain of communities across the archipelago.

The largest settlement is Stornoway, with a population of approximately 6,900, making it the administrative and commercial centre of the islands. Other settlements such as Balivanich (Benbecula) and Tarbert (Harris) are much smaller but remain important local hubs.

Census-related data also shows a continuing ageing trend, with a marked rise in the number of residents aged 65 and over. This increase is one of the largest in Scotland, driven by long-term out-migration of younger adults and increasing life expectancy. Peripheral islands show small population increases among older age groups, while younger groups continue to decline.

According to NRS estimates, the total population of the Western Isles in 2022 was 26,138, reflecting a 5% decrease since 2011. This aligns with the broader pattern of population contraction and ageing across most island areas, with the exception of Barra and Vatersay, which experienced slight growth

The Western Isles' long-established crofting, agriculture and fisheries sectors continue to play a significant role in the regional economy. The islands' extensive wind, wave and tidal energy resources are of growing importance both locally and nationally, with several major renewable projects already operating or under development. The Western Isles also play a key role in research, testing and innovation in marine energy, low-carbon technologies and other sustainable energy sectors, supported by their natural resources and strategic coastal location.

The other main industries in the Western Isles are tourism, aquafarming and renewable energy. Tourism remains a major contributor to the local economy, supported by the islands' distinctive landscapes, cultural heritage and outdoor recreation opportunities. The Western Isles also host significant salmon farming and shellfish aquaculture, which form an important part of the regional economic base.

Western Isles plays a strategic role in offshore energy activity, including support for North Sea oil and gas logistics, vessel movements and emergency response routes. In addition, the region's exceptional wind, wave and tidal resources have led to the development of large-scale renewable energy projects, with associated infrastructure for transmission and export. These sectors continue to grow in importance both locally and nationally as Scotland expands its low-carbon energy capacity.

The islands are connected to mainland Scotland by air and ferry services. Stornoway Airport has direct flights from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness and Benbecula, with further inter-island links to Barra and Benbecula. Benbecula Airport also provides scheduled services to Glasgow, supporting travel across the southern islands.

Passenger and freight ferries operate from Ullapool, Mallaig and Oban, linking the mainland to Stornoway, the Uists, Harris and Barra. These routes form a vital part of the islands' transport and supply network.

Within the Western Isles, a series of causeways connects North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay, allowing continuous road travel through the central chain. Barra and Vatersay are also linked by a causeway, supporting movement of people and goods throughout the archipelago.

SFRS recognises the unique challenges that are faced in delivering services in remote and rural areas including populated islands and coastal communities. Fourteen, On Call Duty System (Not Primary Employment), Fire Stations provide the operational response capability for the Western Isles.

SFRS has nine stations located on Lewis and Harris, four stations on North Uist, Benbecula and South Uist and one station on Barra crewed by 131 station-based personnel. The provision of a Fire and Rescue Service in remote locations must be a partnership between SFRS and the community which it serves. Recruitment and retention of On Call staff is problematic in certain locations and can have an adverse effect on fire appliance availability.

Operational On Call firefighters are supported by Wholetime District Office personnel: 1 Group Commander; 2 Station Commanders; 2 On Call Support Watch Commanders, 3 Training Function Watch Commanders, 1 Community Safety Advocate and 1 Fire Safety Auditing Officer.

In relation to Operational activity, statistics show that the Western Isles is a safe place to live, work and visit. SFRS will not however become complacent and will continue to engage with stakeholders in order to drive down risks in the wider community whilst focusing on the vulnerable and most at risk.

Prevention and Protection within the Western Isles will be achieved through a process of community safety engagement and Fire Safety Enforcement. Prevention is a clear process of working with our partner agencies to identify the most vulnerable individuals within our community. This will allow the Service to address the occurrence of dwelling fires which are more likely to involve vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, older single people, people living in areas of deprivation and people with drug and alcohol addictions. These high-risk groups will be targeted through a collaborative approach with Social Services, support groups and healthcare providers to carry out Home Safety Visits, and a range of educational and diversionary programmes such as FireSkills, Fire Setter Intervention Programmes, Road Safety events and the Safe Islanders events.

Protection will be achieved by carrying out Fire Safety Audits on all relevant premises. These premises include all Care Homes, Education Establishments, Hospitals, Businesses with a Sleeping Risk, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and very high or high-risk premises.

