



**Midlothian
Local Fire and Rescue Plan
Review 2014 - 2017**



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

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Midlothian 

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1. Introduction

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

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

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

2. Performance Data – what the figures told us

Over the past five years within Midlothian, the SFRS have responded to 4129 incidents. The indicators below relate to our reduction priorities within the 2014-17 Local Fire and Rescue Plan. They do not include certain data such as non-domestic, non-dwelling accidental fires and non-fire related Special Services, this data however does form part of the overall incident totals above.

Dwelling fires accounted for 8% of our operational activity over the five-year period and resulted in 73 fire casualties including four fatalities. Deliberate fires, other than dwellings, accounted for 30% of our operational activity over the five-year period.

Disappointingly, Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) accounted for 60% of our operational response activity.

Green figures indicate we have met our performance target, a red figures indicate we have failed to reach our performance target.

Key Performance Indicator	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Accidental dwelling fires	88	62	56	60	75
All fire casualties and fatalities	20	35	20	10	15
All deliberate fires excl. dwellings	181	312	260	278	394
Special Service – RTC's	41	36	46	47	39
Unwanted fire alarm signals	531	537	496	565	665

3. Scrutiny Arrangements

Scrutiny arrangements in Midlothian require SFRS to report local performance on a quarterly basis to the Police and Fire and Rescue Board. The SFRS Local Senior Officer presents performance reports to the Board. The following Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are scrutinised.

1. Reduction of Dwelling Fires
2. Reduction of Fire Casualties and Fatalities
3. Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting (not including dwellings)
4. Reduction of Road Traffic Collisions
5. Reduction of All Special Service Casualties
6. Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

The term “Special Service” relates to a range of incident types including RTC’s, rescues from height, machinery, water and confined space, medical emergencies and effecting entry. Whilst not captured as a priority in our 2014-17 Local Fire and Rescue Plan, our attendance at non RTC Special Services calls continues and has increased by 35% over the last five years.

HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) inspection 2016

To support this formal review, consideration of the outcomes from HMFSI’s Local Area Inspections that examine the development and delivery of Local Fire and Rescue Plans. By undertaking inspections of our service delivery within local authority areas, HMFSI have given independent assurance to Scottish Ministers and the public that adequate provision for local service delivery is being made. There is equal access to specialist resources, service provision, partnership working is of sound quality, and strong scrutiny arrangements are in place. This allows HMFSI to maintain a good awareness of how well we are functioning and builds intelligence to inform future inspections.

By the end of the period 2016/17, examination of the SFRS service provision in nine local authority areas will be complete. These areas included Aberdeen City, East Renfrewshire, Western Isles, West Lothian, Dundee, South Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, Moray and Glasgow City. Once prepared, HMFSI will publish these inspection reports.

The published Local Area Inspection Reports indicated that HMFSI felt that there was a need to identify unique characteristics for each local area and provide clearer use of risk-based evidence to identify and shape priorities across our Local Plans. They also encouraged a stronger emphasis made on specific local priorities and contribution supported by an appropriate level of local performance measures. Local priorities and measures should be balanced against our national needs as well as aligning to the collaborative partnership working requirements of Local Outcome Improvement Plan delivery.

4. Reduction of Dwelling Fires

We will contribute towards the Scottish target of a 10% reduction over a three-year rolling period.

What the figures told us

Dwelling fires can have devastating effects on our communities. The reduction of dwelling fires, accidental or deliberate, continues to be a priority for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in Midlothian.

The incidence of Dwelling Fires in Midlothian has seen increased numbers over the last five years.

Over 50% of these fires started in single occupancy dwellings involving persons 18-64 years old. Most fires occurred during the day between 1600-2100hrs with human behaviour rather than equipment faults being a common cause.

Not surprisingly, the kitchen and cooking continues to be the most common rooms of origin and cause for Dwelling Fires.

Midlothian has generally charted just below or in line with the Scottish average over the last five years where people have required the attendance of the SFRS to a fire in their home.

Reduction in accidental dwelling fires	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Midlothian Wards	88	62	56	60	75
Penicuik	21	13	6	12	13
Bonnyrigg	11	4	5	9	9
Dalkeith	13	18	17	16	24
Midlothian West	14	5	7	8	15
Midlothian East	15	12	12	7	5
Midlothian South	14	10	9	8	9

What are we doing to help prevent Dwelling Fires?

Over the last three years, we have conducted approx. 3500 home safety visits and fitted just approx. 1500 smoke detectors in Midlothian. We continue to work alongside our community partners in order to reach those most vulnerable to fire.

5. Reduction in Fire Casualties and Fatalities

We will contribute towards the Scottish target of a 5% reduction, over a three-year rolling period in relation to fire casualties and fatalities.

What the figures told us

Fire casualty and fatality rates provide an indication of the amount of serious, life-threatening injuries that occur due to fire. This can indicate not only the success of SFRS in reducing the number of life risk fires through community fire safety and similar activities, but also their success in response activity in saving lives.

