



# Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report - Highland Quarterly Performance Report 1 April - 30 June 2013



## Introduction

Welcome to the first report of the quarterly Performance Reports for 2013/14. This report provides summaries of our fire safety activities, statistical and benchmarking information for the Highland area, and extracts of incidents that occurred between 1 April and 30 June 2013.

## 1. Community Safety Activity

### Community Engagement - Activities

We promote fire safety and engage with the community through a number of different initiatives, which include working with partner agencies in promoting road safety, addressing anti-social behaviour, and providing fire and road safety advice to the community in general.

We undertook a variety of community engagement activities during this quarter, which included:

#### Safe Highlander



Safe Highlanders is an annual education activity aimed at Primary 7 pupils promoting community safety, health and crime prevention.

The main event is held in Inverness with satellite events in Fort William, Lairg, Portree and Wick. The Safe Highlanders event covers a range of community safety topics with a strong focus on enabling children to become more aware of personal safety, avoiding becoming victims of crime, understanding how to react to emergency situations and becoming good citizens

Safe Highlanders is a Multi Agency event and is run in partnership with The Highland Council, NHS Highland, Southern Scottish Electric, British Red Cross, Health and Safety Executive, Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Police Scotland. Each agency provides an interactive workshop; topics covered include road safety, fire safety, water safety, first aid, building site safety, farm safety, electrical safety, and substance misuse.

This year's event in Inverness took place at Cameron Barracks from 7-17 May and was attended by approximately 1600 students from primary schools in the surrounding area.

#### Multi Agency Days of Action

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service participated in Multi Agency Days of Action which took place from 25-27 June 2013 in three locations - Inverness, Brora and Easter Ross. The Days of Action was an enforcement operation where commercial vehicles were directed to a check point area and the occupants and vehicles were checked by the agencies participating in the event with an average of 300 vehicles being stopped each day. As part of this event, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service staff and Community Safety staff offered home fire safety visits, following which 19 visits have been arranged.

The other Agencies participating were Police Scotland, Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, British Transport Police, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs.

## 2. Community Safety Activity

### Summer Safety Day

On 28 June, the Service took part in a Summer Safety Day in Falcon Square, Inverness. The aim of the event was to provide community safety information to the public, especially young people, in order to keep people safe over the summer holidays. A number of Multi Agency partners set up activities or vehicles in Falcon Square promoting their individual specific safety messages. The Multi Agency partners included:

- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Services
- National Camera Safety Partnership
- Highland Council - Road Safety
- NHS Highland - Drugs & Alcohol
- Action for Children

Pictured is Firefighter Dave Brennan showing Miss Rosemary Cameron of Lochend by Inverness around the fire appliance.



### Autism Alert Card DVD

A DVD has been produced as part of a Multi Agency Highlands and Islands initiative and was distributed to all Stations and District Offices, as well as our Community Safety Advocates.

The purpose of the DVD is to promote the Autism Alert Card and show examples of how it can be used in various situations by all the Agencies involved. The Autism Alert Card will allow staff to refer to it when working with other Agencies or undertaking home fire safety visits (HFSVs) where they have been informed that a family member has been diagnosed with Autism.

### Post Fire Audit Procedure

A Post Fire Audit Procedure was introduced and implemented by the Prevention and Protection department during May in line with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) legislative fire safety strategy. Following a fire in a non domestic premise an initial assessment of the property type and the cause of fire is undertaken and where it is deemed appropriate a fire safety enforcement officer will undertake an audit of the premises. This may be a full or partial audit and would involve examining maintenance logs and management practices. During the reporting period five post fire audits have been undertaken with no follow-up action being required.

### Legislative Fire Safety

In order to meet our obligations under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 all SFRS staff in Highland area will be targeting premises where the risk is greatest. These include care homes, house of multiple occupancy (HMO), hostels, hotels and hospitals.

During the first quarter of this year, audits focused on High or Very High Risk Premises previously audited with the target being exceeded. The focus on this premises type resulted in us achieving 10% of our target for Care Homes and HMOs and 5% for Follow On and Other Audits. Audits on hospital premises are to be undertaken by a dedicated team from the West service delivery area and will begin during quarter 3.

