



## Highland Performance Report

*Covering the activities and performance in support of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Highland*



**SCOTTISH**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
Working together for a safer Scotland

**October - March 2022/23**

**Working together  
for a safer Scotland**



## **ABOUT THE STATISTICS IN THIS REPORT**

The activity totals and other statistics quoted in this report are provisional in nature and subject to change as a result of ongoing quality assurance and review.

Because all statistics quoted are provisional there may be differences in the period totals quoted in our reports after original publication which result from revisions or additions to the data on our systems.

From 2015-16 onwards responsibility for the publication of end-year statistical data transferred from the Scottish Government to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). This change of responsibility does not change the status of the figures quoted in this and other SFRS reports reported to the Committee.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The 6-monthly monitoring report covers the SFRS's performance and activities in support of the six priorities in the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Highland:

- Priority 1 – Domestic Fire Safety
- Priority 2 – Unintentional Harm
- Priority 3 – Non-Fire Emergencies
- Priority 4 – Deliberate Fire Setting
- Priority 5 – Non-Domestic Fire Safety
- Priority 6 – Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
- Priority 7 – Operational Resilience and Preparedness















As well as supporting the six priorities in the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Highland, this monitoring report shows how SFRS activities and performance contribute to the wider priorities of the Highland Council Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as set out in the Highland Community Plan.

The figures in this report are provisional, to provide the Committee with the SFRS's direction of travel in the Highland area, in terms of performance against headline indicators and targets. Most figures will not change; however, members should note that there may be some small variations for some indicators when the final confirmed figures are published by the SFRS.

The Highland Council Scrutiny and Audit Committee agreed to the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Highland, covering the subsequent 3-year period. In support of delivering the priorities in this plan, 14 headline indicators and targets have been set, and form the basis of the report.

## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The table below provides a summary of the six-months (October 2022 – March 2023) activity and year-to-date (YTD) progress, based on annual targets set against headlines indicators. It aims to provide – at a glance – our direction of travel during the current reporting year.

<b>Q3 &amp; Q4: All Incidents Attended - 1837</b>		
<p><b>HI 1</b> Accident Dwelling Fires</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 77 Incidents</b> <b>YTD – 142 Incidents</b></p>	<p><b>HI 2</b> ADF Fatal Casualties</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 0</b> <b>YTD – 0</b></p>	<p><b>HI 3</b> ADF Non-Fatal Casualties</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 17</b> <b>YTD – 24</b></p>
<p><b>HI 4</b> Home Fire Safety Visits</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 1089 Visits</b> <b>YTD – 2133 Visits</b> <b>Annual Target – 4000</b></p>	<p><b>HI 5</b> Non-Fire Emergency</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 342 Incidents</b> <b>YTD – 678 Incidents</b></p>	<p><b>HI 6</b> Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 87 Incidents</b> <b>YTD – 193 Incidents</b></p>
<p><b>HI 7</b> Fatal RTC Casualties</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 7</b> <b>YTD – 21</b></p>	<p><b>HI 8</b> Non-Fatal RTC Casualties</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 39</b> <b>YTD – 91</b></p>	<p><b>HI 9</b> Deliberate Fires</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 78 Incidents</b> <b>YTD – 215 Incidents</b></p>
<p><b>HI 10</b> Deliberate Primary Fires</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 18 Incidents</b> <b>YTD – 48 Incidents</b></p>	<p><b>HI 11</b> Deliberate Secondary Fires</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 59 Incidents</b> <b>YTD – 166 Incidents</b></p>	<p><b>H12</b> Non Domestic Fires</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 35 Incidents</b> <b>YTD – 88 Incidents</b></p>
<p><b>HI 13</b> Fire Safety Enforcement Audits</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 120 Audits</b> <b>YTD – 260 Audits</b> <b>Annual Target – 592</b></p>	<p><b>HI 14</b> Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals</p>  <p><b>Q3 &amp; Q4 – 690 Incidents</b> <b>YTD – 1454 Incidents</b></p>	

## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

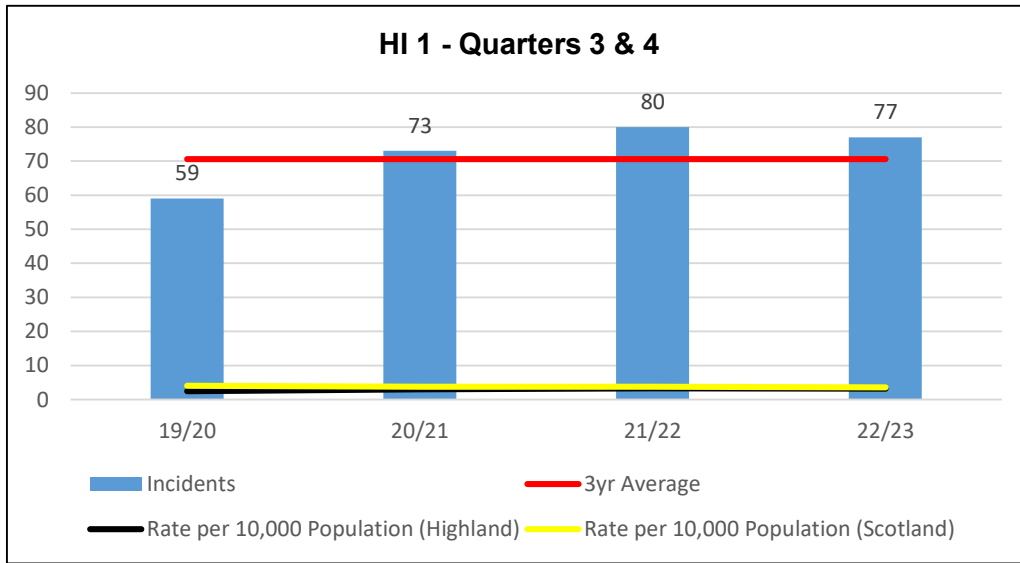
Of the 14 headline indicators and targets, the following performance should be noted for the six-month period October 2022 to March 2023:

- There were **77 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)** which is slightly above the 3-year average. The majority are classed as low severity, requiring little or no intervention from the Service and minimal fire damage. There were **0 ADF Fatalities**, and **17 ADF Casualties**. All ADF's are offered HFSV's and agency referrals where required.
- We attended **87 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)** which is slightly below average. There were **7 RTC Related Fatalities (21 for the year 22/23)** and **39 RTC Related Injuries**. The number is significantly higher than in previous years and our Prevention teams are working with partner agencies through the Highland Road Safety group, Older driver Virtual Reality Scheme and Road Safety Scheme for new drivers.
- A total of **78 Deliberate Fires**, these include **18 Deliberate Primary Fires** and **59 Deliberate Secondary Fires** which is just slightly below the 3-year average. Referrals are made to other agencies for those at risk within our communities.
- There were **35 Non-Domestic Building Fires** which is average.
- We undertook **120 Fire Safety Enforcement Audits. Supported Short Term Let enquiries and work streams, and conducted 3 prohibitions and 18 action plans**
- We attended **690 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)** showing a trend of increasing **UFAS (1453 for the year)**. From the 1<sup>st</sup> July, the way we attend UFAS is changing (See Appendix 2).
- Our Community Safety Advocates and Station personnel undertook **972 Home Fire Safety Visits**. The majority targeted the most at risk in our communities.
- Our firefighters continue to train in all aspects of their role to ensure they are operationally prepared for what is required and we continued to gather information on local risks to assist us in an emergency through our operational intelligence visits and exercises.
- We continue to support partnership delivery of road safety programmes with our partners as well as working to reduce fire-related antisocial behaviour through targeted youth engagement activities and thematic action plans, as well as our Youth Volunteer programme and Fire Skills courses.
- In areas of Highland, we have seen successful recruitment and availability (**18 appliances above 90% and 34 above 70%**). However, we do face some challenges in areas where population levels are low or decreasing. To support our On-Call stations, increase recruitment and provide cover we employ 11 full-time rural Watch Commanders (the highest number across Scotland) and have rolled our two Highland trials to support availability.
- A joint mobilising process whereby two appliances who do not have safe minimum crewing numbers available can meet at an agreed rendezvous point to give them enough crew to safely respond to the incident;
- A formalised process which will allow On-Call staff to undertake paid duties at other stations to increase their staffing levels, undertake prevention activities and thereby increase appliance availability.
- The improvements and learning we have made have assisted in the On-Call improvement programme and recommendations to improve the service.
- Across Highland, we have **96 people in the recruitment process** for On-Call.

There has been a large increase in local initiatives, some of which you can see in Appendix 1 highlighting the fantastic work our crews are involved in, away from emergency response.

## PRIORITY 1 – DOMESTIC FIRE SAFETY

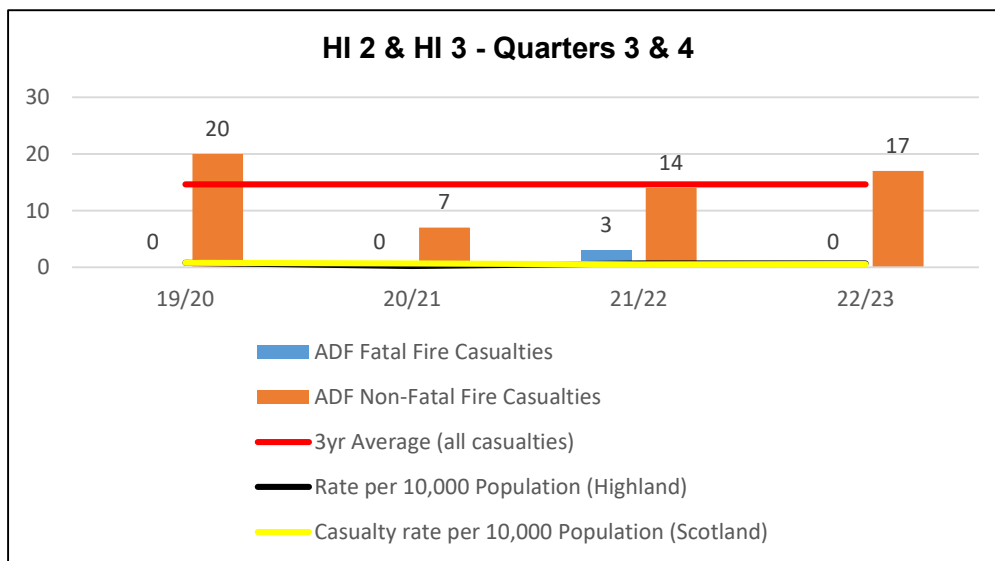
### HI 1 – Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)



**Table 1: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 1: ADF's</b>	113	126	153	<b>141</b>

### HI 2 - ADF Fatal Casualties & HI 3 - ADF Non-Fatal Casualties



**Table 2: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 2: ADF Fatal Casualties</b>	0	0	6	<b>0</b>
<b>HI 3: ADF Non-Fatal Casualties</b>	25	17	14	<b>17</b>

### What we aim to Achieve

- Downward trend in the number of accidental dwelling fires.
- Downward trend in the number of accidental dwelling fires casualties and fatalities.

There were **0 ADF Fatalities** for this period and year to date

There were **17 ADF Casualties** which is slightly above the 3-yearly average and higher for the period. However, the overall **77 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)** is lower than the previous year and slightly above the 3-year average. The majority are classed as low severity, requiring little or no intervention from the Service and minimal fire damage.

All ADF's are followed up with HFSV's and agency referrals where required.

## PRIORITY 2 – UNINTENTIONAL HARM

### HI 4 – Home Fire Safety Visits

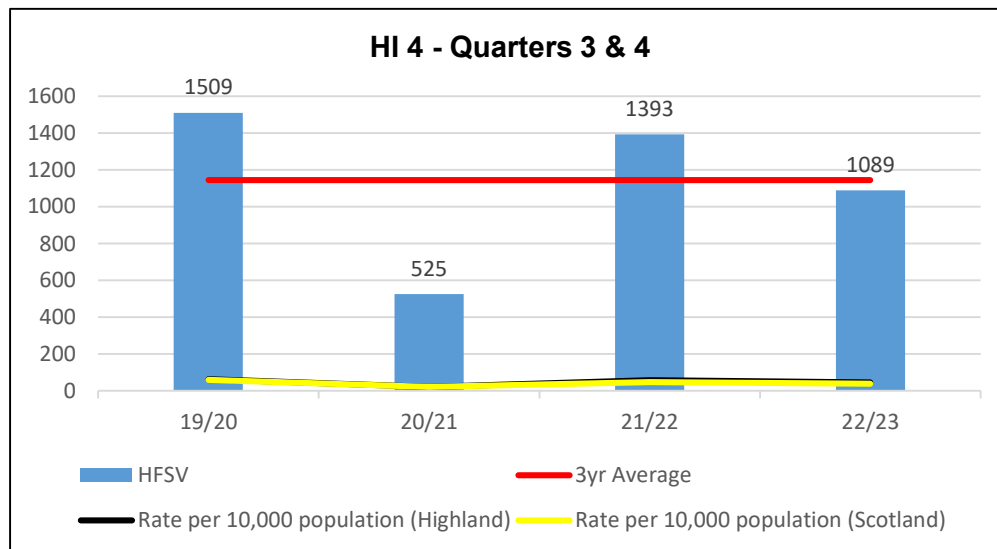


Table 3: 2022/23 Year Performance

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
<b>HI 4: Home Fire Safety Visits</b>	2862	794	2213	<b>2132</b>

