

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN FOR SCOTTISH BORDERS 2021

PLAN REVIEW-2023

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Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.

1. Introduction

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is required under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, as amended by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, to prepare Local Fire and Rescue Plans for each local authority in Scotland.

Local Fire and Rescue Plans set out our national and local operating context and outline our specific priorities for that area. In their preparation, due regard is given to the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland and the SFRS Strategic Plan.

The publication of our new Strategic Plan 2022-25 in October 2022 instigated a requirement to conduct 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 growing needs of our communities.

The information contained within this Review Report will contribute towards the development of a new Local Fire and Rescue Plan that is tailored to local need.

2. Scrutiny Arrangements

Scrutiny arrangements in the Scottish Borders 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.

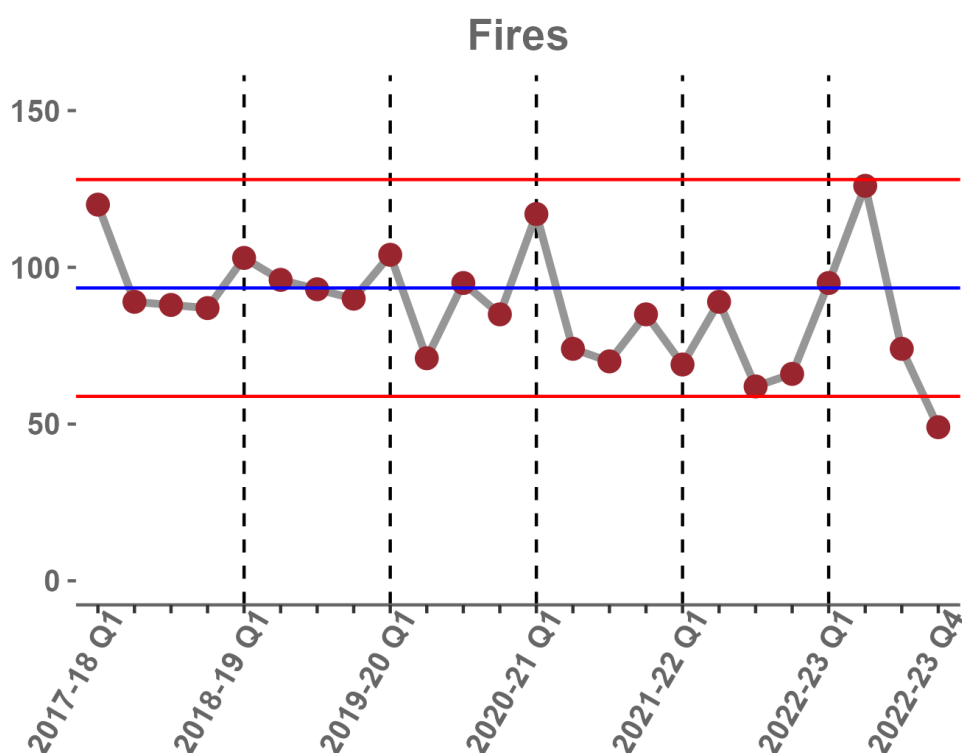
The following Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are scrutinised.

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

3. Performance Data – what the figures told us

Overall Operational Activity - Fires, Non-Fire Incidents and False Alarms

Key Performance Indicator	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Accidental dwelling fires	92	96	77	75	70
Fire casualties excl. Fatalities	20	31	15	12	15
Fire Fatalities	1	0	2	0	2
All deliberate fires excl. dwellings	137	128	119	93	106
Special Service – RTC's	87	99	52	70	78
Unwanted fire alarm signals	521	464	451	515	538

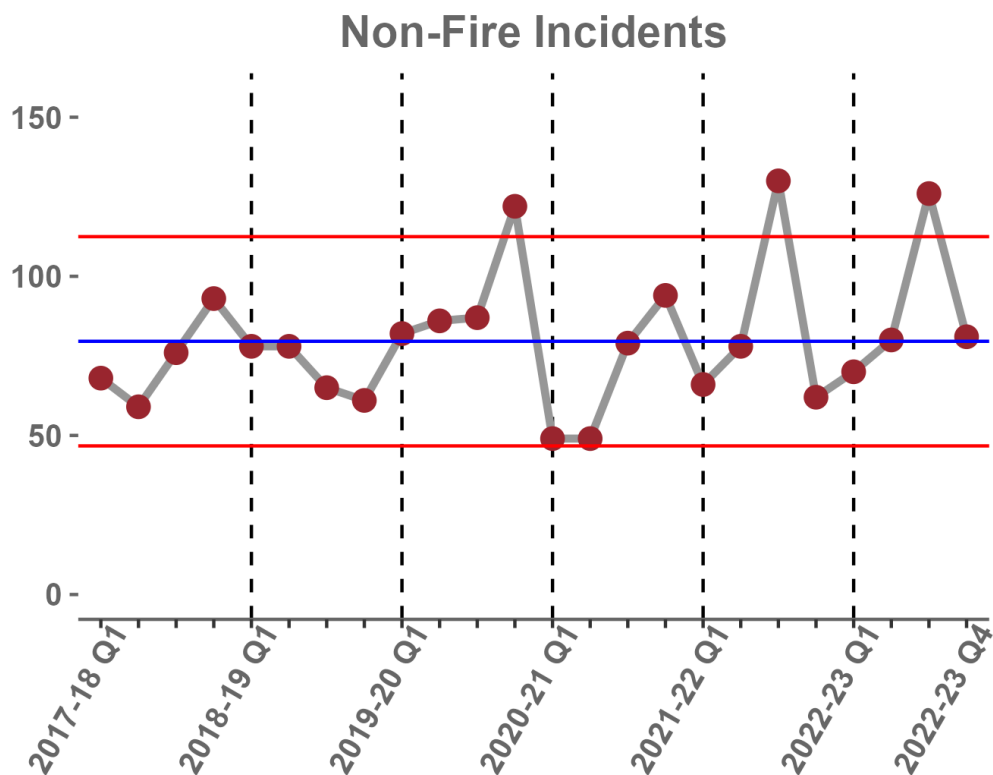


In our analysis, we've observed a notable pattern in fire incidents within the Scottish Borders region between 2020-21 Q2 and 2021-22 Q4. During this period, these incidents consistently remained below the historical average, indicating a potential decreasing trend in fire-related occurrences.

However, in 2022-23 Q1, there was an unexpected uptick in fire incidents, bringing the figures closer to the historical average. Even more noteworthy is the observation in 2022-23 Q2 when the number of incidents approached the upper control limit, signifying a significant deviation from the previous trend.