Target Area	No. of Targeted Premises for 2013/14	Target to 30/06/2013	Completed to 30/06/2013	% Completed to 30/06/2013	% Annual Target Completed	Enforcement Notices	Prohibition Notices
Care Homes	99	25	10	40%	10%	2	0
Hospitals	17	4	0	0%	0%	0	0
Registered HMOs	117	29	12	41%	10%	0	0
High or Very High Risk Premises Previously Audited	136	34	78	229%	57%	6	1
School Care Accommodation	6	2	0	0%	0%	0	0
Hospices	1	0	0	0%	0%	0	0
Follow On and Other Audits	152	38	7	18%	5%	2	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

### 3. Key Performance Indicators

We have developed a small set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to report performance to the Strategic Leadership Team and Fire Board. We have concentrated on measures that we consider will be of particular importance to stakeholders.

**Key:**  Good/Acceptable  Room for Improvement  Below Standard

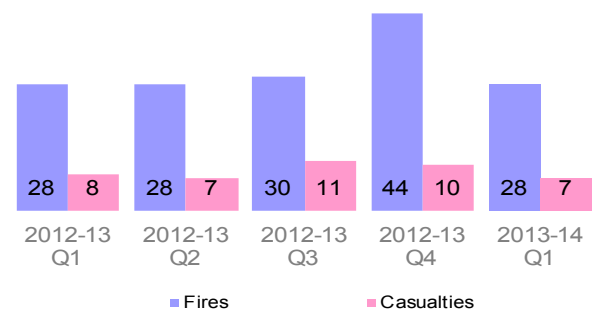
#### KPI-01 & KPI-02 **Accidental Dwelling Fires and Fire Casualties**

The number of accidental dwelling fires in the first quarter of this year has remained the same when compared to the same quarter last year, with a total of 28.

The number of casualties has decreased by one in this quarter, compared to the same period last year, from eight to seven.

Although the number of accidental dwelling fires in this quarter has remained the same when compared to the same period in 2012/13, the number of casualties has decreased by one, therefore we classify this KPI as green.

**Accidental Dwelling Fires - Highland**  
From 2012-13 Q1 to 2013-14 Q1



#### KPI-03 **Malicious (Deliberately Started) Fires**

The number of malicious, which includes deliberately started, fires in the current reporting period has increased significantly from 56 in the first quarter in 2012/13 to 83 in the first quarter of 2013/14.

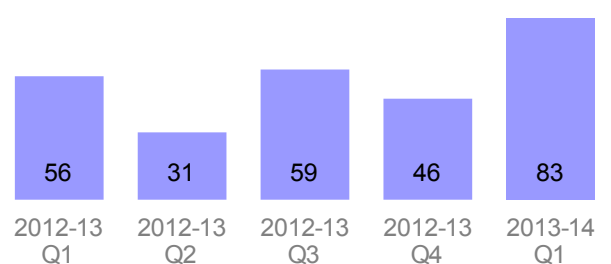
There were 53 deliberately started grass or heath fires this quarter compared to 27 in the same period in 2012/13, which represents a 49% increase in this type of incident.

There is a reduction in the number of fires which involved refuse being set alight. This quarter reports 16 such refuse fires compared to 21 in the same period last year, which is a 24% reduction.

The same quarter last year saw one derelict building fire but no derelict vehicle fires. During this quarter there was only one derelict vehicle fires, there were no derelict building fires.

As the number of malicious fires has increased compared to the number in the same period in 2012/13, we classify this KPI as red.

**Malicious Fires - Highland**  
From 2012-13 Q1 to 2013-14 Q1



### 3. Key Performance Indicators



**KPI-04**

#### Fire Prevention Activities - Home Fire Safety Visits

##### Highland

The number of home fire safety visits conducted in the first quarter of this year was 750, which is 250 less than the target set for Quarter 1. This can be attributed to the roll-out of a new process and recording mechanism to all staff, by the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service during April.

	HFSV Targets for 2013/14	Target to 30/06/2013	HFSVs Completed to 30/06/2013	% Completed to 30/06/2013	% Annual Target Completed
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>19%</b>

The target for the number of home fire safety visits to be conducted in quarter 1 was 1000. As the total number of home fire safety visits conducted this quarter is 25% below our target, we classify this KPI as red.