### What we aim to Achieve

- Reduced societal and economic cost of unintentional harm or injury
- Improved safety and wellbeing of Highland residents
- Support independent living of vulnerable residents within our communities

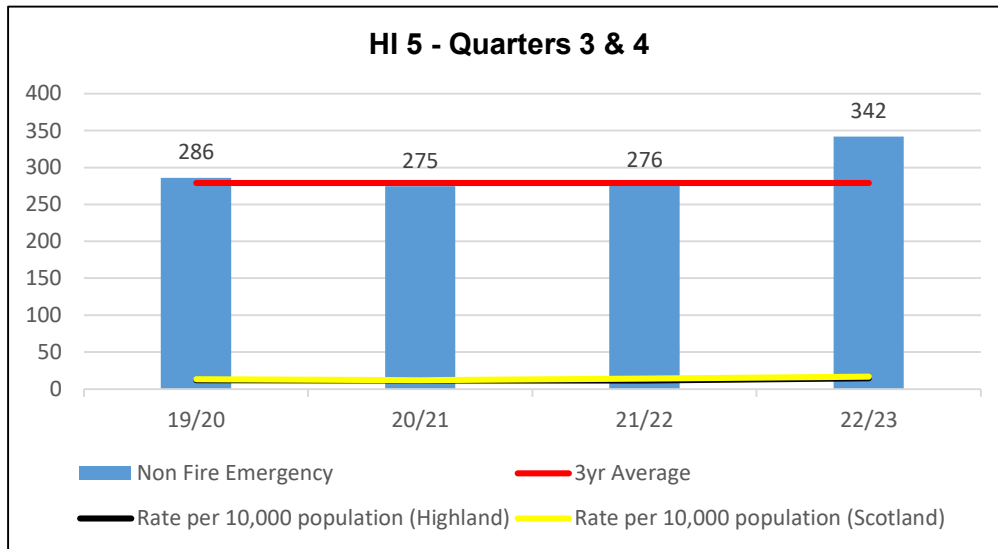
Our Community Safety Advocates and Station personnel undertook **1089 Home Fire Safety Visits** taking the **year total to 2132**. The majority targeted the most at risk in our communities and clearing the backlog from the period affected by COVID, which affected reaching the target for the year.

To support our communities, we made over **300 referrals to partner agencies** based on the needs of the individuals. Over the year we made referrals to the NHS, Telecare, Deaf services and Police Scotland.



## PRIORITY 3 – Non-Fire Emergencies

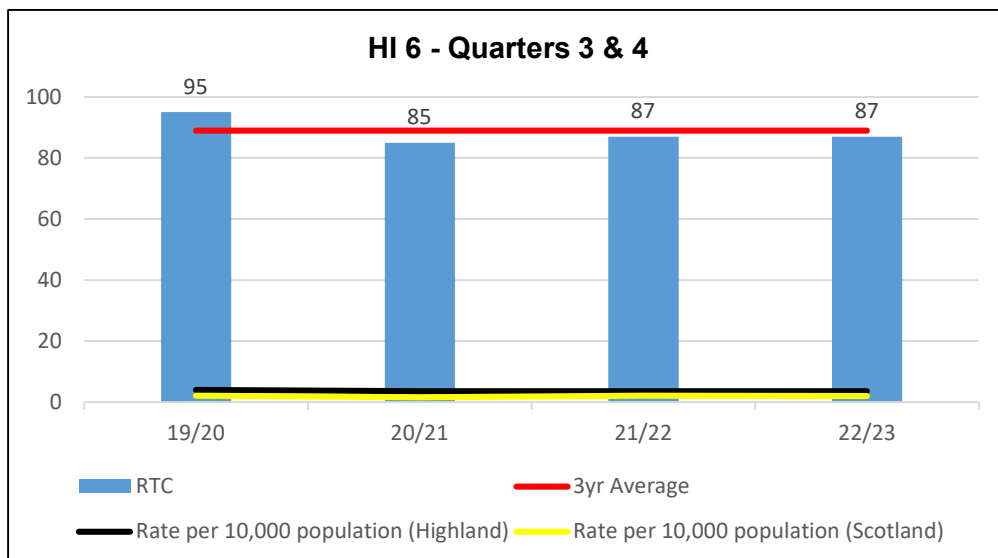
### HI 5 – Non-Fire Emergency Incidents (this figure includes RTCs)



**Table 4: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 5: Non-Fire Emergency Incidents (all Special Service)</b>	625	517	600	<b>677</b>

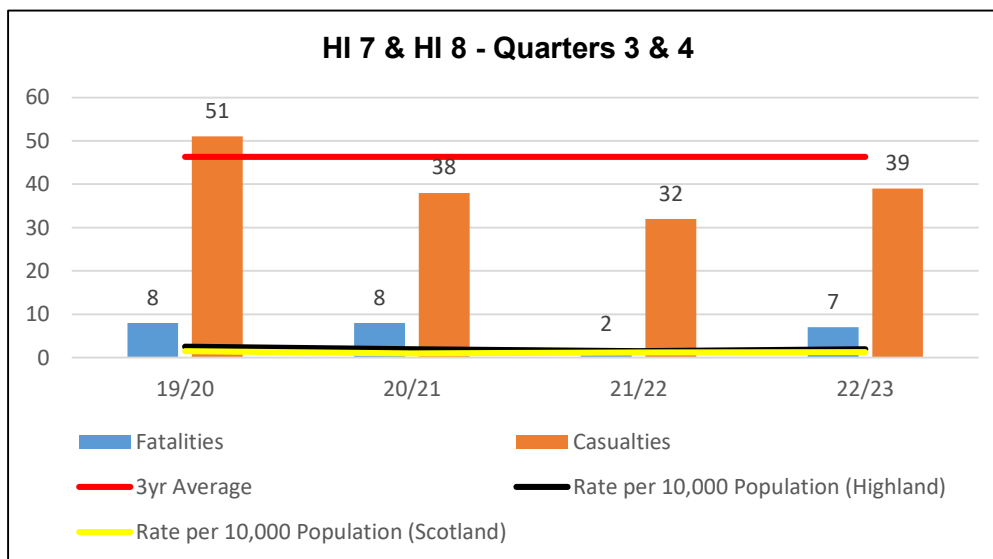
### HI 6 – Road Traffic Collision (RTC) Incidents



**Table 5: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 76: RTC Incidents</b>	211	140	166	<b>193</b>

## HI 7 – Fatal RTC Casualties & HI 8 – Non-Fatal RTC Casualties



**Table 6: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 8: Fatal RTC Casualties</b>	15	10	5	<b>21</b>
<b>HI 9: Non-Fatal RTC Casualties</b>	108	61	78	<b>91</b>