The main risks are spread across processing, transport, geographical, coastal waters and coastline, isolated communities, severe weather; infrastructure related, mixed category roads network, plus schools, hospital and care facilities. In addition, there exists commercial activity that includes the whisky and gin industry, marine commerce and farming.

The response to, and recovery from major emergencies as defined within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 will continue through our participation in the Western Isles Emergency Planning & Co-ordinating Group, (WIEPCG), which in turn links into the Highland & Islands Local Resilience Partnership, (LRP). In times of severe weather, power and communications outages the local co-ordinating group is at the forefront of ensuring the safety of residents in many ways, independent of outside assistance, placing SFRS at the very core of response and resilience in Western Isles.

These arrangements include the emergency plans and agency specific operational orders and procedures and are intended to facilitate an effective joint response to any emergency.

As a statutory partner in The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (CYPA) and GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) provide a unique foundation to support the development of not only youth engagement activities but also can provide SFRS with links to our most vulnerable citizens. The provision of community safety information and making adjustments to how, what and when we will communicate with communities is an important aspect of our work. The effective use of the media can support communities through targeted or generic safety information to the promotion of events across the Western Isles. Whenever possible we will deliver joint safety messaging along with our partners.

SFRS is an active member of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP). This group brings together the main public sector organisations with the voluntary and business sectors to solve problems no single agency could resolve by themselves. Western Isles faces a range of interconnected challenges, including geographic isolation, underemployment, housing shortages, high living costs, and climate change. The OHCPP's approach is rooted in collaboration, prevention, and innovation, aiming to build a more sustainable and inclusive future.

The OHCPP has agreed four priorities:

- **Sustain the population** by attracting and retaining people, especially young adults and working-age families;
- **Improve access to suitable housing**, including affordable and energy-efficient homes;
- **Promote the Outer Hebrides** as an attractive place to live, work, study and invest;
- **Reduce inequalities** through targeted action in communities with the greatest need;
- **Strengthen climate resilience** and support adaptation across communities and infrastructure.

Where possible the Western Isles Local Fire and Rescue Plan will link activities to the OHCPP priorities either through direct action or actions that mitigate the impacts arising from these priorities.

Performance Scrutiny

The Western Isles Local Fire and Rescue Plan is the basis on which SFRS performance is measured. This is done via the governance arrangements of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar specifically the elected members of the Police and Fire Sub-Committee. This Committee meets formally, six monthly and SFRS report directly to this committee. To ensure performance monitoring is consistent with our strategy we will work with our managers, staff representatives and wider partners to develop a comprehensive set of performance measures against the outcomes, priorities and objectives outlined in this Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

These measures will form the basis of our future performance reports, which will enable us to continue to provide relevant, accurate, timely and consistent data and information to maintain effective scrutiny and challenge both at national and local levels.

The Local Senior Officer, or their deputy will attend the Police and Fire Sub Committee and provide an update on progress against this plan, overall performance, and any other matters deemed relevant to the delivery of Fire and Rescue matters within the Western Isles.

Local Priorities

Priority 1.	Improving Fire Safety in the Home
Priority 2.	Improving Fire Safety and Resilience in the Business Community
Priority 3.	Minimising the Impact of Unintentional Harm
Priority 4.	Effective Risk Management and Operational Preparedness

	SFRS Local Area Plan Priorities			
Local Outcome Improvement Plan Outcomes	Priority 1 Improving Fire Safety in the Home	Priority 2 Improving Fire Safety and Resilience in the Business community	Priority 3 Minimising the Impact of Unintentional Harm	Priority 4 Effective risk Management and Operational Preparedness
<u>Outcome 1</u> Sustainable Population Ensure the Outer Hebrides retains and attracts people to secure a sustainable community structure. • Locality Planning • Youth Retention • Housing Continuity	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Outcome 2</u> Sustainable Economic Growth Ensures all residents have direct access to appropriate, stable employment opportunities. • Island Deal Delivery • Fair Work Practices • Emerging Sectors	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Outcome 3</u> Quality of Life, Wellbeing and Health Provide attractive opportunities that elevate long-term health, culture, and community safety. • Fuel Poverty • Gaelic and Cultural Heritage • Early Intervention Networks	✓	✓	✓	✓

Local Priorities

1. Improving Fire Safety in the home

Background:

Among the range of emergencies attended in the Western Isles, fires in the home represent a very small proportion of overall operational demand. Although these incidents account for only a minor percentage of our activity, they remain the category of fire most likely to result in serious injury or loss of life. Consequently, enhancing fire safety within the home continues to be a core priority for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Western Isles.