**KPI-05**

#### False Alarms as a Proportion of Incidents

We are committed to reducing the impact of unwanted fire alarm actuations (FAAs) over time, as attending unwanted calls is resource intensive and does little to reduce the risk of fire in the communities we serve.

We identify premises which have two or more FAAs in a four-week period, or three or more in a six-month period. District staff use this information to inform them where a direct visit to discuss call reduction methods would be of most benefit.

FAAs vs Other Attendances - Highland	2012-13 Q1	2012-13 Q2	2012-13 Q3	2012-13 Q4	2013-14 Q1	Trend
Equipment-Related False Alarms	278	348	336	332	330	
Other Incidents	571	455	570	714	679	
Proportion of FAAs to Other Incidents	33%	43%	37%	32%	33%	
Highland and Islands Area Average	35%	47%	47%	31%	36%	

Equipment related false alarms accounted for 33% of all incidents attended in the Highland area in the first quarter of this year. The number of equipment related false alarm incidents attended is higher than in the same period last year; 330 this quarter against 278 in the first quarter of 2012/13.

As the number of equipment related false alarms increased on the total for the same period last year we classify this KPI as red.



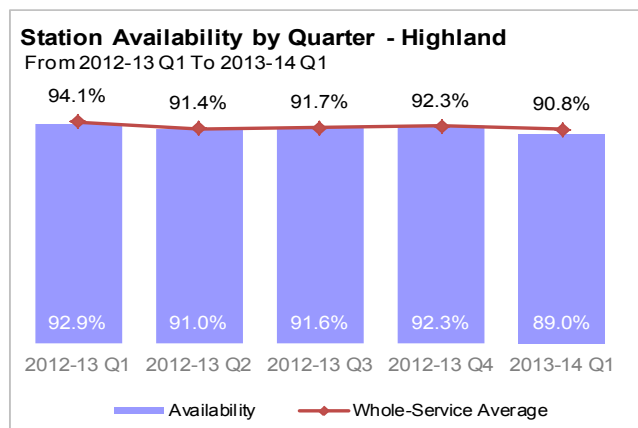
**KPI-06**

#### Proportion of Station Hours Available

We use a Retained Availability system to record when station staff are off-call, and how this affects the availability of the station's fire appliances.

The chart shows that the availability of stations in the Highland area this quarter decreased to 89% in comparison to 92.3% in the previous quarter.

As availability is lower than the average, we classify this KPI as red.



### 3. Key Performance Indicators



KPI-07

#### Injury Accidents

We aim to reduce the number of accidents that result in injury, and in particular the number of more serious injuries which must be reported to the Health & Safety Executive under the Reporting of Incidents Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). From 6th April 2012, the Fire Service must report any incident which results in an absence from work of 7 days or more.

We actively encourage the reporting of near misses as identification of sources of potential harm before injury occurs to allow proactive action to be taken.

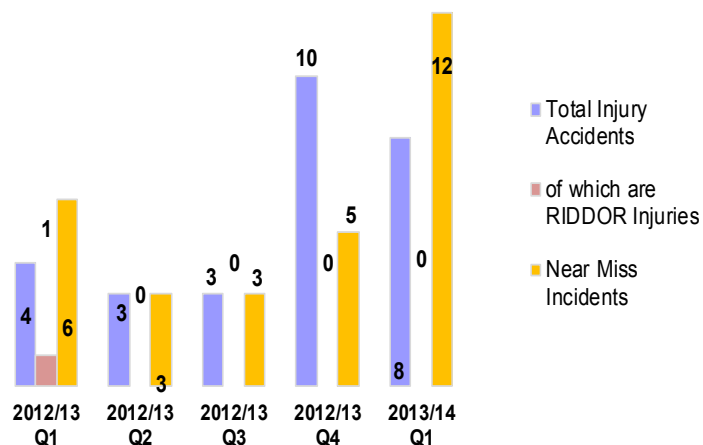
The graph shows the number of injury accidents and the number of those which were RIDDOR injuries within the Service, and compares the figures for this quarter against the same period in 2012/13.