Subsequently, the situation reversed, with the number of incidents decreasing again, as evident in 2022-23 Q4, where the figures fell below the lower control limit. To draw a definitive conclusion regarding whether this represents a decreasing trend with a one-time anomaly in 2022-23 Q2 or merely the result of random variation, additional data points are necessary for a more comprehensive analysis.

Nationally, the data on fire incidents across Scotland does not display a clear trend. However, it is notable that there seems to be a recurring seasonal pattern, with fire incidents in most years spiking during Q1, surpassing the historical average. Interestingly, this seasonal trend is not as pronounced in the data specific to the Scottish Borders, suggesting potential regional variations in fire incident patterns that warrant further investigation.

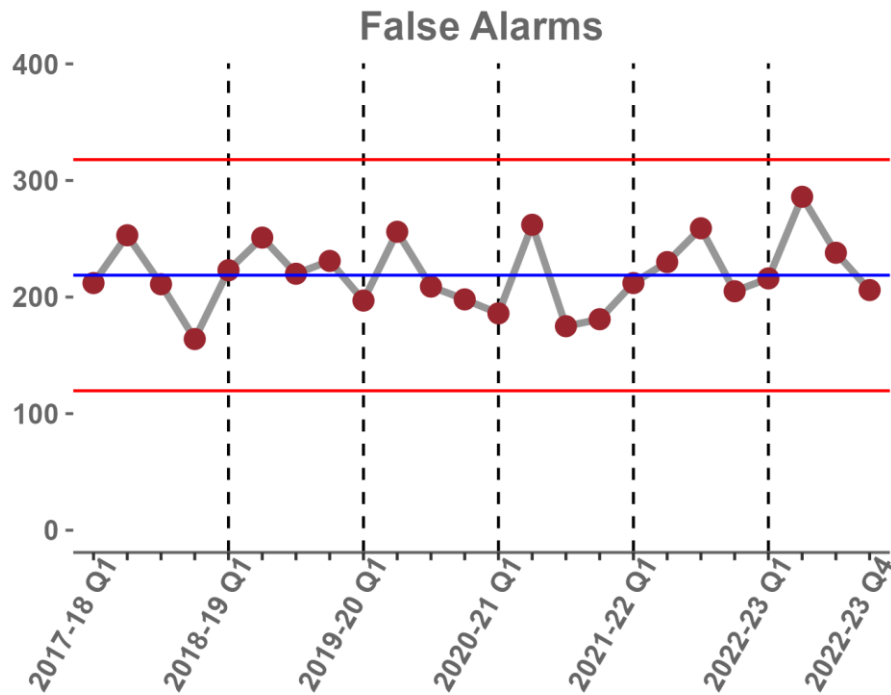


Non-fire incidents in the Scottish Borders have exhibited noteworthy patterns, with instances surpassing the upper control limit in specific quarters, namely 2019-20 Q4, 2020-21 Q3, and 2022-23 Q3. Intriguingly, after each of these occurrences, the subsequent quarter consistently reverted to a level either at or below the historical average.

A substantial reduction in non-fire incidents was particularly evident in 2020-21 Q1, following the elevated numbers in the preceding quarter. During this period, both the data points for 2020-21 Q1 and Q2 aligned closely with the lower control limit. This trend resonates with national data patterns, reflecting a decline in non-fire incidents during the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by a subsequent increase in incidents as conditions returned to normal.

These observations underscore the influence of external factors, such as the pandemic, on non-fire incidents, and highlight the resilience of the Scottish Borders in swiftly adapting to changing circumstances. It is important to continue monitoring these

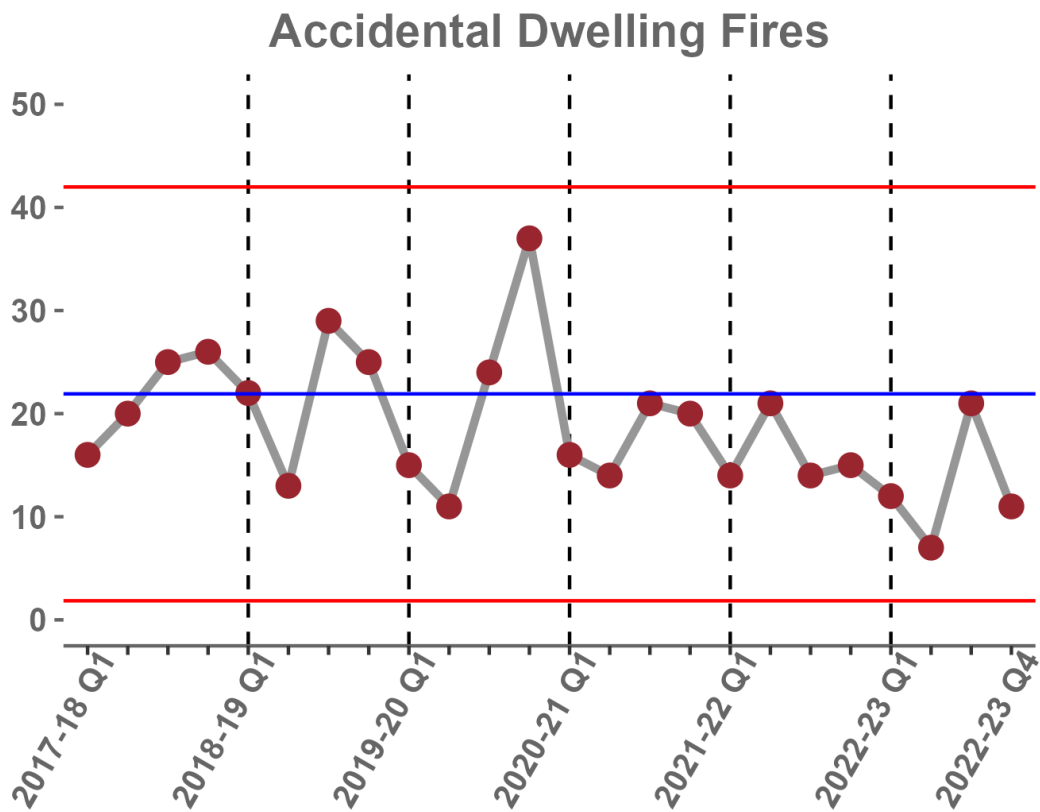
patterns to ensure effective response and mitigation strategies are in place, considering both regional dynamics and broader national trends.