### What we aim to Achieve

- Reduction in number of Road Traffic Collisions
- Reduction in number of Road Traffic Collision casualties (fatal and non-fatal)
- Reduce the social and economic impact of Non- Fire Emergencies
- Support the safety and wellbeing of those living, working, and visiting Highland
- Increase the number of people within communities who are CPR trained

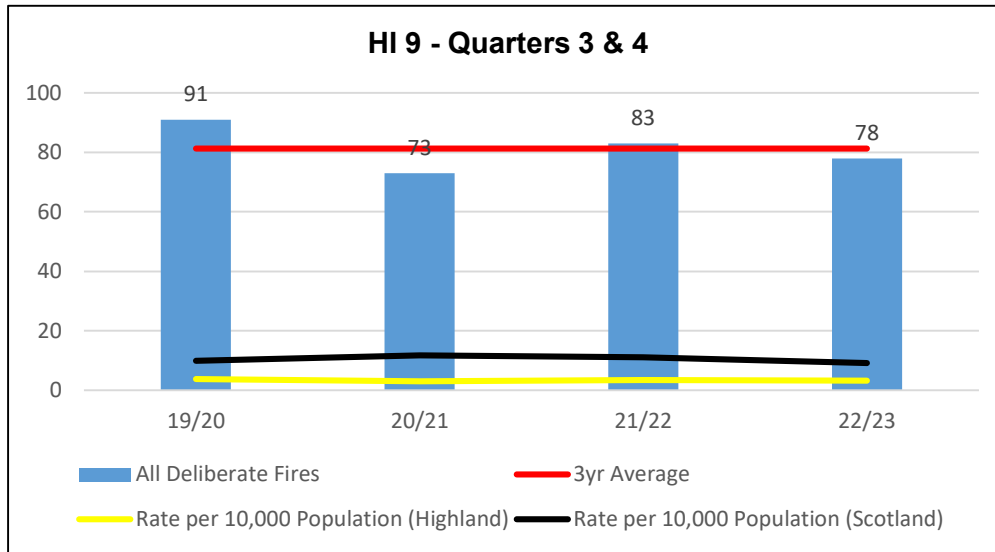
We attended **342 Non- fire emergencies** during this period which has shown an increase. The type of incidents includes RTC's. Inter-agency, animal assist, water rescue and Hazardous Materials.

We attended **87 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)** which is slightly below average. There were **7 RTC Related Fatalities (21 for the year 22/23)** and **39 RTC Related Injuries**. The number is significantly higher than in previous years and **our Prevention teams are working with partner agencies through the Highland Road Safety group, Older Driver Virtual Reality Scheme and Road Safety Scheme for new drivers.**

We have **purchased 5 additional community access Automated External Defibrillators (AED)** to be installed outside fire stations bringing our total community access AED's to 17. Events are now planned to deliver CPR and AED training to our local communities.

## PRIORITY 4 – DELIBERATE FIRES

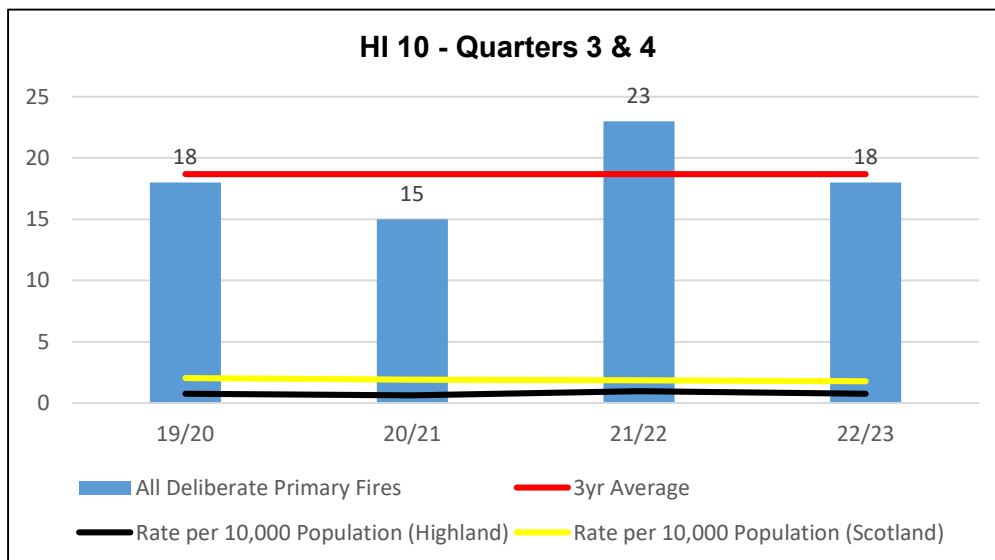
### HI 9 – Deliberate Fires



**Table 7: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 9: Deliberate Fires</b>	198	204	223	<b>215</b>

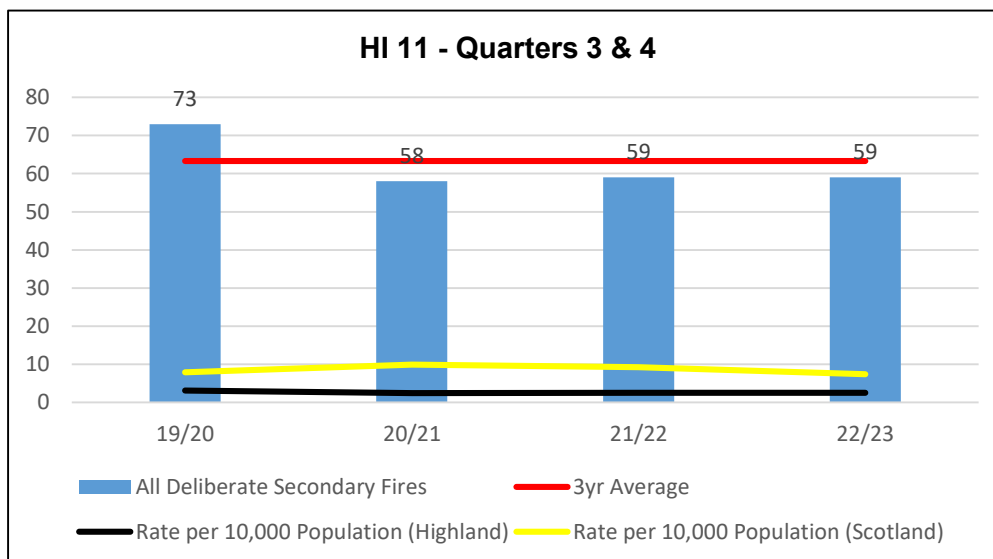
### HI 10 – Deliberate Primary Fires



**Table 8: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 10: Deliberate Primary Fires</b>	43	43	51	<b>48</b>

## HI 11 – Deliberate Secondary Fires



**Table 9: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 11: Deliberate Secondary Fires</b>	155	161	170	<b>166</b>

### What we aim to Achieve

- Reduction in the number of deliberate fires
- Reduction in incidences of anti-social behaviour related fires
- Diversion of perpetrators from anti-social behaviour towards positive destinations through education and diversionary activities
- Improved community outcomes and reduced impact on the environment and economy

**Deliberate fires 78 for the period**, lower than the previous year and slightly below the 3-yearly average.

**Deliberate primary fires 18** for the period lower than the previous year and slightly below 3-yearly average.

**Deliberate secondary fires 59** for the period which is the same as the previous year and slightly below the 3-yearly average.