As the overall number of injury accidents for quarter 1 of 2013/14 is higher than that in quarter 1 of 2012/13, we classify this KPI as red.

We are pleased to report that again, as in the previous three quarters, there has been no RIDDOR reportable accidents.

Injury Accidents and RIDDOR Injuries

From 2011/12 Q4 to 2012/13 Q4





## 4. Area Statistics

The following statistical breakdown allows all stakeholders and the public to further scrutinise the Service's performance.

### Workforce Statistics

The table below provides information on the current workforce within the Highland area as at 30th June 2013.

It details the breakdown of gender within each type of staffing and role within the Highland area.

	Workforce	Actual in post	Male	Female
<b>OPERATIONS CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND, ROSS &amp; CROMARTY</b>				
RETAINED Station Manager A	0	0	0	
Watch Manager B	27	28	28	0
Crew Manager	58	50	45	5
Firefighter	271	210	194	16
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>21</b>
CRU Watch Manager A	3	3	3	
Crew Manager	6	4	4	
Firefighter	21	18	17	1
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>
CFS Watch Manager A				
Crew Manager	3	1	1	
Firefighter	27	8	8	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table: 1 Gender of Workforce within Caithness, Sutherland and Ross & Cromarty area**

	Workforce	Actual in post	Male	Female
<b>OPERATIONS INVERNESS &amp; NAIRN, BADENOCH &amp; STRATHSPEY</b>				
RETAINED Station Manager A	10	8	8	0
Watch Manager B				
Crew Manager	23	21	21	0
Firefighter	111	91	81	10
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>10</b>
CRU Watch Manager A	4	3	3	0
Crew Manager	8	2	2	0
Firefighter	28	22	19	3
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3</b>
CFS Watch Manager A	0	0	0	0
Crew Manager	0	0	0	0
Firefighter	0	0	0	0
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table: 2 Gender of Workforce within Inverness & Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey area**

	Workforce	Actual in post	Male	Female
<b>OPERATIONS LOCHABER, SKYE &amp; LOCHALSH</b>				
RETAINED Station Manager A				
Watch Manager B	15	15	14	1
Crew Manager	32	29	26	3
Firefighter	149	116	104	12
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>16</b>
CRU Watch Manager A	6	2	2	
Crew Manager	12	0	2	
Firefighter	42	16	15	1
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>
CFS Watch Manager A				
Crew Manager	5	1	1	
Firefighter	45	5	5	0
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR HIGHLAND</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>52</b>

**Table: 3 Gender of Workforce within Lochaber and Skye & Lochalsh area**

## 4. Area Statistics

### Incident Statistics

The top chart shows the number of incidents attended in the first quarter of this year by category of incident.

The second chart relates to the proportion of incidents attended in the Highlands (in yellow) to the average for the former HIFRS as a whole (in white). If a yellow bar extends beyond the red marker in the middle of the chart the proportion is greater than the average; if to the left of the red marker it is below average.

The number of primary fires has increased compared to the same quarter the previous year with 95 primary fire incidents compared to 83 in the same period in 2012/13.

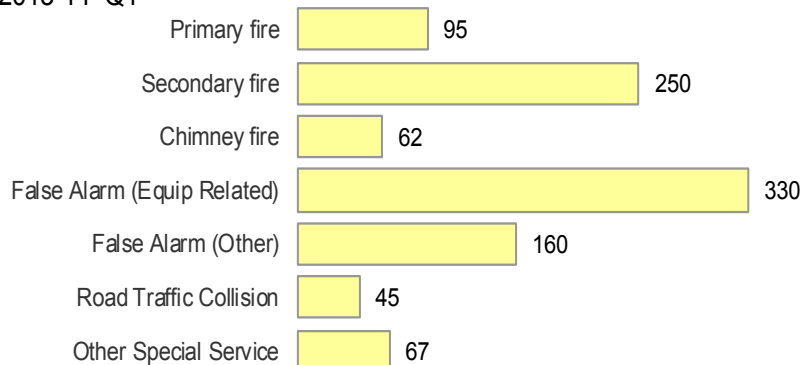
Secondary fires increased significantly when compared to the same period last year, increasing by 58% with 250 compared to 158.

