



**Scottish Borders  
Local Fire and Rescue Plan  
Review 2014 - 2017**



**SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

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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 the Scottish Borders, the SFRS responded to 7538 incidents, which is an average of 1508 incidents each year. 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 7% of our operational activity over the five-year period and resulted in 96 fire casualties including five fatalities. Deliberate fires, other than dwellings, accounted for 6% of our operational activity over the five-year period. Special Service, Road Traffic Collision's (RTC's) also accounted for 6% of our operational activity for the same period.

Disappointingly, Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) accounted for 59% 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
Dwelling fires	108	110	84	109	89
All fire casualties and fatalities	18	28	15	18	17
All deliberate fires excl. dwellings	63	79	92	100	97
Special Service - RTCs	86	76	92	107	94
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals	878	919	878	905	870

### 3. Scrutiny Arrangements

Scrutiny arrangements in the Scottish Borders require SFRS to report local performance on a quarterly basis to the Scottish Borders Police, Fire and Safer Communities Committee. Performance reports are presented to the Committee by the SFRS Local Senior Officer with the following Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) 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

It should be noted that the term "Special Service" relates to a range of incident types including RTC's, rescues from height, 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 medical emergency related calls continues to increase and accounted for 8% of our operational activity over the last two years.

#### **HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) inspection 2016**

To support this formal review, the outcomes from HMFSI's Local Area Inspections that examine the development and delivery of Local Fire and Rescue Plans, have also been considered.

By undertaking inspections of our service delivery within local authority areas, HMFSI can provide 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 and 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 it is planned that the SFRS service provision will have been examined in nine local authority areas. These areas included Aberdeen City, East Renfrewshire, Western Isles, West Lothian, Dundee, South Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, Moray and Glasgow City. Once prepared, these inspection reports are published by HMFSI on their website.

On examining the published Local Area Inspection Reports, we noted that HMFSI generally 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. HMFSI would also like to see 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 the Scottish Borders.

The incidence of Dwelling Fires in the Scottish Borders has seen minor increases and decreases over the last five years. Consistent with other areas of Scotland there is a higher incidence of Dwelling Fires in our larger populated towns for example Galashiels and Hawick.

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 room of origin and cause for Dwelling Fires.

The Scottish Borders has generally charted just below the Scottish average over the last five years with 2.5 people in every 10,000 in the Scottish Borders requiring the attendance of the SFRS to a fire in their home.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Scottish Borders	108	110	84	109	89
Tweeddale West	11	9	4	6	6
Tweeddale East	7	10	4	5	4
Galashiels and District	22	17	16	18	14
Selkirkshire	3	9	3	4	10
Leaderdale and Melrose	7	11	15	8	4
Mid Berwickshire	11	11	10	11	11
East Berwickshire	8	7	7	20	12
Kelso and District	3	14	5	10	7
Jedburgh and District	9	7	3	7	3
Hawick and Denholm	15	9	8	9	7
Hawick and Hermitage	12	6	9	11	11

### What are we doing to help prevent Dwelling Fires?

Over the last three years, we have conducted over 5000 home safety visits and fitted just over 10000 smoke detectors in the Scottish Borders. We continue to work alongside our community partners to identify and engage with those most at risk from 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 averaged 17 over the last five years with exception of 2013/14 when we experienced a sharp rise in casualties. There have been five fire fatalities for the same period, one each year. The wards of Lauderdale & Melrose, Mid Berwickshire, Hawick & Denholm and Hawick & Hermitage collectively accounted for 58% of all fire casualties in the Scottish Borders over the five-year 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.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Scottish Borders	18	28	15	18	17
Tweeddale West	0	2	1	2	2
Tweeddale East	2	2	0	0	0
Galashiels and District	2	2	0	3	1
Selkirkshire	1	0	1	0	3
Leaderdale and Melrose	2	5	4	2	0
Mid Berwickshire	2	6	3	2	4
East Berwickshire	1	0	1	1	1
Kelso and District	0	2	0	1	1
Jedburgh and District	4	0	1	3	0
Hawick and Denholm	2	5	1	2	2
Hawick and Hermitage	2	4	3	2	3

### What are we doing to reduce Fire Casualties and Fatalities?

During home safety visits, SFRS staff 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, Scottish Borders 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 the Scottish Borders. 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 431 deliberate fires in the Scottish Borders over the last five years. Galashiels and District has consistently seen the greatest incidence of deliberate fires accounting for 19% of the five-year Borders total. Hawick & Denholm and Jedburgh & District are next highest accounting for 12% and 10% of the Borders total respectively.