There are approximately 12,500 occupied homes across the Western Isles, and on average we attend around 15 accidental dwelling fires each year. High-severity house fires remain infrequent, representing a very small proportion of all such incidents recorded nationally. The rate of fire fatalities and casualties in the Western Isles continues to be well below the Scottish average, reflecting the strong emphasis placed on prevention, early intervention, and targeted community safety work.

This comparatively low frequency and impact of fire in the home demonstrates the effectiveness of our prevention and protection activities and contributes to making the Western Isles one of the safest places to live in Scotland. However, evidence consistently shows that the most vulnerable individuals within our communities remain at heightened risk. Older adults account for a significant proportion of fire-related casualties, and fires in the home tend to occur more frequently in areas experiencing higher levels of deprivation.

The rural and dispersed geography of the Western Isles also presents additional challenges. Social isolation, limited access to support services, and the prevalence of single-occupancy households can increase vulnerability to fire. These factors reinforce the importance of our continued focus on targeted home fire safety visits, partnership working, and early identification of individuals who may be at increased risk.

Our commitment remains clear: to reduce the likelihood and impact of fire in the home, to protect the most vulnerable, and to ensure that every community across the Western Isles benefits from a safe and resilient environment.

Individuals who are at higher risk from fire are, often, known to other agencies such as health, social care or criminal justice. This highlights the absolute need to share knowledge and information between services about those most vulnerable in our communities. Collaborative working will contribute to the reduction of fire risk in their homes.

A home fire safety visit, where firefighters visit people in their homes to provide fire safety advice and fit free detection will continue to be our main tool to improve fire safety in the home. We will monitor and broaden this over coming years to identify what other protection we can offer communities. But a smoke alarm cannot prevent a fire, it can only alert the occupant that a fire may

have started. The best way of reducing the potential for fires to occur is to influence and change the behaviour of residents and we will continue to concentrate our efforts on how to improve their fire safety awareness.

We will achieve it by:

- Sharing relevant information and analyse data, to identify individuals, households, communities and geographical areas most at risk from fire.
- Implementing our Post Domestic Incident Response after all reported fires and incidents involving the activation of fire detection systems.
- Targeting our home fire safety visits, and fire safety education and advice at those who are identified as being most at risk from fire.
- Making it easier for our partners to refer vulnerable individuals who are at risk from fire.
- Educating children and young people on the risks from fire, making the Western Isles a safer place for the future.
- Supporting the OHCPP.

Performance Indicators:

- The number of accidental dwelling fires.
- The number of accidental dwelling fire casualties and fatalities.
- The number of Home Safety Visits measured against the backdrop of risk.
- The number of Home Safety Visits referred to SFRS by partners.

Expected Outcomes:

- Our aim is to support all Western Isles individuals and communities to become safer, resilient and sustainable.
- Supporting the OHCPP by ensuring that ALL Western Isles residents have equality of access to home safety guidance and that our engagement and interventions improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Improving Performance*

2. Improving Fire Safety and Resilience in the Business Community

Background:

Non-domestic fires tend to involve businesses, the backbone of the Western Isles economy and growth. Ensuring businesses are better protected, more resilient to fire and can continue to contribute to the local economy is a key priority for us during these tough economic times.

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 premises. In the Western Isles, several hundred non-domestic premises fall within the scope of the Act, including businesses, public buildings, care facilities, hospitality venues and community premises. Duty holders in these buildings are required to meet specific responsibilities to ensure safe working environments, carry out suitable fire risk assessments and maintain appropriate fire safety measures. SFRS supports this through targeted engagement, audits and enforcement activity where necessary.

Our approach of educating and advising duty holders on how to build and maintain safe business environments, combined with enforcing our powers to ensure compliance is working effectively, means that in the Western Isles, we have one of the lowest rates of non-domestic fires in the whole of Scotland.

We aim to build on this success by operating a risk-based fire safety audit programme, which is intelligence led and focusses our resources on auditing premises with high life risk and where there is greater likelihood of fire. These will include buildings important to our heritage and critical to our local infrastructure.