Road Traffic Collisions reduced by 26% which is a significant decrease when compared to the same period last year; from 61 to 45.

Although the number of chimney fires has fallen this quarter to 62, in comparison to the same quarter in 2012/13 of 68, the proportion of such incidents is higher than the Highland and Islands Area average (6.1% against 5.3%).

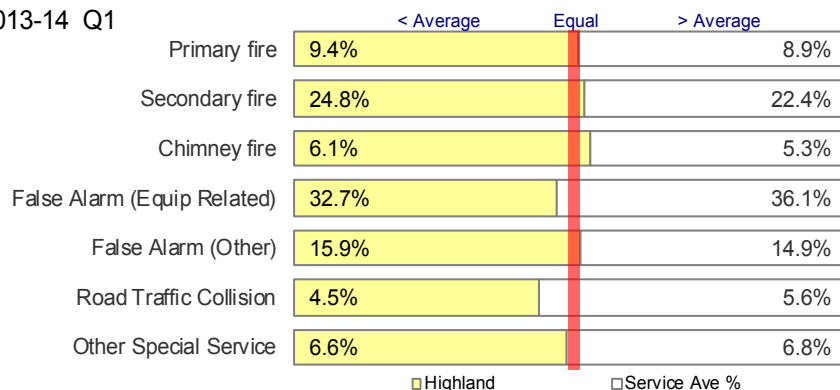
#### Incidents Attended - Highland

2013-14 Q1



#### Incident % Highland vs Highland and Islands Area Average

2013-14 Q1



## 4. Area Statistics

### Station Statistics

On the next two pages we show the number of attendances for each station in the Highland area. Table 1 contains the Community Response Units (CRUs) and Table 2 contains the Wholetime and Retained.

The tables are ranked in descending order by total number of attendances this year, and include standby turnouts (where stations turn out to provide standby cover either at their own or another station).

Please note that the tables show the total number of recorded attendances by each station. As there can be two or more stations in attendance at an incident the totals shown may be greater in some cases than the totals for the individual incidents shown on the previous pages.

**Table 1:**

### Incidents by Station Ground in Highland CRU 2013-14 Q1

CRU	Availability %	Staff	Total Incidents		Number of Incidents This Quarter								
			This Year	This Qtr	Fires			False Alarms		Special Services		Other	
					Primary	Secondary	Chimney	Equipment	Other	Road Traffic Collision	Other	Standby	
Nethybridge	-	7	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balintore	-	8	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carrbridge	-	10	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cromarty	-	7	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lybster	-	9	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Muck	-	5	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newtonmore	-	10	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ratagan	-	4	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spean Bridge	-	9	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>