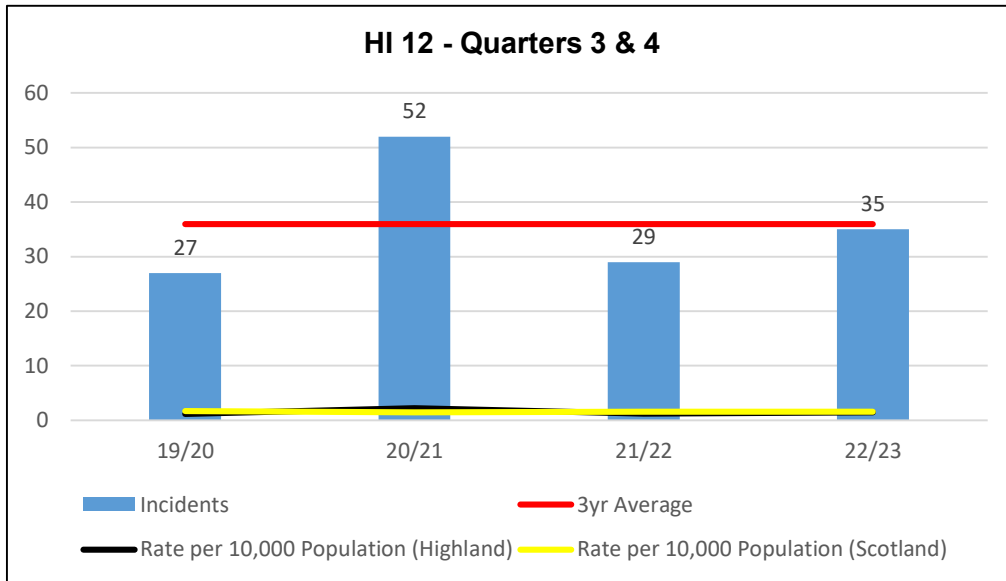
**The number of deliberate fires was well below the National average per 10'000 of the population** and shows a trend of reduction since last year.

Our Station personnel have undertaken engagement activities with Prevention teams in targeted areas and information sessions at Schools, clubs and recreation areas.

We have also re-introduced our Fireskills course since the COVID pandemic with one course completed this period and another planned to complete in May 2023.

## PRIORITY 5 – Non-Domestic Fire Safety

### HI 12 – Non-Domestic Building Fires



**Table 10: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 12: Non-Domestic Building Fires</b>	76	106	75	<b>88</b>

### HI 13 – Fire Safety Enforcement Audits

A total of 120 audits were undertaken during Quarters 3 and 4. In the year 2022/23 a total of 260 audits were undertaken.

#### What we aim to Achieve

- Reduction in the number of non-domestic fires
- Support for duty holders to understand their duties and responsibilities to comply with fire safety legislation
- Reducing the social and economic impact of non-domestic fires and supporting business continuity and employment in Highland
- Contributing to the protection of our built and natural heritage

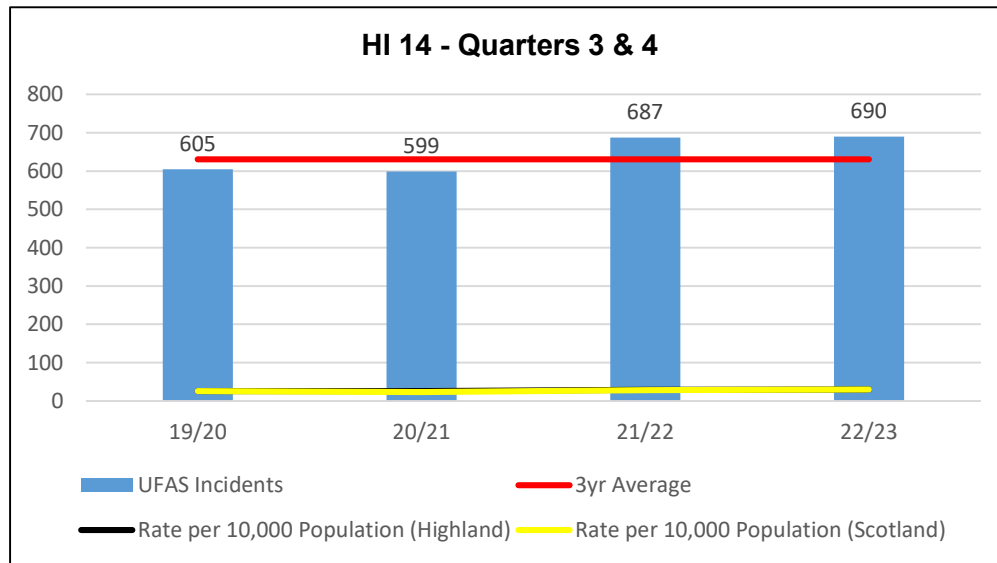
We attended **35 non-domestic building fires** this period which is an increase on last year but a reduction in the three-year average.

To support our communities in complying with their obligations we have conducted **120 audits during this period**. The numbers were affected by our teams answering questions and giving advice on the introduction of Short term let licensing and **the change to the way we will respond to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (See Appendix 2)**.

Our Fire Safety Officers also undertook **3 prohibitions and 18 action plans on non-domestic buildings** and are working with the responsible persons for compliance.

## PRIORITY 6 – REDUCING UNWANTED FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

### HI 14 – Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals



**Table 11: 2022/23 Year Performance**

	19/20	20/21	21/22	<b>22/23</b>
<b>HI 14: UFAS Incidents</b>	1243	1142	1351	<b>1453</b>

#### What we aim to Achieve

- Reduction in the number of UFAS incidents across Highland, particularly amongst the highest offenders
- Reduction in unnecessary demand on Retained Firefighters and their primary employers
- Reduced road risk for SFRS staff and the wider community
- Release capacity for staff training and community engagement through reduction in UFAS attendance
- Reduced costs to SFRS associated with UFAS response

During this period, **we were called out to 690 UFAS incidents**, which is above the 3-year average and shows an increase for the year.

We have continued our engagement with these premises and made recommendations to reduce occurrences.

One of the priorities of SFRS is to reduce the amount of UFAS calls we attend. The Fire Safety Enforcement Officer (FSEO) engage with duty holders during the audit process to offer advice on reducing unwanted activations including considering cost-effective technical solutions (e.g.re-positioning fire detector heads and changing detector types).

However, we have continued to see a rise in these Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals, resulting in 1453 unrequired journeys for our operational crews and costs for the Service. **As a result, the way in which we attend UFAS is changing. National and local engagement has and continues to take place to prepare duty holders (See Appendix 2 for more information).**

## PRIORITY 7 – OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE AND PREPAREDNESS

### What we aim to Achieve

- Responding to and resolving operational incidents in a safe, effective and efficient manner that keeps staff, partners, and the public safe
- Contributing to wider safety by focusing on preventing emergencies occurring
- Planning and preparing for response and mitigating the social and economic impact of emergencies upon communities
- Reinforcing local resilience within communities and in Community Fire Stations

During this period, we delivered our quarterly training commitment to operational firefighters, whereby we trained and tested their preparedness to deal with a variety of incident types.

Firefighters continue to carry out Operational Intelligence within their station area so that they are aware of the associated risks and hazards, and if required can take effective actions in dealing with incidents at these sites. All this information is continually updated on our tablets carried on frontline appliances thus giving our staff information at the point of need.

In areas of Highland, we have seen successful recruitment and availability (**18 appliances above 90% and 34 above 70%**). However, we do face some challenges in areas where population levels are low or decreasing.

To support our On-Call stations, increase recruitment and provide cover we employ 11 full-time rural Watch Commanders (the highest number across Scotland) and have rolled our two Highland trials to support availability.

- A joint mobilising process whereby two appliances who do not have safe minimum crewing numbers available can meet at an agreed rendezvous point to give them enough crew to safely respond to the incident.
- A formalised process which will allow On-Call staff to undertake paid duties at other stations to increase their staffing levels, undertake prevention activities and thereby increase appliance availability.

**Since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, there have been 13 successful Joint mobilisations and over 11k spent on paid duties resulting in hundreds of hours of additional availability.**

The improvements and learning we have made have assisted in the On-Call improvement programme and future recommendations.

## Station Establishment and Availability

- 2 x Wholetime Duty System appliances at 1 Station
- 61 x On-Call Retained Duty System appliances across 52 Stations
- 6 x On-Call Volunteer Duty System vehicles / Community Response Units across 6 Stations

These Stations serve the 238'00 Highland population (Highland.gov.uk)

**\*Please note the availability figures do not include Joint Mobilising availability.**

Station	Oct 22 – Mar 23 Availability* %	Male	Female	Staff
Acharacle	47.83%	5	0	5
Achiltibuie	21.21%	5	0	5
Applecross	55.76%	4	1	5
Aultbea	<b>93.13%</b>	8	0	8
Aviemore	<b>78.39%</b>	10	1	11
Balintore (CRU)	N/A	7	0	7
Beauly	<b>70.95%</b>	10	0	10
Bettyhill	19.85%	5	0	5
Bonar Bridge	0.38%	3	1	4
Broadford	65.65%	6	1	7
Cannich	0.48%	3	0	3
Carrbridge (CRU)	N/A	4	1	5
Cromarty (CRU)	N/A	6	2	8
Dingwall - 1st Appliance	<b>99.83%</b>	17	1	18
Dingwall - 2nd Appliance	<b>84.77%</b>			
Dornoch	<b>76.76%</b>	14	0	14
Drumnadrochit	<b>96.97%</b>	10	1	11
Dunbeath	26.07%	9	0	9
Dunvegan	23.96%	4	1	5
Durness	<b>71.46%</b>	8	0	8
Fort Augustus	<b>73.48%</b>	7	2	9
Fort William – 1 <sup>st</sup> Appliance	<b>100%</b>	19	1	20
Fort William – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Appliance	<b>96.35%</b>			
Fortrose	49.59%	4	2	6
Foyers	<b>75.74%</b>	8	0	8
Gairloch	<b>91.37%</b>	8	2	10
Glenelg	<b>71.23%</b>	6	1	7
Golspie	<b>90.80%</b>	9	0	9
Grantown – 1 <sup>st</sup> Appliance	<b>96.29%</b>	10	3	13
Grantown – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Appliance	52.07%			
Helmsdale	<b>72.18%</b>	8	0	8
Invergordon - 1st Appliance	<b>99.41%</b>	15	1	16
Invergordon - 2nd Appliance	45.59%			
Inverness Retained	<b>95.69%</b>	15	0	15
Inverness Wholetime *	N/A	63	10	73
John O Groats	57.35%	9	0	9



Kilchoan	36.89%	3	1	4
Kingussie	<b>94.69%</b>	10	0	10
Kinlochbervie	66.19%	7	1	8
Kinlochewe	<b>70.79%</b>	6	0	6
Kinlochleven – 1 <sup>st</sup> Appliance	<b>80.53%</b>	8	2	10
Kinlochleven – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Appliance	8.43%			
Kyle	<b>93.05%</b>	9	0	9
Lairg	<b>94.29%</b>	8	1	9
Lochaline	47.12%	3	2	5
Lochcarron	55.91%	4	0	4
Lochinver	2.17%	3	2	5
Lybster (CRU)	N/A	5	1	6
Mallaig	<b>82.06%</b>	6	0	6
Muck (CRU)	N/A	0	1	1
Nairn – 1 <sup>st</sup> Appliance	<b>98.35%</b>	19	1	20
Nairn – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Appliance	<b>74.09%</b>			
Nethybridge (CRU)	N/A	0	0	0
Newtonmore (CRU)	N/A	8	0	8
Portree	65.61%	7	0	7
Raasay	<b>88.83%</b>	6	0	6
Ratagan (CRU)	N/A	0	0	0
Scourie	35.23%	4	1	5
Spean Bridge (CRU)	N/A	7	0	7
Staffin	0%	1	1	2
Strontian	61.23%	3	2	5
Tain	<b>95.26%</b>	12	0	12
Thurso - 1st Appliance	<b>97.61%</b>	17	1	18
Thurso - 2nd Appliance	33.40%			
Tongue	0%	4	0	4
Torridon	<b>72.63%</b>	4	3	7
Uig	47.71%	6	0	6
Ullapool - 1st Appliance	<b>99.68%</b>	15	4	19
Ullapool - 2nd Appliance	<b>87.88%</b>			
Wick - 1st Appliance	<b>93.53%</b>	19	0	19
Wick - 2nd Appliance	57.83%			

579 Station based personnel

11 Rural Wholetime Watch Commanders

11 Station Commanders, 3 Group Commanders, 1 Area Commander

In addition, Prevention, Protection, Training non-operational and business support staff

## APPENDIX 1: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This section provides details of community safety engagement programmes undertaken within Highland during the third and fourth quarter of 2022-23, in support of our priorities and targets.