False alarm incidents have demonstrated a pattern of random variation since the first quarter of 2017-18, with no discernible overarching trends or predictable patterns evident in the data. This pattern aligns consistently with the broader national trends in the dataset.

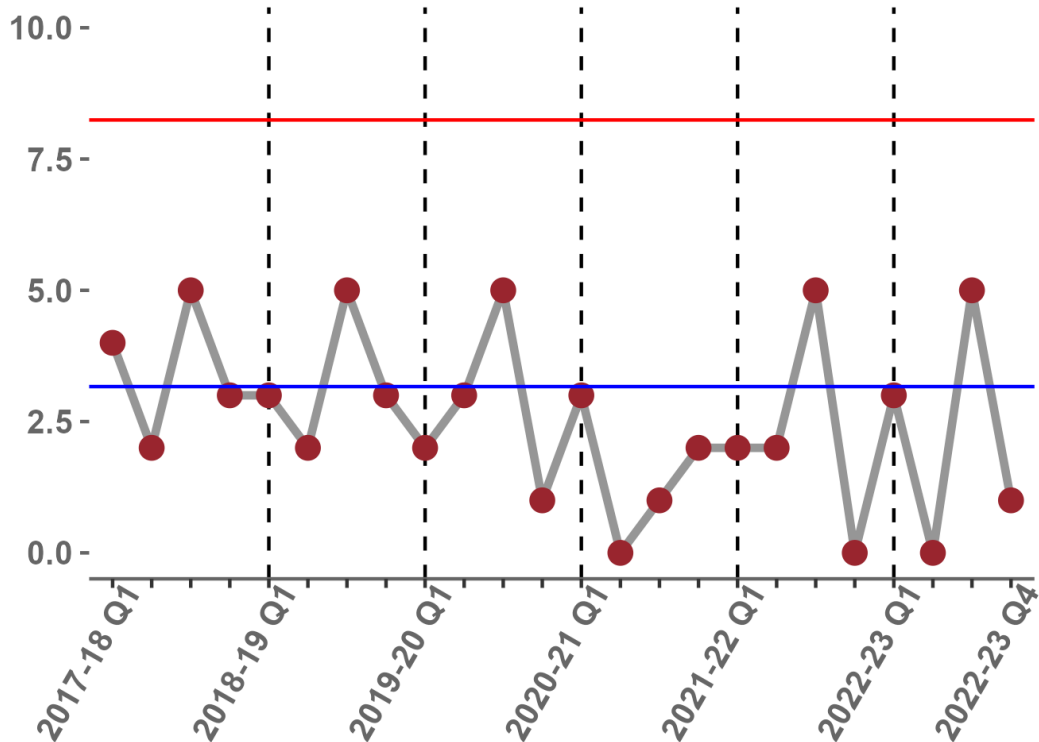
4. Performance Local Priorities

Local Priority 1: As Part of a Community Partnership approach, we will make people safer in their homes.



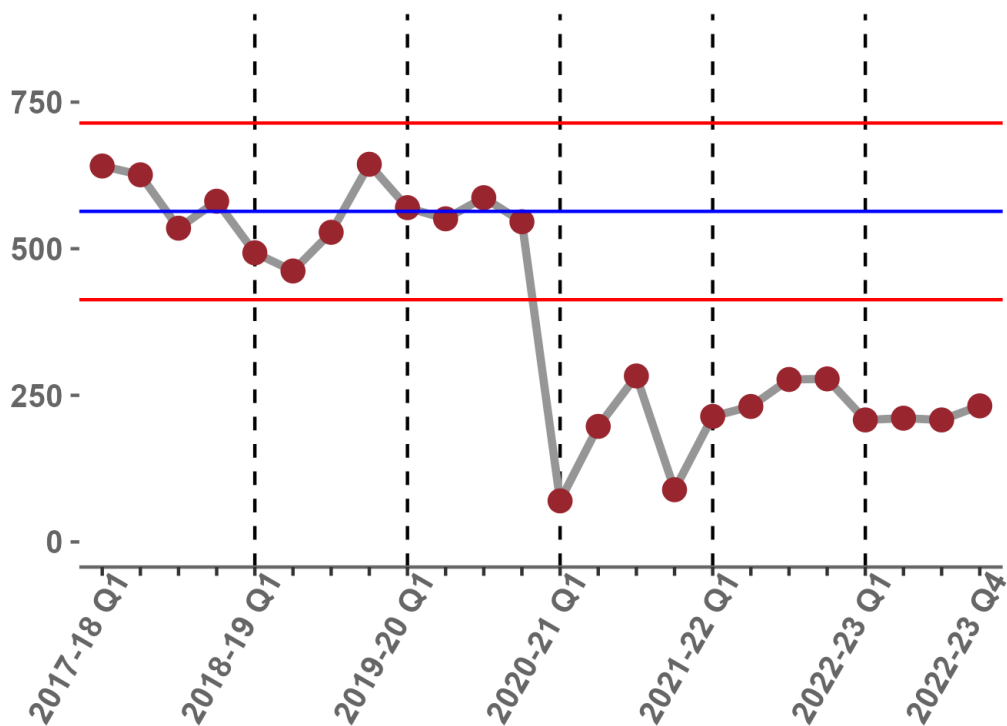
Accidental dwelling fires in the analysed region have consistently remained at or below the historical average since the first quarter of 2020-21. This pattern strongly implies a decreasing trend in these incidents, which aligns with the national trend data, where there has been a distinct and clear decreasing trend in accidental dwelling fires across the country.

Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties



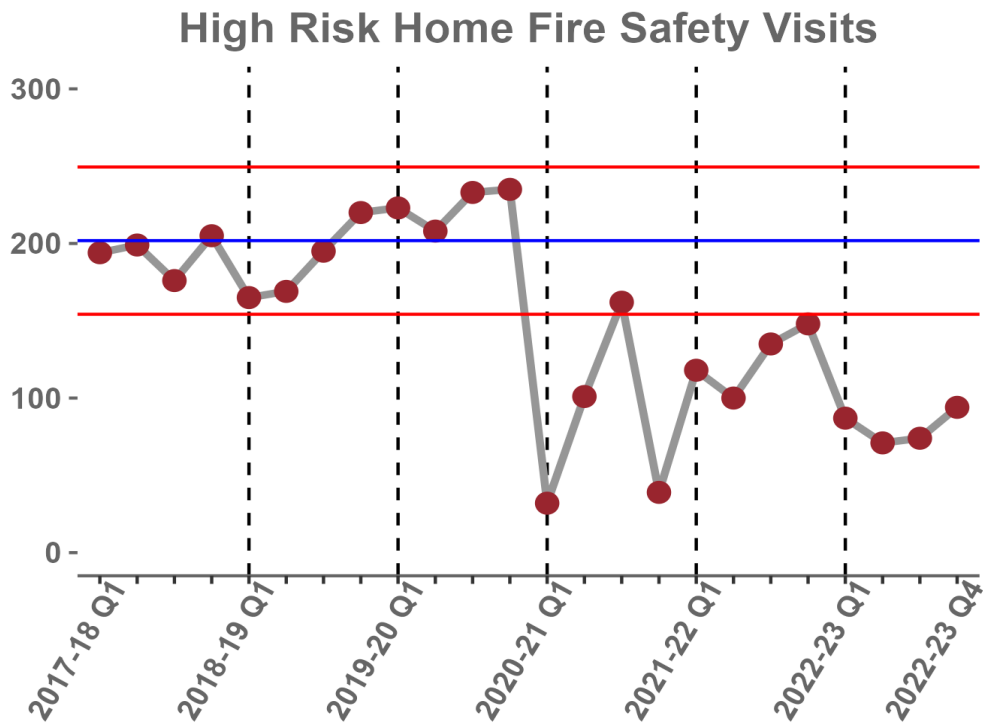
Except for the anomalies observed in 2021-22 Q3 and 2022-23 Q3, all the figures for accidental dwelling fire casualties in the Scottish Borders region have consistently stayed at or below the historical average since the first quarter of 2020-21. This pattern suggests a potential decreasing trend in accidental dwelling fire casualties, mirroring the national trend where figures have consistently remained below average since 2020-21 Q1.

Home Fire Safety Visits



Home Fire Safety Visits in the Scottish Borders exhibited random variations in the period before the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21. However, a significant and noticeable decline in Home Fire Safety Visits occurred in 2020-21 Q1, as evidenced by the data point falling below the lower control limit. Since then, the figures have consistently remained below the lower control limit, indicating that the number of visits conducted has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

This local trend aligns closely with the national data patterns, where a similar decrease in Home Fire Safety Visits during the Covid-19 pandemic is observed, and subsequent recovery to previous visit levels is yet to be realised. These insights underscore the lasting impact of the pandemic on safety initiatives and the need for continued efforts to re-establish and enhance Home Fire Safety Visits within the region.



In a manner similar to the general Home Fire Safety Visit figures, high-risk visits were significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in the Scottish Borders. A substantial reduction in high-risk visits was observed from the fourth quarter of 2019-20 to the first quarter of 2020-21, as a direct result of the pandemic's constraints and safety precautions.

From the first quarter of 2020-21 onward, the figures for high-risk visits consistently remained below the lower control limit, except for the third quarter of 2020-21, which experienced a temporary increase. This pattern indicates that the number of high-risk visits has not yet rebounded to levels seen before the pandemic, suggesting a lasting impact on these critical safety interventions.

The trends observed in the Scottish Borders align with national data patterns across Scotland, further emphasising the widespread challenges posed by the pandemic to high-risk visitation efforts. As such, it remains essential to continue efforts to revitalise and strengthen high-risk visit programs within the region, in line with broader national initiatives.

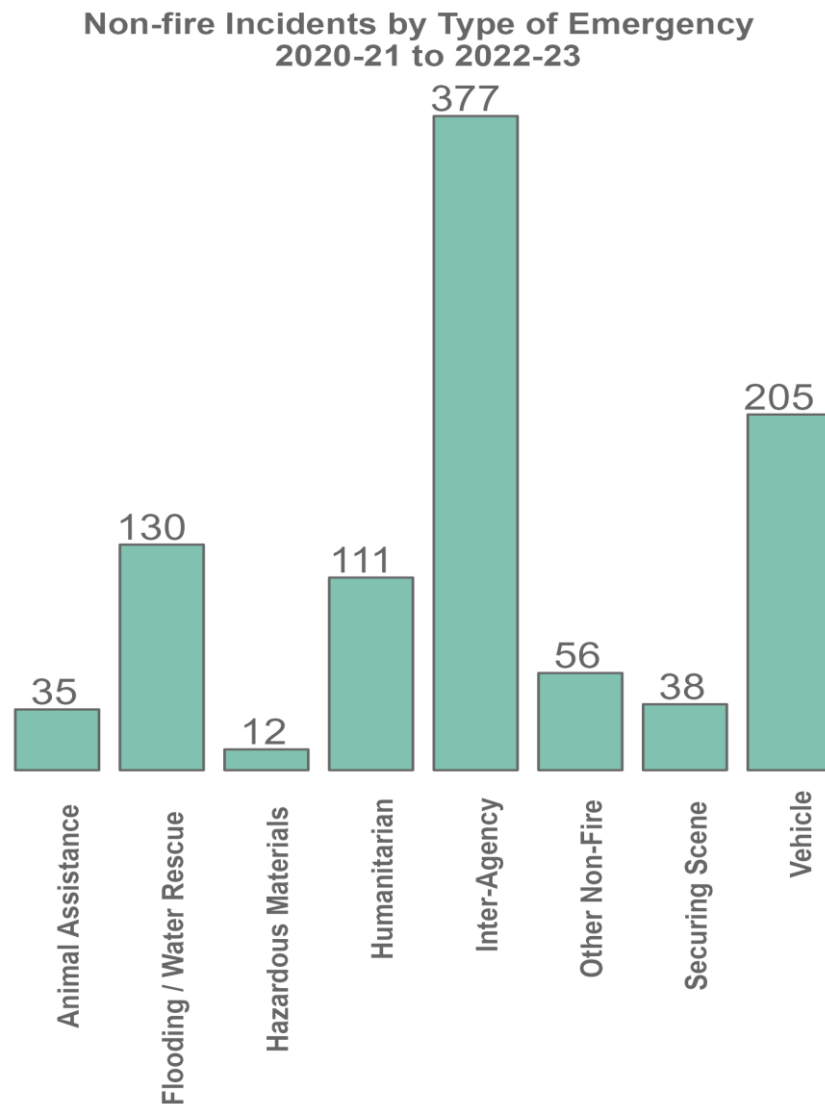
How we worked to improve our performance

We have been proactive in our efforts to enhance community safety by implementing various strategies and initiatives:

- **Educating the Community:** We have undertaken educational campaigns to inform local communities about the new smoke detection legislation. This includes raising awareness about the importance of smoke detectors and their life-saving capabilities.
- **Installation of Interlinked Detection Systems:** To improve safety in high-risk privately-owned households meeting specific criteria, we have installed interlinked detection systems. This initiative has been supported by funding from the Scottish Government, ensuring that vulnerable households have enhanced fire detection capabilities.
- **Targeted Interventions:** We have identified households involved in domestic fire incidents or special service incidents, often referred to as "hot strikes." For these households, we have offered Home Fire Safety Visits to assess their fire safety and ensure they have adequate fire detection systems in place. Additionally, we have conducted leaflet drops to neighbouring properties, extending our safety outreach within the community.
- **Community Collaboration:** We actively engage in community planning partnerships, fostering collaboration with various partners to facilitate home safety referrals. Furthermore, when necessary, we take proactive steps related to Child and Adult safeguarding, ensuring that vulnerable individuals receive the necessary protection and support.
- **Risk Recognition Training:** We have conducted risk recognition training in conjunction with local authorities and third-sector organizations. This training aims to educate participants and raise awareness about identifying potential risks within homes, further contributing to community safety.