## 4. Area Statistics

**Table 2: Incidents by Station Ground in Highland 2013-14 Q1**

Station	Availability %	Staff	Total Incidents		Number of Incidents This Quarter							
			This Year	This Qtr	Fires			False Alarms		Special Services		Other
					Primary	Secondary	Chimney	Equipment	Other	Road Traffic Collision	Other	Standby
Inverness Wholetime		77	318	318	23	47	4	139	65	11	29	-
Fort William	98	22	85	85	2	38	3	24	11	4	3	-
Invergordon	92	17	56	56	4	14	3	23	7	3	2	-
Dingwall	91	18	44	44	4	4	3	17	13	2	1	-
Thurso	93	20	39	39	6	6	5	9	7	2	4	-
Aviemore	93	10	36	36	4	6	4	17	3	2	-	-
Wick	96	19	34	34	7	4	1	13	6	1	2	-
Portree	100	11	32	32	3	17	1	2	5	1	3	-
Nairn	79	18	31	31	1	7	3	11	5	1	3	-
Mallaig	95	8	29	29	2	23	3	-	1	-	-	-
Kinlochleven	57	14	28	28	1	10	-	11	4	1	1	-
Golspie	96	11	21	21	1	5	4	4	4	2	1	-
Fort Augustus	98	11	19	19	3	3	2	4	-	7	-	-
Tain	95	11	19	19	3	5	1	6	3	-	1	-
Grantown	87	20	18	18	1	6	1	7	3	-	-	-
Kyle	99	12	18	18	3	4	2	4	3	-	2	-
Domoch	99	11	17	17	3	-	3	10	1	-	-	-
Kingussie	100	12	16	16	2	3	3	7	1	-	-	-
Lairg	100	11	15	15	1	6	2	2	2	1	1	-
Broadford	99	12	13	13	2	3	2	2	2	-	2	-
Ullapool	80	15	13	13	-	6	3	1	2	-	1	-
Beaully	95	9	9	9	3	2	-	1	-	2	1	-
Fortrose	67	9	9	9	2	-	1	2	2	-	2	-
Strontian	88	10	8	8	2	5	1	-	-	-	-	-
Bettyhill	51	6	7	7	1	5	-	-	-	-	1	-
Dunbeath	82	11	7	7	-	2	-	2	2	1	-	-
Drumnadrochit	93	10	6	6	-	1	1	-	1	2	1	-
Dunvegan	96	11	6	6	-	3	-	1	1	-	1	-
Helmsdale	90	10	6	6	2	-	2	1	-	1	-	-
Achiltibuie	100	10	5	5	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	-
Bonar Bridge	86	9	5	5	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Gairloch	96	9	5	5	2	-	1	1	-	-	1	-
Kinlochbervie	93	7	5	5	-	1	2	-	-	-	2	-
Raasay	84	6	5	5	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	-
Acharacle	80	9	4	4	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
Foyers	95	10	3	3	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Glenelg	89	8	3	3	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Lochinver	64	7	3	3	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-
Aultbea	94	9	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cannich	81	7	2	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Scourie	96	10	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dumess	100	9	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
John O Groats	97	10	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lochcarron	85	10	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tongue	75	6	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Torridon	94	9	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Applecross	94	8	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Inverness Retained	99	14	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kilchoan	96	9	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kinlochewe	61	8	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lochaline	87	9	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staffin	96	9	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uig	78	9	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>		<b>647</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>-</b>

## 5. News in Brief

### Junior Warden Scheme - Pilot Project in Thurso

Early in 2013 Highland Council introduced a pilot project of a Junior Warden Scheme in Ormlie, Thurso, a scheme which allows the youngsters to have more responsibility and an opportunity to influence what can be done to make Thurso a better place in which to live.

Eleven students, made up of 9 girls and 2 boys, participated in the pilot project.

The project is a 12 week course, with each week seeing the students attending talks, training or visits with the various Agencies, including Police, Key Housing and the Fire Service.



The beginning of April, the 9th week of the project, students visited Thurso Fire Station. Watch Manager Kevin Tait posed various questions to the Junior Wardens, including the average number of calls per week Thurso Station receive, how many other stations there were in Caithness and the cost of running the appliances. Students were also shown around the station and the fire appliances thus providing key information about the role of Retained. The students also had the opportunity to participate in hose drills.

### Engagement with Disability Access Panels

Following a very informative presentation at the Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee, Group Manager Phil Green delivered a presentation to the Chairpersons of the Highland Alliance Disability Access Panels which was held at the Boat of Garten Hall. The presentation covered current home fire safety visit procedures and sought to engage partner organisations in referring vulnerable people who would benefit from a home fire safety visit.

The presentation was well received by the 40 members present who represented the Disability Access panels throughout the Highland area.

The presentation has now been circulated to all Service Delivery Managers within the Highland area, allowing them to engage with their respective Disability Access Panels.

### Rockness - 7-9 June 2013

The Fire Service and other Multi Agency partners, issued various safety messages to those who attended Rockness, the three day musical event on the shores of Loch Ness, close to Dores near Inverness.



During the event, the revellers heeded the advice and guidance provided by the emergency services, voluntary organisations and festival organisers, with only a handful of incidents over the weekend. These incidents involved barbecues, camp fires and cooking stoves which were quickly dealt with on site. There was only one report of a fire related injury where one person received minor burns following the explosion of a small camping gas canister.

### Driving Ambition

During June, Driving Ambition courses were delivered in Invergordon Academy and Glen Urquhart High School to S6 pupils.

This Multi Agency initiative is designed to engage with potential young and new drivers, increasing their knowledge and understanding of issues relating to road safety and vehicle ownership.