Figures relating to fire casualties have almost halved over the last five years showing a reduction in the last two years. There have been four fire fatalities for the same period.

Casualty figures include those who have received a precautionary check-up and no further treatment. Many non-fatal casualties suffered minor injuries such as slight smoke inhalation, very few required hospitalisation.

Reduction in fire casualties and fatalities	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Midlothian Wards	20	35	20	10	13
Penicuik	6	4	2	2	5
Bonnyrigg	3	9	2	2	1
Dalkeith	4	9	5	1	1
Midlothian West	1	0	2	3	3
Midlothian East	3	8	6	1	3
Midlothian South	3	5	3	1	0

What are we doing to reduce Fire Casualties and Fatalities?

During home safety visits, SFRS personnel discuss fire safety measures with occupants and fit smoke detectors if required. Knowing what to do in the event of a fire is crucial to maintaining your safety and others within the home. Smoke detection gives early warning of fire and it is this warning that not only allows quicker intervention but also gives occupants the opportunity to leave the affected premises earlier thus reducing the chances of serious and life threatening injuries.

SFRS also work in partnership with other public services such as Police Scotland, Midlothian Council and Health and Social Care in order to identify, and reach, those most at risk from fire in our communities.

6. Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting (not including Dwellings)

Our target against the 3-year average is to continually reduce the number of deliberately set fires.

What the figures told us

Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting continues to be a priority for the SFRS in Midlothian. Deliberate fires of this nature typically involve grassland, refuse or derelict buildings. Evidence shows that there is often a close link between deliberate secondary fires and anti-social behaviour.

Deliberate fires can often be of a sporadic nature although increases in operational response activity generally coincide with the spring and summer months.

There have been 1,425 deliberate fires in Midlothian over the last five years. The Dalkeith and Midlothian East wards have seen the greatest incidence of deliberate fires accounting for over 50% of the five-year Midlothian total.

Reduction in deliberate fires excl. dwellings	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Midlothian Wards	181	312	260	278	394
Penicuik	16	18	19	25	27
Bonnyrigg	12	27	21	28	25
Dalkeith	64	60	65	65	77
Midlothian West	24	44	44	48	85
Midlothian East	41	104	83	63	92
Midlothian South	30	63	43	58	91

What are we doing to reduce Deliberate Fire Setting?

Due to the sporadic and random nature of many deliberately started fires, prevention activities are often reactive. Recent years has seen a more focused multi agency approach to this anti-social behaviour, which has led to a range of diversionary programmes and youth interventions in an attempt to reduce incidence.

The SFRS also offer a range of diversionary and educational programmes for younger people such as Cooldown Crew and Crucial Crew that highlight the consequences of starting fires deliberately. Cooldown crew has been delivered to a number of secondary schools over the last 5 years and crucial crew continues to run on a weekly basis.

7. Reduction of Road Traffic Collisions

Our target against the three-year average is to continually reduce the number of Road Traffic Collisions on the roads in Midlothian.

What the figures told us

Responding to Road Traffic Collisions is a key part of our intervention activities within Midlothian. The SFRS is committed to working with partners and other stakeholders in order to reduce the amount of RTC's that occur. It is worth highlighting that Police Scotland is responsible for investigating the cause of RTC, because of this the SFRS retain only general information relating to the figures below.

SFRS intervention at RTC's can include extricating persons using Hydraulic Rescue Equipment (HRE), rendering medical assistance, or making the vehicle or scene safe. In total, we attended 209 RTC's within the five-year period.

Reduction in road traffic collisions	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Midlothian Wards	41	36	46	47	39
Penicuik	9	6	8	12	9
Bonnyrigg	3	2	1	2	4
Dalkeith	9	2	6	6	7
Midlothian West	10	12	15	10	8
Midlothian East	8	8	7	12	6
Midlothian South	2	6	9	5	5

What are we doing to reduce Road Traffic Collisions?

The SFRS are a member of the Midlothian Road Safety Group. Community Action Teams (CAT) and operational staff attend schools and to deliver inputs to young drivers regarding the consequences of RTC's. The SFRS has been regularly involved in the Tomorrows driver event, held annually at the Brunton Theatre, where 5th and 6th year pupils from across Midlothian receive a safe drive message.

8. Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Our target against the three-year average is to contribute towards a continued reduction in UFAS within Midlothian.

What the figures told us

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) are defined as incidents where an automated fire alarm system activates and results in the mobilisation of SFRS resources, when the reason for that alarm turns out to be something other than a fire emergency.

UFAS is categorised into Equipment Failure, Good Intent and Malicious Intent. The figure below relates to all three categories however, our quarterly performance report presented to the Police and Fire Scrutiny Committee focuses on Equipment Failure. Equipment Failure accounted for around 68% of all UFAS calls.