Visit to Kinlochleven by Cllr Fanet



Croileagan Dingwall welcomed members of the On-Call crew from Dingwall Community Fire Station for a visit during World Gaelic Week



New recruits pass Breathing Apparatus course

**Thurso Community Fire Station** @ThursoFire\_ · Feb 8

Last week we welcomed back FFs Kris Malcolm and Jamie Tarrant from their Breathing Apparatus Initial course, boosting crew numbers at @ThursoFire this week sees the start of three new Trainees all based at Thurso Fire Station starting their initial training. @PaddyFarrell266

You and 3 others

You can reply to this conversation

1 1 26 1,507

Nairn Firefighters help raise £13,536

**SFRS Highland Central: Nairn, Badenoch & S...** @Aviemo... · Feb 23

Nairn Fire Station's 2022 Santa Sleigh raised an incredible £13,536.00 🙌

The firefighters express huge thanks to everyone who donated including the businesses who contributed sweets, hot drinks & snacks and their amazing families for giving up their time to help 🙌 #teamwork

**SFRS Highland Central: Nairn, Badenoc...** @Avie... · Dec 20, 2022

£3000 donated to @mfrcashforkids from Nairn Fire Stations fantastic fundraising firefighters 🙌❤️

What an amazing amount of money and how incredibly generous are the communities of Nairnshire donating to Santa's Sleigh to make this possible 🙌❤️

Truly inspiring 🙌🎄🎁

Firefighters hosting Christmas party for all over 70's in Golspie

You Retweeted

**Mark Leavey** @MarkLeavey3 · Dec 19, 2022

Great effort from WC William Macbeth and the crew from Golspie Community Fire Station hosting the over 70s Christmas Party supporting our Highland communities

You and Stephen Wood

1 6 54 3,686

Promoting On-Call recruitment with Scotland's first female game keeper

**FRSA** @frsa\_uk · Dec 7, 2022

Sophie says: 'I became a retained firefighter because I wanted to help my community and there is always a need for firefighters in the Highland region - it's another job where you can make a difference and help the local community.'

scottishfield.co.uk/online-feature... via @scottishfield

scottishfield.co.uk

Firefighting with Scotland's first female gamekeeping lecturer - SF Scotland's first female gamekeeping lecturer explains why she's also a firefighter - Scottish Field - Scotland's Quality Lifestyle Magazine





Firefighter Trainee course Sept,



Trainee Courses this period

**September 2022 Trainees**

Nairn, Invergordon, John O' Groats, Gairloch, Thurso, Inverness x 2, Wick, Dornoch, Aviemore.

**February 2023 Trainees**

Dornoch, Beauly x 2, Fortrose, Thurso x 3, Tongue, Invergordon.

**April 2023 Trainees**

Kinlochleven x 2, Drumnadrochit, Torridon, Beauly, Kyle, Invergordon.

Portsafe boards coming soon to the Highland area

EMERGENCY THROWLINE

DO NOT INTERFERE WITH LIFE SAVING EQUIPMENT - A LIFE MAY DEPEND ON IT

**To access throwline in an emergency:**  
**DIAL 999**  
 Ask for **FIRE SERVICE**  
 Quote Location:  
**INV01**  
 #whatthree.words

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:**

1. Use the lock code you have been given to open the box.
2. Remove throwline
3. Pull the neck of the throwline bag open
4. Grab open end of bag with throwing hand
5. Grasp rope firmly in other hand
6. **KEEPING HOLD OF THE END OF THE ROPE** throw bag to person in water

**Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers**

- 1. Do not use if you are unsure
- 2. Do not use if you are unsure
- 3. Do not use if you are unsure
- 4. Do not use if you are unsure
- 5. Do not use if you are unsure
- 6. Do not use if you are unsure
- 7. Do not use if you are unsure
- 8. Do not use if you are unsure
- 9. Do not use if you are unsure
- 10. Do not use if you are unsure

Remembering Barry Martin



## **APPENDIX 2: Recent Questions & Answers**

### **RRU / minimum four crew**

- We have fire appliances known as Rapid Response Units which are located at various On-Call community fire stations here in the Highland area and across Scotland;
- It was previously stated that we would explore the possibility of crewing these appliances with a minimum of three firefighters as a measure to help improve availability;
- We always indicated this had to be balanced against maintaining the safety of our crews when responding to emergency incidents;
- Following our review, and at this time, we are not in a position to adapt our current safe systems at work and standard operating procedures to crew these vehicles with three firefighters;
- We will therefore continue to maintain the required minimum of a minimum crew of four in the best interests of both our staff and the communities they protect;
- The minimum four crew members must consist of an officer in charge with a valid incident command certificate, a driver with a valid emergency response certificate and two qualified BA wearers;
- Community and firefighter safety will always be our number one priority;
- There are a number of other measures that we are exploring to improve appliance availability and enhance our recruitment and retention of On-Call firefighters.

### **APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY – MEDIA REPORTING**

- We are aware of recent media reports regarding availability in the Highland and elsewhere in our North Service Delivery Area;
- We do of course accept that there are crewing and recruitment challenges, not only here in Highland but across Scotland and the UK.
- However, I must clarify that some of the reported claims were factually incorrect and understand why they may have caused alarm;
- It was claimed that there was no cover in the Caithness & Sutherland, Western Isles, Skye and Lochaber areas on 28 July;
- On this specific day, our figures show that we had 13 appliances available throughout the day in these areas with a further 14 appliances providing availability at various times throughout the day;
- We were not given an opportunity to comment on this and other initial figures, which is disappointing;
- A further review of our availability in our most recent performance report shows high levels of availability in the Highland.
- For example, from April – Sept 2022, 14 stations reported availability figures of 90% to 100%. These were Thurso, Wick, Dornoch, Lairg, Drumnadrocht, Inverness (On-Call), Grantown, Kingussie, Nairn, Fort William, Raasay, Dingwall, Invergordon, and Ullapool;
- This type of inaccurate reporting can cause unnecessary alarm and have a detrimental impact on the morale of our committed staff who are providing cover.

## OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE – NATIONAL

- We will always maintain fire cover and ensure we continue to attend at every emergency;
- We have capacity and flexibility to operate as a network so that we can strategically place appliances and personnel from stations wherever they may be required;
- Fire stations can temporarily have an insufficient crewing level for a number of reasons – this includes staff training, sickness, multi-agency training exercises for operational preparedness, and other commitments;
- Across Scotland, we have 54 On-Call Support Officers to help maintain appliance availability and assist in the delivery of training;
- We have also introduced a pre-recruitment engagement programme (PREP);
- PREP introduces candidates into the station environment for up to 12 weeks prior to their selection tests and helps them to more fully understand the role and the level of commitment required.