We will achieve it by:

- Prioritising our Fire Safety Audits and Operational Reassurance Visits towards protecting non-domestic premises with the highest life risk and those where there is the greatest risk of fire.
- Supporting every business that has been affected by a fire, by undertaking a post fire audit of the premises and assisting their recovery in the quickest and most efficient way.
- Responding promptly to complaints over fire safety compliance in non-domestic premises.
- Where relevant, advise on the suitability of fire safety provision in all new non-domestic premises under construction and existing premises undergoing major refurbishment.
- Engaging with duty holders on how to meet fire safety compliance, to ease the burden on the business community.

Performance Indicators:

- Reviewing the number of fires in non-domestic premises and the type of premises involved in fire.
- Reviewing the number and types of fire safety audits, and Operational Assurance visits carried out.
- Assessing the outcome of fire safety audits carried out in non-domestic premises.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our responses to complaints over fire safety compliance in non-domestic premises.

Expected Outcomes:

- Our aim is to support Western Isle's business communities to become safer, resilient and sustainable.
- Supporting the OHCPP by ensuring that all Western Isles businesses have equality of access to relevant safety guidance, that through our guidance and interventions. Western Isles economy is

better protected preventing future poverty and that our engagement and interventions improve the health and wellbeing of business owners, employees and visitors.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Safe and Effective Response*
- *Improving Performance*

3. Minimising The Impact of Unintentional Harm

Background:

The Building Safer Communities Phase 2: National Strategic Assessment of Unintentional Harm defines these types of incidents as “unintentional physical and psychological harm that could have been predicted and prevented”. Unintentional harm in Scotland is a heavy burden on the population in terms of death and injury but is also a significant economic burden for public services. In 2024/25, there were 54,720 emergency admissions for unintentional injuries, this represents 1 in 10 of all emergency admissions in Scotland. In 2024, unintentional injuries led to 2,850 deaths. This can be reduced through more focus on prevention and education, targeted interventions and partnership working.

Unintentional harm in the home (falls in particular) has been identified as one of the most prominent issues and the associated risk profile closely matches those people that are most at risk from fire, in particular the elderly. It therefore makes absolute sense that our work goes beyond making people safer from fire. We will position unintentional harm as a local priority, and work with our partners to make the most vulnerable people in the Western Isles safer from experiencing unintentional harm in the home, much of which is driven by social and economic inequality.

Out with the home environment, we experience the impact of unintentional harm through our response to a range of non-fire related emergencies, and it is Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) and medical emergencies which are the most significant cause of non-fire related deaths and injuries. Working with our Community Planning partners, we will ensure there is a co-ordinated and joined up approach to road safety prevention activity, water safety and medical emergencies. With a pooling of expertise and a range of activities, we will target the ‘at risk groups’ to reduce the number of deaths and injuries resulting from RTC’s and alongside key partners from the Partnership Approach to Water Safety (PAWS) group reduce the number water related incidents and work with SAS on medical emergency awareness inputs.

SFRS will work with partners within the Western Isles, ensuring that a robust referral process is established in line with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. This will ensure that the people who are most vulnerable from risk are provided with the necessary support to reduce that risk. SFRS personnel on the Western Isles will continue to promote and conduct safety visits within the home, targeting those deemed to be most vulnerable from harm.

We will achieve it by:

- Re-focusing our Home Fire Safety Visit Programme to include the assessment of unintentional harm in the home and wider health issues.
- Training our firefighters to recognise and respond to the risk factors associated with unintentional harm in the home.
- Sharing key data and jointly deliver targeted interventions, to reduce the incidence and impact of unintentional harm among vulnerable people in the home.
- Agreeing referral pathways, considering expanding our Home Fire Safety Visit Programme to include unintentional harm in the home.
- Targeting road safety activities from early years to young drivers and other 'at risk groups.
- Targeting water safety activities as directed through the Western Isles PAWS group.

Performance Indicators:

- Analysing the number of unintentional harm referrals we make to our partners.
- Monitoring the number of attendances at RTC's and the frequency and severity of injuries arising from RTC's.
- Reviewing the number of other non-fire related emergencies and the frequency and severity of injuries arising from these incidents.
- Assessing the number of people we train in CPR.