These initiatives collectively reflect our commitment to proactive engagement with local communities, ensuring that residents are well-informed about fire safety measures and have access to the necessary resources and support. By taking these steps, we aim to create safer environments for all members of our community.

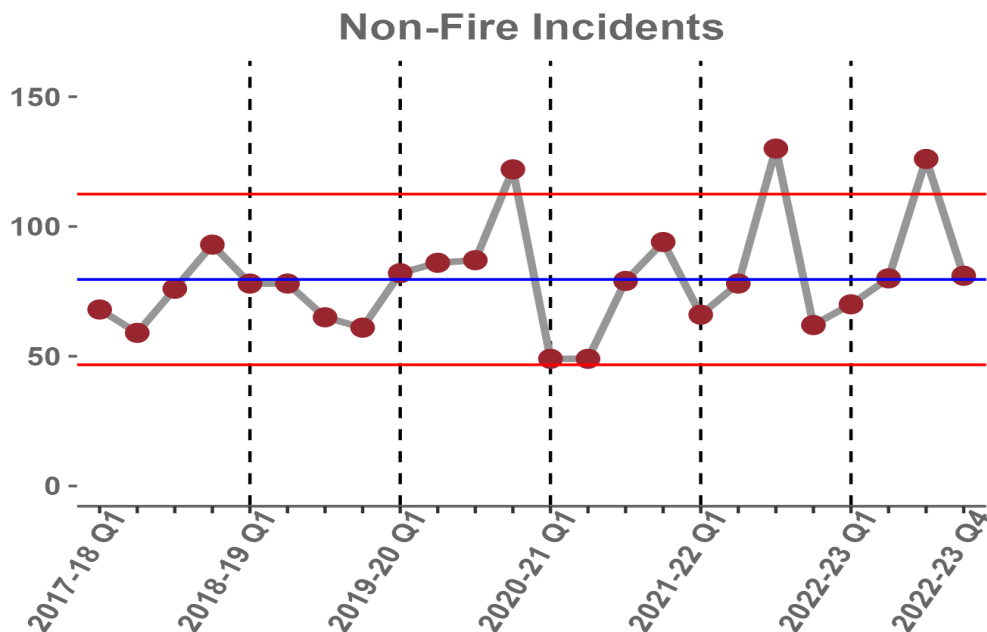
Local Priority 2: We will promote Community resilience whilst contributing to improved outcomes for people involved in non-fire emergencies.



Please note 'Humanitarian' includes Evacuation (no fire), Lift Release, Other Rescue/Release of Persons, Removal of Objects from People and Removal of People from Objects. 'Inter-Agency' includes Assist Other Agencies, Effecting Entry/Exit, Medical Responder and Suicide. 'Other Non-Fire' includes Advice Only, No Action (not false alarm), Standby and Water Provision. 'Securing Scene' includes Making Safe (not RTC), and Spills and Leaks (not RTC). 'Vehicle' includes Road Traffic Collisions and Other Transport (no fire).

Between 2020-21 and 2022-23, most non-fire incidents within the region were categorised as inter-agency incidents, accounting for a total of 232 occurrences. Following this, the incidence of Vehicle Incidents was the next most common, with 91

recorded incidents. Additionally, there were 62 instances of flooding and water rescue incidents, 58 humanitarian incidents, and 28 non-fire incidents during this period.



The analysis of non-fire incidents in the Scottish Borders has revealed specific patterns and fluctuations:

- In the fourth quarter of 2019-20, as well as the third quarters of 2020-21 and 2022-23, non-fire incidents exceeded the upper control limit, indicating an unusual increase in such incidents during these periods.
- Interestingly, after each of these instances of exceeding the upper control limit, the following quarter consistently returned to a level either at or below the historical average. This suggests a tendency for the region to swiftly respond to fluctuations and return to more typical levels of non-fire incidents.
- In the first quarter of 2020-21, there was a significant decrease compared to the previous quarter, with data points for both the first and second quarters of 2020-21 falling on the lower control limit. This aligns with the broader national pattern where non-fire incidents decreased during the initial phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by an increase in incidents as the situation evolved.

How we worked to improve our performance

Our commitment to safety within the Scottish Borders is evident through a range of targeted campaigns and initiatives:

- **"Make the Call" Campaign:** We have launched the "Make the Call" campaign, specifically targeting caregivers, family members, friends, and neighbours of individuals who may be at the highest risk of fires within the home. This campaign aims to raise awareness and prompt timely action to ensure safety.
- **Water Safety Education:** We have prioritised water safety education, reaching out to schools, youth groups, and specific risk areas through both online and in-person engagement events. This proactive approach helps educate our communities, especially young people, about staying safe around water.
- **Water Safety Video:** In partnership with TD1 youth hub, we created a water safety video. Local young people from TD1 youth hub played a significant role in narrating this video, which includes British Sign Language (BSL) narration. This video serves as an accessible and informative resource for our communities.
- **Engagement at Swimming Hotspots:** During warmer periods, we have conducted targeted visits to popular local swimming spots to engage with swimmers and provide valuable water safety guidance.
- **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC):** We play a key role in MARACs, collaborating with various agencies to assess and mitigate identified risks, contributing to improved safety outcomes.
- **Child and Adult Safeguarding:** We actively share child and adult safeguarding information with relevant partners, ensuring that vulnerable individuals receive the necessary support and protection.
- **Cost of Living Crisis Support:** We have initiated a cost-of-living crisis signposting effort during home safety inspections. Through collaboration with Sustainable Selkirk, we identify households at risk from cost of living-related hazards and provide referrals for energy advice and guidance.
- **Borders Union Primary Schools' Event:** We have actively participated in the Borders Union primary schools' event, delivering crucial water safety advice using our water rescue team and equipment. Additionally, we provide home safety advice through our community safety vehicle.
- **PAWS Group Formation:** We have established a PAWS (Partnership for Action on Water Safety) group within the Scottish Borders, collaborating closely with partners to enhance safety outcomes in and around bodies of water.

These initiatives underscore our dedication to community safety, covering a wide spectrum of safety concerns, from fire prevention to water safety and more. By actively engaging with our communities and collaborating with partners, we aim to create safer environments for all residents in the Scottish Borders.

Local Priority 3: Together with our Community Partners, we will contribute to making Scottish Borders roads safer.

Road Traffic collisions 2018-2023 attended by SFRS in Scottish Borders

Geography/Reporting Year						
↑ Ward	Reporting Year	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
East Berwickshire		11	13	4	7	17
Galashiels & District		11	12	7	8	7
Hawick & Denholm		5	7	0	3	4
Hawick & Hermitage		4	3	4	2	5
Jedburgh & District		11	10	8	10	7
Kelso & District		0	12	1	4	4
Leaderdale & Melrose		9	14	9	10	8
Mid Berwickshire		10	7	7	10	7
Selkirkshire		6	4	3	4	7
Tweeddale East		8	3	3	3	3
Tweeddale West		12	14	6	9	9
Total		87	99	52	70	78

**Above is the Road Traffic Collisions that SFRS have attended this is not reflective of the total number of RTC's within the Scottish Borders during this period.*

How we worked to improve our performance

Our commitment to road safety and education is evident through various initiatives and partnerships:

- **"Drive to Arrive" Educational Resources:** Collaborating with Police Scotland, we have delivered "Drive to Arrive" educational resources to secondary schools. These resources are designed to educate young drivers and passengers about safe practices on the road, contributing to safer road experiences.
- **Fire skills Courses:** We delivered Fire skills courses to secondary schools and youth groups in the region. These courses include road safety components, ensuring that young individuals receive comprehensive road safety education.
- **Older Road User Safety Events:** We have organized safety events targeted at older road users, particularly at garden centres throughout the year. These events address the specific safety needs of this age group, including discussions about eyesight issues due to age and roadside eye testing. We also utilise a crash car simulator to demonstrate the consequences of road traffic collisions (RTCs).
- **Border Union Show Participation:** Our presence at the Border Union Show includes a crash car exhibition, promoting road safety messages and

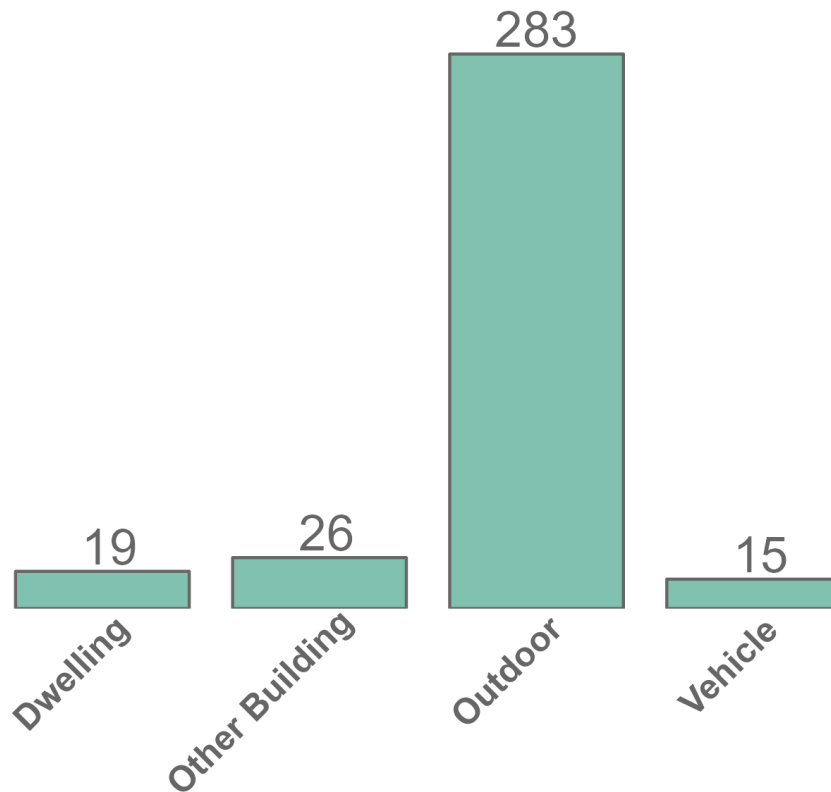
emphasising the outcomes of RTCs within rural communities. This participation is under the Scottish Borders Council safer communities banner and involves collaboration with partner agencies.

- **Road Safety Educational Packages:** We delivered road safety educational packages to youth rugby clubs, with a focus on the challenges faced by youths as they approach driving age and the dangers of peer pressure within this age group. This proactive approach helps address potential risks and instil safe practices.
- **Digital First Communication:** During the Covid-19 pandemic, we adopted a digital-first approach to communicate with schools, using the Inspire Learning program in the Scottish Borders. This program provided iPads to every pupil, enhancing their educational experience, including road safety education.
- **QR Codes for Feedback:** We have incorporated QR codes within our digital presentations to collect instant feedback. This feedback mechanism allows us to adapt and improve the quality of our delivery continually.

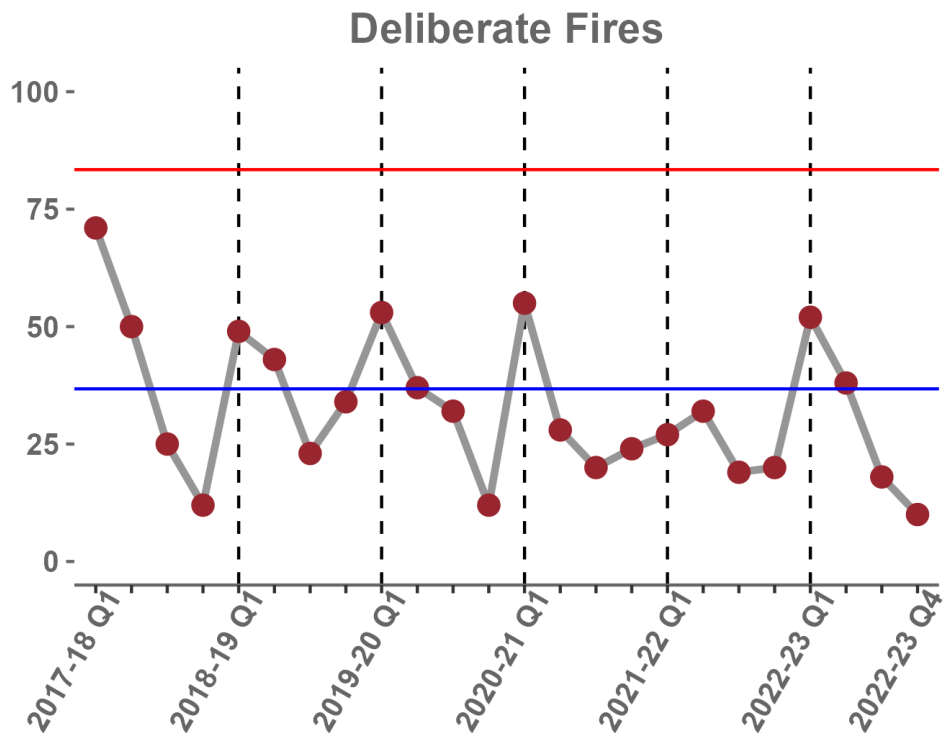
These initiatives, spanning from education in schools to targeted events and partnerships, reflect our commitment to road safety in the Scottish Borders. By actively engaging with various age groups and utilising digital resources, we aim to foster a culture of safe and responsible road use within our community.

Local Priority 4: As part of a community partnership, we will challenge anti-social behaviour

Deliberate Fires by Property Type 2020-21 to 2022-23



Between 2020-21 and 2022-23, most deliberate fires within the region have taken place in outdoor settings, totalling 283 incidents during this period. Following this category, other types of buildings experienced 26 deliberate fires, dwellings had 19 recorded incidents, and vehicles were involved in 15 deliberate fire incidents.



The analysis of deliberate fires in the region reveals specific patterns:

- Since 2017-18 Q1, deliberate fires have exhibited random variation, with no discernible overall trend.
- Notably, there is a consistent pattern of higher figures in Q1 of each year when compared to other quarters, and these Q1 figures have consistently been above the historical average.
- Between 2020-21 Q1 and 2021-22 Q4, the figures were consistently below the historical average, which might have suggested a decreasing trend during that period. However, this trend shifted in 2022-23 Q1 when the figures rose again, surpassing the historical average.

Overall, the data does not indicate a clear and sustained trend in deliberate fires. This pattern aligns with national trends, where Q1 consistently exhibits higher figures than other quarters within the same year, but there is no apparent overall trend. It is crucial to continue monitoring and analysing this data to identify any emerging patterns or changes in deliberate fire incidents, allowing for timely intervention and prevention efforts.

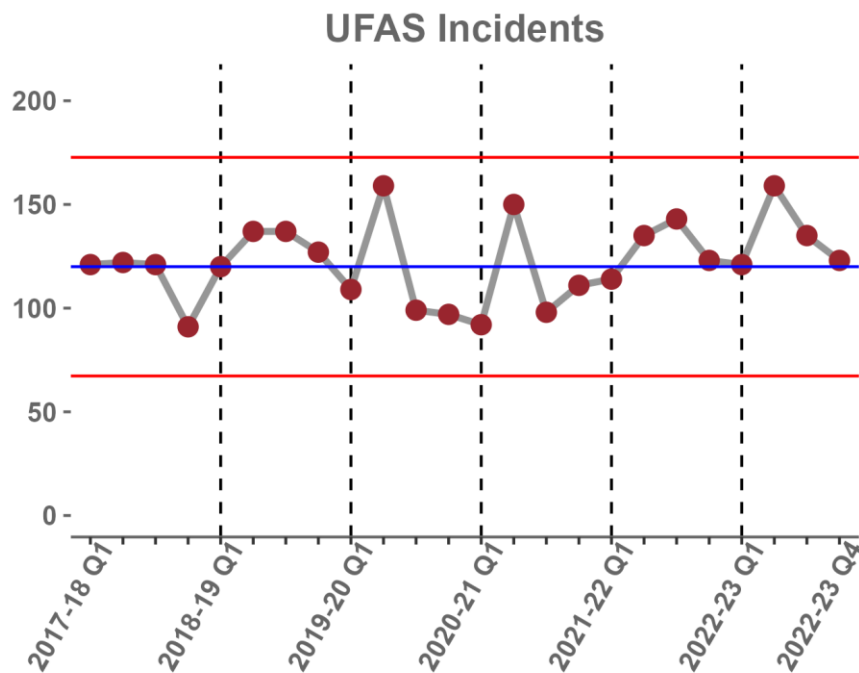
How we worked to improve our performance

Our efforts to address anti-social behaviour and promote community safety in the Scottish Borders involve a range of initiatives and collaborations:

- **Fire Skills" courses:** We have implemented "Fire Skills" courses in the Scottish Borders, which include dedicated sessions for young people aimed at addressing anti-social behaviour. We have also partnered with Police Scotland to provide input on drug awareness and the associated dangers to attendees of these courses.
- **Collaboration with Police Scotland:** In preparation for the November Bonfire period, we work closely with Police Scotland to target and remove illegal bonfires. Additionally, we deliver education packages on fire safety to all secondary schools in the area during this period.
- **Engagement with Youth Clubs:** We actively collaborate with local youth clubs to educate young individuals about the risks of fire and the consequences of deliberate fire setting. This proactive approach helps deter anti-social behaviour related to fire incidents.
- **Sharing of Local Intelligence:** We share local intelligence related to anti-social behaviour with Police Scotland through community intelligence reports. This collaborative approach enables us to work together to reduce instances of anti-social behaviour in the region.
- **Fire Safety Support and Education (FSSE):** We deliver Fire Safety Support and Education programs specifically targeting individuals involved in anti-social behaviour. This educational initiative aims to raise awareness and promote responsible behaviour.
- **Intervention Activities:** Alongside our partners, we engage in intervention activities designed to encourage responsible citizenship among individuals involved in anti-social behaviour. These activities contribute to positive community engagement and safety.
- **Participation in Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership Working Group:** Our involvement in the Anti-social Behaviour Partnership Working Group (ASB) reflects our commitment to collaborative efforts with partners to tackle problems associated with anti-social behaviour.

Through these initiatives and partnerships, we are actively working to address anti-social behaviour, enhance community safety, and promote responsible citizenship in the Scottish Borders. These efforts align with our mission to create a safer and more harmonious environment for all residents.