## ON-CALL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

- Nationally, we have established an On-Call Improvement Programme;
- This is a comprehensive and full-scale review of how we recruit and retain On-Call firefighters, training and response options and contracts;
- **Attraction and recruitment process** - we aim to improve the candidate experience and communications as well as better preparing candidates for selection tests and identifying their support needs;
- **Training, competence and response matters** - our dedicated and skilled On-Call support officers will assist this and all the projects by providing research and insight from other services across the UK;
- **Contracts** - we will create a suite of potential options for contracts whilst considering how these may influence how stations are crewed;
- I hope that this provides you with an insight into the expansive and innovative steps we are taking to drive continuous improvement in our On-Call capability, not only here in the Highlands but across Scotland

## HIGHLAND SPECIFIC MEASURES

- There is no simple solution to crewing challenges but we are doing everything possible to ensure we can provide the best service possible;
- Across Highland, there are 11 full-time on-call support officers who review crewing daily and give On-Call cover during evenings and weekends;
- We have also introduced innovative options to increase appliance availability;
- This includes a joint mobilising process whereby two appliances who do not have safe minimum crewing numbers available can meet at an agreed rendezvous point to give them enough crew to safely respond to the incident;
- We have also introduced a formalised process which will allow On-Call staff to undertake paid duties at other stations to increase their staffing levels, undertake prevention activities and thereby increase appliance availability.

## ON-CALL RECRUITMENT

- We currently have 21 personnel across the Highland area going through the PREP process and 96 total in the recruitment process;
- We are continuing to actively recruit for On-Call firefighters across Highland and local stations throughout Highland hold community open days, events and Fireskills courses;
- Ultimately we need people to step forward and would encourage people from all walks of life to join us as we work to protect our communities;
- We are committed to driving forward improvements and we will continue to engage and work with key stakeholders and communities to achieve this;
- I would also ask that you assist us to help promote our recruitment efforts in the areas you represent;
- I hope this information reassures you not only of our commitment to firefighter and community safety but to enhancing this wherever possible.

## AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM (AFA) - UNWANTED FIRE ALARM SIGNALS (UFAS)

- Each year, we attend around 28,000 automatic fire alarm (AFA) callouts to commercial business and workplace premises. However, 98% of these are false alarms. We usually mobilise two fire appliances to each AFA call out. This equates to 64,000 productive crew hours lost and 57,000 unnecessary blue light journeys undertaken each year. **It also means that the crew is unable to attend emergencies where lives could be at risk.**
- From 1 July 2023, we will stop attending AFA call outs to commercial business and workplace premises, such as factories, offices, shops and leisure facilities unless a fire has been confirmed. Our control room operators will now be asking anyone who reports a fire alarm to check whether there is an actual fire or signs of fire, before sending the nearest fire appliance. This does not apply to sleeping premises, such as hospitals, care homes, hotels or domestic dwellings who will receive the full pre-determined attendance (PDA). This change follows the SFRS public consultation in 2021.
- Fire and Rescue Services must make provision for extinguishing fires and for protecting life and property in the event of fires. They must also plan for dealing with calls for help when there is a fire. However, there is no legal duty placed upon them to respond to calls originating from AFA systems for the purpose of establishing whether there is a fire. In relevant premises, as defined by the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, the employer/owner or persons who exert control over the premises, known as the dutyholder, must as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that the premises are safe for its occupants in the event of a fire.
- We contacted key stakeholders across Scotland, such as the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, to inform them of this change and ask that they notify their members. We emailed 2,500 dutyholders and 1,000 relevant stakeholders across Scotland on Monday 6 February 2023. We will also be using our website and social media channels to reach as many businesses as possible.

For more information please visit:

[Scottish Fire & Rescue Service: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals \(UFAS\) \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](https://firescotland.gov.uk)

## COMMUNITY ASSET REGISTER

- The Community Asset Register is a Scotland wide database of volunteers willing to help during an emergency. The database plots assets on a map so if an emergency incident occurs we can identify those who could help. Assets can be people with either skills or equipment.
- There's no obligation on volunteers to provide support, as we will always respond to deal with emergencies. But, if we believe a volunteer could help, we ask if they're available. If they are, we explain where they should go and what they should do.
- Volunteers acting under our instruction, are insured and can claim certain expenses, such as mileage, however we don't pay hourly rates for their time.

To register: <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-area/community-asset-register/>

## FINANCE

- On 21 February, the Scottish Parliament approved the budget for public spending in Scotland for the next financial year.
- Our overall funding increased by £11 million (3.1%) to £363.7 million. Our resource budget was set at £304.207 million, an increase of £10 million. The capital budget remains static at £32.5 million and the remaining £1 million budget increase relates to non-cash budget to cover depreciation of our assets.
- The cost of living has increased pressure on us all and pay negotiations have been challenging. A support staff pay increase of five per cent was agreed for 2022/23 and an increased offer to firefighters of seven per cent for 2022/23 and five per cent for 2023/24 was accepted.
- The Scottish Government's Justice Portfolio intends to allocate an additional £4.4 million at the Autumn Budget Revision to support the recent firefighter pay agreement.
- However, despite this welcomed increase in funding, once we factor in pay rises and inflation to arrive at a final budget, we need to find savings of £11 million to balance our income and expenditure for the year ahead, in line with legal requirements.
- Following on from this, we are prioritising spending in line with **our vision** and **2022-25 Strategic Plan** outcomes
- It is a challenging budget and we are required to make savings this year of £11 million and anticipate flat cash funding in future years will mean further savings will be required for each of the subsequent three financial years to negate inflation and pay increases.
- There will be no compulsory redundancies; and we are in the same financial boat as other public sector organisations in Scotland.
- SLT and our directorates have identified savings for 2023/24 of £11 million and are considering savings for future years.
- We will need to reduce expenditure over the financial year, which we recognise will have an impact on staffing even though it is supported by a no compulsory redundancies policy. Although this is challenging, it is necessary to maintain a balanced budget position and align with the financial parameters set by the Scottish Government.
- The agreed budget enables us to provide the resources to continue to provide an emergency response to fire and rescue incidents, continue recovery from COVID-19, including mental health initiatives, and enable the Service to continue its work on fire prevention and fire safety with vulnerable households. In addition, the proposed budget will be used to maintain our commitment to protecting our staff and communities from



new and emerging risks and provide additional resources to support our change portfolio.

- The proposed budget also includes taking positive steps to decarbonise our Service, improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental risks as part of our climate change response plan.
- Our workforce is our most important asset in delivering our strategic priorities and objectives with £245.8 million (80%) of the proposed budget allocated to employee costs: being wholetime, operations control, On-Call and support staff. The remaining £62.3 million (20%) of the budget is allocated to property, supplies and services, third parties, legacy financing costs, other costs and income.
- The £11 million in recurring savings for 2023/24 is split between £6 million in staff costs and £5 million in other general business costs.