Expected Outcomes:

- Our aim is to support individuals and communities to become safer, resilient and sustainable.
- Supporting the OHCPP by ensuring that all residents have equality of access to safety guidance and that our engagement and interventions improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Improving Performance*

4. Effective Risk Management and Operational Preparedness

Background:

Risk management and operational preparedness is a key area of work for SFRS. Locally, this means understanding the specific risks across the Western Isles and planning effectively so we are resilient and ready to respond to any incident these risks may create. Many of the risks we face are shaped by where people live and work, the nature of local industries, and the contribution these activities make to the islands' infrastructure.

In the Western Isles, key risks include energy generation and transmission infrastructure, extensive aquaculture operations, and the presence of multiple ferry ports and harbours that support passenger travel, freight, fishing and commercial activity. The islands' exposure to severe weather, including storms, high winds and coastal flooding, also presents significant operational challenges. These risks must be identified, assessed and managed through effective planning, partnership working and response arrangements.

Other risks in the Western Isles include;

- Ports and harbours supporting fishing, aquaculture, freight and leisure activities;
- Temporary events such as community festivals, concerts and sporting competitions;
- Significant heritage and cultural sites, including historic buildings and nationally important archaeological locations.

The national risks Scotland faces are continually changing and as a key public service, we have a statutory duty to prepare for and respond to any significant national threats or major emergencies. These include being able to deal with events such as widespread flooding, major transport accidents, terrorist attacks and natural disasters. As our role broadens, so does the variety of incidents we attend. Developing greater flexibility to deploy crews, to take on a broadening response and prevention role will therefore be fully explored nationally and locally for safe and effective delivery.

Having the resilience to make plans for and respond to the unique risk profile of the Western Isles is essential for managing the effects of any event. For us, that means our firefighters being equipped to deal with emergencies safely and effectively, our stations being in a constant state of readiness; working with our partners to deliver an integrated approach to emergency planning and helping to build community resilience.

We will achieve it by:

- Identifying and assessing the risk to our community through the process of Operational Intelligence (OI) gathering.
- Active involvement in the Western Isles Emergency Planning & Co-ordinating Group. (WIEPCG), which in turn links into the Highland & Islands Local Resilience Partnership, (LRP).
- Implementing a training programme that matches the Western Isles' risk profile and maintains our capabilities for dealing with local and national emergencies.
- Undertaking targeted On Call firefighter recruitment campaigns, to raise community awareness of the role and its value.
- Strengthening community resilience by engaging with them, to build their capabilities for managing the effects of emergencies as a community.

Performance Indicators:

- Reviewing the outcomes of our OI process and engagement with LRP's.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our firefighter training programme and multi-agency emergency planning.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our firefighter recruitment campaigns.

- Assessing the number of resilience hubs, we engage with to enhance their capacity and capabilities.

Expected Outcomes:

Our aim is to support Western Isles' individuals and communities to become safer, resilient and sustainable;

- Supporting the OHCPP by ensuring that all our communities have equality of access to relevant safety guidance, that through our guidance and interventions ensure our economy is better protected preventing future poverty and that our engagement and interventions improve the health and wellbeing of business owners, employees and visitors. Providing access to employment opportunities across our communities.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Safe and Effective Response*
- *Improving Performance*
- *Investing in our People*
- *Innovation and Investment*

Review

To ensure this Local Fire and Rescue Plan remains flexible to emerging local or national priorities a review may be carried out at any time but will be reviewed at least once every three years.

A review may also be carried out if the Scottish Minister directs it or if a new Strategic Plan is approved. Following a review, the Local Senior Officer may revise the Plan.

Contact Us

We are fully committed to continually improving the service we provide to our communities and recognise that to achieve this goal we must listen and respond to the views of the public and our partners.

We use all feedback we receive to monitor our performance and incorporate this information into our planning and governance processes in order to continually improve our service. We are proud that the majority of feedback we receive is positive and we are keen to hear examples of good practice and quality service delivery that exemplifies the standards of service that we strive to provide for the communities of Scotland.

If you have something you would like to share with us or you require additional information, you can get in touch in a number of ways:

Write to: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Western Isles District Office
 4 Robertson Road
 Stornoway
 HS1 2LL

Submit an enquiry: <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/contact-us/general-enquiry/>

Visit our website: www.firescotland.gov.uk



firescotland.gov.uk