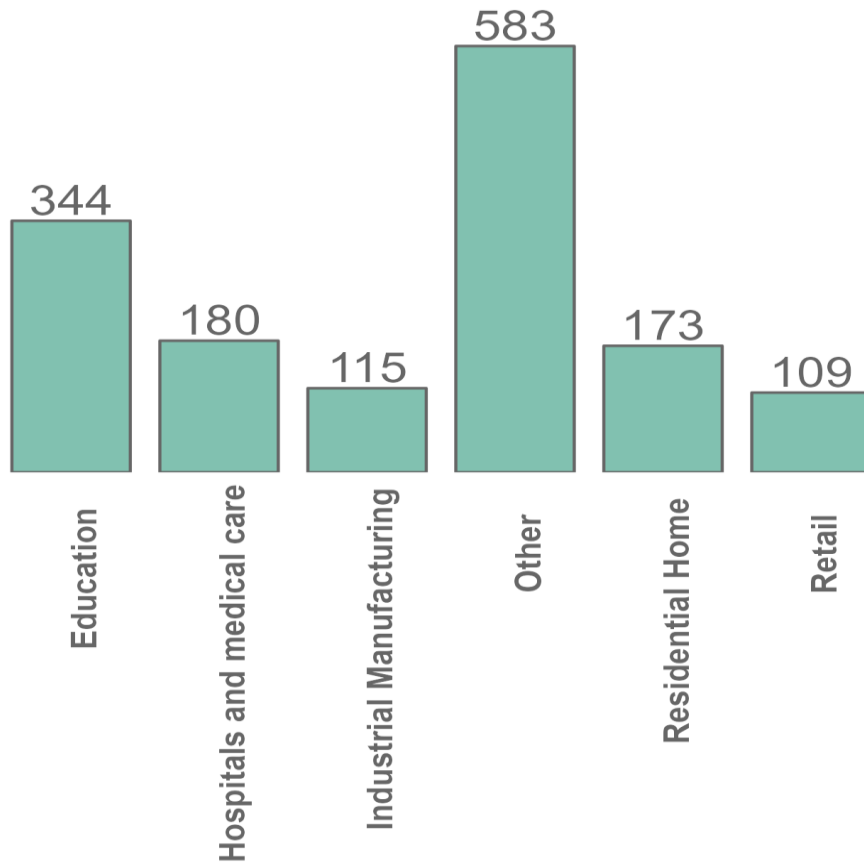
Local Priority 5: In Partnerships, we will aim to reduce the occurrence and impact of unwanted Fire Alarm Signals.



The analysis of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) incidents reveals the following trends:

- UFAS incidents have exhibited random variation since 2017-18 Q1, with no discernible overall trend during this period.
- However, a notable change occurred from 2021-22 Q2 onwards, where all figures have been consistently on or above average. This suggests the possibility of an increasing trend in UFAS incidents during this more recent period. To draw a more conclusive trend, additional data points would be necessary.
- On a national level, UFAS incidents followed a pattern where they dropped during the Covid-19 pandemic and have since returned to figures close to the historical average.
- Continued monitoring and analysis of UFAS incidents will be essential to determine whether the recent increase in incidents represents a sustained trend or remains subject to random variation. This data provides valuable insights for ongoing efforts to manage and reduce UFAS incidents.

UFAS by Property Type 2020-21 to 2022-23



Between 2020-21 and 2022-23, the majority of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) incidents in the region were reported in property types categorized as 'Other,' with a total of 583 incidents occurring within this period. Following this category, UFAS incidents were recorded in education properties (344), hospitals and medical care properties (180), and residential homes (173).

This data provides valuable insights into the property types most affected by UFAS incidents during this period. Such information can inform targeted strategies and interventions aimed at reducing UFAS incidents in specific property types and enhancing overall fire safety in these settings.

How we worked to improve our performance

- Addressing Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) has been a long-standing concern for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). In March 2020, we conducted a comprehensive Stocktake Review to understand the persistent UFAS incidents throughout Scotland. This review identified areas where we could enhance collaboration with key stakeholders and improve training. One of the most significant recommendations from the review was the need to address the underlying challenges associated with the increasing UFAS incidents.
- Consequently, we have proactively acted upon the insights gained from the UFAS Stocktake Review. We prioritised the evaluation of various response options for Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs). After extensive consultations with both internal and external stakeholders, we officially implemented the preferred response approach on July 1, 2023. To ensure a smooth transition to this innovative approach, SFRS actively engaged with key local stakeholders, providing them with the necessary information and guidance regarding their responsibilities considering these changes.
- This strategic response to UFAS incidents is aligned with our commitment to enhancing public safety and streamlining our operational procedures. We remain dedicated to collaborative efforts with all stakeholders to reduce UFAS incidents and further enhance the effectiveness of our firefighting endeavours across Scotland.
- Furthermore, we maintain an ongoing engagement and support framework for businesses, in accordance with the Scottish Regulator Code of Practice. Our Protection Officers partner with Duty Holders to ensure the fulfilment of their responsibilities and provide guidance to promote safe and compliant business operations. This approach contributes to creating a safer environment for both businesses and the broader community.

4. Conclusion

The review of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for the Scottish Borders has provided valuable insights into the performance and priorities of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in this region. This review has examined key performance indicators, analysed performance data, and outlined the progress made in addressing local priorities. Here are the key takeaways from this review:

The analysis of performance data has revealed both positive trends and areas for ongoing vigilance. Notable patterns include a potential decreasing trend in fire-related incidents in the Scottish Borders, with occasional deviations. Non-fire incidents have been influenced by external factors like the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting the need for adaptability in response strategies. False alarm incidents have exhibited random variation.

Throughout the review, collaboration with community partners and other agencies has been a recurring theme. This collaboration has been crucial in achieving progress in local priorities and addressing safety concerns.

The impact of external factors like the Covid-19 pandemic on incident patterns has been acknowledged. The SFRS has demonstrated resilience in adapting to these changing circumstances and ensuring a continued focus on community safety.

In conclusion, this review provides a comprehensive assessment of the SFRS's performance in the Scottish Borders and progress toward local priorities. While positive trends have been observed, it is essential to maintain a proactive and adaptable approach to address emerging challenges and evolving community needs. The insights gained from this review will inform the development of a new Local Fire and Rescue Plan tailored to the specific requirements of the region, reinforcing the commitment to creating safer environments for all residents. Continued collaboration with community partners and stakeholders remains essential in achieving these goals.

5. Recommendation

The current priorities remain fit for purpose until such time that the new Local Fire and Rescue Plan is developed in 2024/25.