The Fire Service input specifically focuses on the importance of driver safety, what to do at the scene of an accident and the role of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service at a road traffic collision.

### Plaque Presentation to QinetiQ (formerly BUTEC)

Group Manager Michael White travelled to the former naval base located in the Kyle of Lochalsh to present a plaque in recognition of the employers commitment to the community through releasing staff to attend emergency incidents for the last 25 years.

Currently, 7 firefighters who work at the base are also members of Kyle Station. QinetiQ show on-going commitment and support to the Fire Service staging exercises within the complex to enable crews to understand the on site risks and hazards.

QinetiQ have strong links within the community and working alongside the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service assist with the running of safety events.

## 6. Incidents of Note

### Wildfires

The beginning of April this year saw exceptional challenges for the new national Fire and Rescue Service for Scotland, as unseasonably dry weather in the Highlands area saw scores of firefighters battling extensive wildfires.

While much of the country was affected by wintry conditions, the west coast of the Highlands and Skye experienced sunny and dry weather which resulted in tinder-dry ground conditions contributing to a spate of wildfires in these areas.

The grass, heather and heathland fires began in the last week in March and increased dramatically at the beginning of April, with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service attending 233 wildfire incidents from the end of March to 15th April in the most northern parts of Scotland.

During this challenging period, there were 550 appliance mobilisations and 2,397 personnel movements across the Highland area.

Supported by fire operations control staff, Police Scotland, landowners, land managers and in some cases, locals from the community, firefighters worked around the clock as they tackled the large rapidly spreading wildfires.

One of the largest and most visual wildfires was in the Fort William area and covered over 40 hectares of land. Sixteen p u m p i n g appliances and 70 firefighters were in attendance over the duration of the incident.



The largest single incident attended was at Achmore near Kyle of Lochalsh on 2nd April, which ran for three days and involved 1100 hectares of

countryside. This required 39 appliance mobilisations and the attendance of 169 personnel. Our firefighters were assisted by the use of off-road vehicles and two helicopters carrying out "water bombing" operations.

Numerous other wildfires were taking place simultaneously and as the area is predominately covered by crews operating within the retained duty system, our retained firefighters committed to working almost full-time to deal with these incidents.

### Hostel Fire - Eastgate, Inverness

On 3 April the Fire Service received a report of a fire in the Eastgate Hostel, Inverness.

Two appliances were initially mobilised. On arrival crews were faced with an intense fire in a 4 storey building with persons unaccounted for. The Incident Commander (IC) suspected that the fire was located on the 2nd and 3rd floors with heavy smoke logging on the 2nd floor. With the need to account for the 51 residents and staff, the IC immediately requested additional appliances for firefighting purposes.

All persons were evacuated and taken to a reception centre established by the British Redcross and Highland Council in the nearby Spectrum Centre. Many of the hostel residents were on holiday in the Highlands and of foreign nationality. The British Redcross also liaised with the Foreign Consulates in order to arrange replacement documentation such as passports which had been lost in the fire.

At the height of the fire approximately 35 firefighters, 5 fire engines and an aerial ladder platform were in attendance.

Due to the worries raised about the structural integrity of the roof, the building was secured and handed over to Police Scotland. A joint Police and Fire investigation was carried out at a later date to ascertain the cause of fire.

This was a very successful Multi Agency incident co-ordinated through the Highlands & Islands Strategic Co-ordinating Group, involving Police Scotland, Highland Council, British Redcross, Scottish Government and SFRS.

### Special Service - Caithness

On 27 June, a farm worker on a site of a wartime airfield, discovered some 'self igniting phosphorous grenades' (SIPGs), which had been exposed in a field in Caithness. One



had been smashed and let off copious amounts of smoke, which resulted in fire crews from Thurso and Wick attending.

Police closed off the roads while crews attempted to identify the source of the smoke and make the area safe. After a Multi Agency meeting, a specialist bomb disposal team from the Royal Navy was contacted and over the next few days destroyed almost 100 grenades in a series of controlled explosions. Fire crews were on stand-by at the scene during these subsequent operations.

These grenades were issued to the Home Guard during WW2 and were intended to be used against invading enemy tanks. Unused items were simply buried after the war.