East Berwickshire, with 4%, has seen the least amount of deliberately started fires.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Scottish Borders	63	79	92	100	97
Tweeddale West	10	3	8	14	5
Tweeddale East	5	4	9	16	9
Galashiels and District	8	11	18	23	23
Selkirkshire	6	5	9	5	7
Leaderdale and Melrose	2	9	6	6	7
Mid Berwickshire	7	6	8	4	8
East Berwickshire	3	4	4	2	4
Kelso and District	3	14	4	6	6
Jedburgh and District	6	8	6	11	12
Hawick and Denholm	8	7	14	11	11
Hawick and Hermitage	5	8	6	2	5

### 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. The Church Square area of Galashiels and District is a good example of this and has seen a number of partnership approaches to reduce deliberate fire setting whilst attempting to detect and apprehend the individuals responsible.

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. The recent SFRS led TD1 initiative was not only innovative but popular and this format, where younger people's personal and team skills are developed to boost employment chances and encourage good citizenship, will be developed for potential use across the Scottish Borders.



## 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 the Scottish Borders***

### What the figures told us

Responding to Road Traffic Collisions is a key part of our intervention activities within the Scottish Borders. The SFRS is committed to working with partners and other stakeholders in order to reduce the amount of RTC's that occur in the Scottish Borders. 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 455 RTC's within the five-year period, on 125 occasions we utilised HRE to remove trapped occupants from vehicles.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Scottish Borders	86	76	92	107	94
Tweeddale West	12	8	18	11	8
Tweeddale East	5	12	13	13	8
Galashiels and District	10	10	13	14	12
Selkirkshire	7	5	6	7	6
Leaderdale and Melrose	13	8	8	16	11
Mid Berwickshire	4	9	8	5	10
East Berwickshire	8	3	8	12	6
Kelso and District	9	3	5	8	8
Jedburgh and District	13	13	8	13	15
Hawick and Denholm	4	3	2	6	5
Hawick and Hermitage	1	2	3	2	5

### What are we doing to reduce Road Traffic Collisions?

The SFRS are part of the Scottish Borders Safer Communities unit and a member of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Road Safety Working Group. Community Action Teams (CAT) and operational staff attend educational establishments such as schools and the Borders College to deliver inputs to young drivers regarding the consequences of RTC's. We also participate in partnership initiatives such as the Scottish Borders Young Drivers Event and more recently, the Police Scotland led initiative "Drivewise". Reduction of RTC's also forms part of the SFRS action plan regarding the Reducing Inequalities Group within the CPP.

## 8. Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

*Our target against the three-year average is to contribute towards a continued reduction in UFAS within the Scottish Borders*

### 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, Fire and Safer Communities Committee focuses on Equipment Failure. Equipment Failure accounted for around 70% of all UFAS calls and just over 50% of our total operational response activity.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Scottish Borders	878	919	878	905	870
Tweeddale West	123	130	93	84	111
Tweeddale East	40	41	28	30	54
Galashiels and District	92	103	92	104	116
Selkirkshire	85	60	81	59	89
Leaderdale and Melrose	73	79	92	78	81
Mid Berwickshire	29	25	52	33	63
East Berwickshire	44	33	41	34	54
Kelso and District	25	29	36	25	76
Jedburgh and District	24	29	33	28	62
Hawick and Denholm	37	41	30	31	68
Hawick and Hermitage	65	60	67	60	96

### What are we doing to reduce Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals?

We continue to proactively 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 planned approach with the aim of educating duty holders whilst reducing UFAS calls and ensuring they meet their legislative requirements.

The SFRS has a Policy for dealing with UFAS calls which has been implemented in the Scottish Borders to ensure this is managed appropriately and consistently.

## 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 plan can be accessed here,

[http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/1005163/scottish\\_fire\\_and\\_rescue\\_service\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2016\\_19.pdf](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 the Scottish Borders. 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 the Scottish Borders.

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 pilot, in the Cheviot locality, is currently being evaluated with expansion to another area of the Borders anticipated in the summer 2017.

With regard to “Modernising our Response”, the Scottish Borders also feature heavily in a national project with the aim of increasing survival rates when an individual suffers an “Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest” (OHCA). Initially seven Community Fire Stations were chosen across Scotland to take part in the pilot, this included Coldstream, Hawick and Lauder. The pilot, which has been running for 18 months, has expanded and now involves 16 stations across Scotland providing a medical response to OHCA in conjunction with Scottish Ambulance colleagues when requested.

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.

Feedback identified that in terms of local communities, the majority of people residing within the Scottish Borders are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the service and information provided by the local Fire and Rescue Service. 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. Conclusions

In reviewing the progress against the priorities within the Scottish Borders Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2014 – 2017, it is pleasing to note the decrease in dwelling fires and associated 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.

On a less positive note, Road Traffic Collisions and other Special Service incidents continue to rise. Improvements in this area will only be achieved by innovative and concentrated collaborative working with key stakeholders. As a statutory partner within the CPP but also as an emergency response service to RTC's, the SFRS will continue to prioritise the reduction of this type of incident and associated casualties.

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 in turn 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 transformational changes which we have implemented and continue to develop in the Scottish Borders.

The review of the Scottish Borders 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 the Scottish Borders.

## **12. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the following priorities are taken forward in the new Local Fire and Rescue Plan for the Scottish Borders 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