Reduction in Unwanted fire alarm signals	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Midlothian Wards	531	537	496	565	665
Penicuik	49	49	69	62	79
Bonnyrigg	60	76	82	84	87
Dalkeith	127	92	103	105	130
Midlothian West	121	141	91	135	153
Midlothian East	121	92	84	115	120
Midlothian South	53	87	67	64	96
Penicuik	49	49	69	62	79

What are we doing to reduce Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals?

We continue to monitor UFAS calls and our Fire Safety Enforcement Officers work closely with premises to reduce further UFAS incidents. This includes discussing technological, procedural and management solutions in order to prevent future UFAS incidents. This forms part of an incremental approach with the ultimate aim of educating duty holders whilst reducing UFAS calls.

9. Emerging Priorities

Last year the SFRS published its 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. Six Strategic Priorities were identified including “Improving Local Outcomes” and “Modernising our Response”, the full plan can be accessed here,

http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/1005163/scottish_fire_and_rescue_service_strategic_plan_2016_19.pdf

Both of the aforementioned priorities will form key parts of our 2017-20 Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Midlothian. Indeed, whilst not included in our 2014-17 Local Plan, over the last 18 months we have contributed to both priorities through pilot projects in Midlothian.

In terms of “Improving Local Outcomes”, the SFRS lead a multi-agency initiative that targets those most at risk from Unintentional Harm and Injury in the home. The project has seen the role of a local Firefighter expand beyond traditional activities and include holistic home safety such as assessing risk from slips, trips and falls in the home and referring to partner agencies when cases of fuel poverty are identified.

The SFRS has taken a lead role in the Scottish Government “Unintentional harm” work stream of the Building Safer Communities Programme. The Scottish wide Strategic Assessment has now been published and will be considered as part of the next Local Fire Plan. (<http://www.bsc.scot/publications.html>)

The SFRS will continually aim to develop, evolve and improve as we look to provide a service that is fit for purpose, effective, efficient and takes cognisance of changing risk profiles and associated community needs.

10. Engagement – what our stakeholders told us

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

Community partners have acknowledged the importance of maintaining our “core business” however also recognise our contributions to wider Community Planning Partnership (CPP) themes such as Reducing Inequalities. Comments suggest that our CPP partners view the SFRS as a committed member in terms of resource and prevention and they are keen to see us develop some of our innovative projects in relation to Community Justice, youth engagement and holistic community safety.

Opportunities have also been highlighted where we can improve our community engagement whilst making our community fire stations more accessible for the general public and community partners. These opportunities also include wider information sharing regarding persons at risk and strengthening ties with Third and voluntary sector organisations.

11. Conclusion

In reviewing the progress against the priorities within the Midlothian Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2014 – 2017, it is pleasing to note the decrease in dwelling fire casualties. We will continue to prioritise this type of incident whilst strengthening our links with community partners and the public to allow us to reach those most at risk from fire in our communities.

As a statutory partner within the CPP and having a statutory responsibility for attending RTC's, we will continue to prioritise the reduction of RTC's and associated casualties. It is pleasing that there has been no significant increase in the past 5 years.

On a less positive note, dwelling fires, deliberate fires, unwanted fire alarm signals and other Special Service incidents such as medical response continue to rise. Improvements in these areas will only be achieved by innovative and concentrated collaborative working with key stakeholders.

It is clear that opportunities exist to improve our engagement with the communities we serve. Only by listening to our communities will we accurately identify their needs, which will direct our prevention activities to the people and places that need them most. We will not do this in isolation and we will look to strengthen and improve our excellent relationships with Community Partners such as Police Scotland and the Local Authority whilst establishing links with other partners from the private and third sectors.

The SFRS has undergone significant change since its inception in 2013. Examples of this have been the expansion of the role of a Firefighter into holistic community safety whilst shaping a Fire and Rescue Service that meets the needs of modern day society and its associated risks. We are keen to ensure that the Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2017-20 recognises and reflects some of the key Service transformational changes implemented and continuing to develop in Midlothian.

The review of the Midlothian Local Fire and Rescue Plan for 2014 – 2017 has considered the progress that has been made to date and supported the development of key priorities for the next plan. As mentioned previously, meeting the challenges in the new plan will not be achieved in isolation but through effective partnership working and as such, the new Local Fire and Rescue Plan will seek to compliment and contribute to the integrated approach to Community Planning within Midlothian.

12. Recommendations

It is recommended that the following priorities are taken forward in the new Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Midlothian area:

Priority 1: Reduction of Dwelling Fires

Priority 2: Reduction of Fire Casualties and Fatalities

Priority 3: As part of a Community Partnership approach, contribute to the reduction of Unintentional Harm and Injury in the Home for those groups most at risk.

Priority 4: Reduction of Road Traffic Collisions

Priority 5: As part of a Community Partnership approach, contribute to the reduction of all Special Service Casualties

Priority 6: Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals