

# Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 17 January 2023

## Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Local Plan Performance Report

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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1.1 To note the update from the Area Commander.

**Richard Carr**  
Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services

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# Report

## Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Local Plan Performance Report

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on the prevention, protection and operational response activities within the City of Edinburgh area during the reporting period of 2021-22 (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022).

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 In May 2019 the Council agreed that police and fire and rescue services' city-wide plans, policies and performance would be considered by the Policy and Sustainability Committee.
- 3.2 This consideration provides a forum for Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to discuss major cross-cutting issues with the Council as well as fulfilling their duty to engage with the local authority.
- 3.3 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are required by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 to involve the local authority in the setting of its priorities and objectives for its area.

### 4. Main report

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- 4.1 This report provides an update from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on the prevention, protection and operational response activities within the City of Edinburgh area during the reporting period of 2021-22 (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022).
- 4.2 As with previous updates to this committee, the content of the report is aimed to be a high-level overview of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's progress on their key priorities and the strategic issues facing the service. Elected Members are asked to consider the information provided by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and whether any additional content is requested.

## **5. Next Steps**

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5.1 Not applicable.

## **6. Financial impact**

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6.1 Not applicable.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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7.1 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have discussed the content of the report with the Council and the information can develop as feedback is received.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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8.1 The City of Edinburgh Council 30 May 2019 – [Review of Political Management Arrangements 2019](#)

8.2 Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

## **9. Appendices**

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Report by the Area Commander

# Local Plan Performance Report

## City of Edinburgh

1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022



### DISCLAIMER

The figures included in this report are provisional and subject to change as a result of quality assurance and review. The statistics quoted are internal management information published in the interests of transparency and openness. The Scottish government publishes Official Statistics each year which allow for comparisons to be made over longer periods of time.

Please ensure any external partners in receipt of these reports are aware of this.

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## Introduction

This report provides information on our Prevention, Protection and Operational response activities within the City of Edinburgh area during the reporting period of 2021-22 (1st April 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022).

The Scottish Government provides an overarching vision for public services. This vision is supported by 16 National Outcomes, which demonstrate commitment to creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable growth. The SFRS can make a significant contribution to improving these outcomes for the City of Edinburgh by contributing to the Community Planning arrangements across the area.

The overarching aim of the Fire & Rescue Service in the City of Edinburgh is to reduce death and injury from fire and other emergencies in the community. To achieve this, we will work in partnership, be pro-active and target our prevention and protection activities to where they are required, based on evidence. Within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for the City of Edinburgh 2020, six priorities have been identified:

1. Operational Resilience and Preparedness
2. Domestic Fire Safety
3. Reducing Unintentional Injury and Harm
4. Reducing Deliberate Fire Setting
5. Non-Domestic Fire Safety
6. Reducing Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (False Alarms)

These priorities, and our strategies for service delivery, are clearly aligned to the Community Planning structure, which supports the delivery of the Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan 2018-2028 and the four Locality Improvement Plans.

The full Local Fire and Rescue Plan for City of Edinburgh can be accessed at:

<https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-area/east/east-local-plans.aspx>

Area Commander Matt Acton,  
Local Senior Officer for City of Edinburgh

## Performance Summary

We measure how well we are meeting our priorities using 10 Key Performance Indicators (KPI):

Key Performance Indicator	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
Year to Date (YTD) – Total Incidents attended	10815	10860	10615	9032	10738
Accidental Dwelling House Fires	463	448	438	369	396
All Fire casualties (Fatal & non-fatal - incl. precautionary check up's)	92(1)	131(2)	106 (1)	73(2)	71(3)
All deliberate primary fires	298	254	223	237	220
Non- domestic fires	1452	1342	1195	1218	1485
False Alarms - Malicious	323	252	288	223	342
- Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals	3760	4011	4110	2996	3665
Special Service - RTC's	137	107	118	81	92
- Flooding	168	178	279	190	291
- Effecting Entry	513	448	489	469	570
- Medical Assistance	47	45	38	21	37

Table 1: Key Performance Indicators

The areas of note are:

- SFRS attended a total of 10,738 incidents in Edinburgh during the reporting period. This figure reflects a slight increase on the pre-COVID figures.
- The data reflects improved performance for 6 of the 10 KPI's.
- Overall in last 5-year period, we have experienced a downward trend for accidental dwelling fires.
- There has been a continued reduction in non-fatal fire casualties. Unfortunately, there have been 3 fire fatalities during the 21/22 reporting period.
- The data reflects a marked increase in Special Service - flooding incident types.
- Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (False Alarms) remain a challenge. These incidents make up 34% of all calls received for the City of Edinburgh area. Further information on the work we are doing to improve performance is detailed later in this report.
- Effecting Entry incidents continue to rise as we continue to work in partnership with Police Scotland and Scottish Ambulance Service. Additional factors impacting on these figures are: the demographics of Scotland and an ageing population. Further information on the work we are doing in this regard is detailed later in this report.

## Progress on Local Fire & Rescue Plan Priorities

### Operational Resilience and Preparedness

The Service must identify, prioritise and plan to meet the risks in each local community.

#### What we said we would

- *Identify and assess the risk to our communities through Operational Intelligence gathering.*
- *Undertake planned training events to support the acquisition and maintenance of skills to provide the capability to respond to emergency incidents.*
- *Review our operational response to incidents to ensure ongoing firefighter safety and to ensure the ongoing protection of our communities from harm.*
- *Work in partnership to plan, prepare and test our responses to major emergencies.*
- *Continue to draw upon our experience of multi-agency event planning to ensure that all events within Edinburgh are safe, successful and enjoyable, minimising disruption to the city and maximising public safety.*

#### What we do

- Our operational staff continue to gather and analyse local risk information and operational intelligence (OI) which is used in our preparations to resolve incidents. OI is gathered on premises as varied as high rise buildings, large manufacturing facilities, National Trust premises, etc.
- We have engaged with Local Authority Housing and Regulatory Services to improve our operational preparedness/response for High Rise Domestic Buildings. This has included upgrading lifts for use by the fire service and standardising associated firefighter lift switches/keys. Also, our Operational crews undertake regular Operational Assurance Visits (OAVs) to familiarise themselves with vehicular access, hydrant locations, building layout and fire service facilities and equipment. Arrangements are in place so that any faults are quickly rectified to ensure public and firefighter safety.
- We conduct Post Incident Debriefs to identify any lessons that can be learned from our preparedness and response to emergency events. This process allows us to identify, and address, training needs highlighted by staff and partners ensuring we continue to learn.
- We use Urgent Instruction (UI) briefings to inform our operational staff of any safety critical information.
- We continue to be an active member of the Lothian and Borders Local Resilience Partnership activity. This has resulted in attendance at several multi agency exercises which is essential to ensure our preparedness for actual incidents by creating relationships and trust across the partner agencies. We share information with local authority partners and other key stakeholders (e.g. Police Scotland) to ensure emergency event risks are mitigated. This is extremely valuable given the current UK threat level and its implication for the SFRS and our partners. We have and continue to be active partners in the planning of events such as The Tour of Britain, the Council Bonfire CIP, Police Scotland Operation Moonbeam, the Edinburgh Festival and the planning and staffing of COP 26 Climate Conference.

## Domestic Fire Safety

Most fire deaths and injuries occur in the home. Dwelling fires can have devastating effects on our community and the SFRS is committed to keeping people safe in their homes. We share information with partners to make sure that the right people get the right information they need, particularly those who are vulnerable due to age, isolation, or other contributory factors. The table below details the occurrence of accidental dwelling fires in 2021/22 per Locality area, and over a 5-year period.

Accidental Dwelling Fires	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
North East Locality	144	128	127	91	111
North West Locality	113	106	108	94	93
South East Locality	107	125	96	107	108
South West Locality	99	89	107	77	86
<b>Total (Edinburgh)</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>398</b>

Table 2: Accidental Dwelling Fires by year and Locality

2021/22 Accidental Dwelling Fire figures are slightly up on the preceding year but continues the overall downward trend in accidental dwelling fires in Edinburgh over the 5-year period.

Of the accidental dwelling fires attended, 30% occurred in single occupancy households. The main cause of fire is cooking (42%). 69% of fires were limited to the first item ignited and/or confined to the room where the fire started and, therefore, relatively minor in nature. 7 fires were of a more serious nature with fire damage over 1 or 2 floors. It is clear from this evidence that we must continue to target those mostly at risk in single occupancy households and to ensure those properties have working smoke detection. 133 domestic properties who experienced a fire during 2020/21 did not have working smoke alarms fitted.

### We said we would

- *Promote and undertake Home Fire Safety Visits to those deemed at risk from fire.*
- *Work with our partners in Edinburgh to share information where fire risks within the home have been identified and to provide solutions to protect those who are at risk.*
- *Focus engagement activities in those areas where service demand has been identified.*
- *Support the provision of assistive technology within the home to increase occupant safety.*

### What we do

- Our Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) programme is key to improving domestic fire safety. For 2021/22, 2702 HFSVs were completed, compared with 1415 HFSVs for 2020/21. This significant increase is due mainly to the relaxation of COVID restrictions.
- Evidence identifies that dwelling fires occur more frequently in those premises that are occupied by the more vulnerable members of our community such as the elderly and those with substance and alcohol dependencies. To tackle this, we have aligned our HFSV work with the findings of the Scottish Government SIMD 2020, to ensure our efforts are intelligence led. SFRS continue to develop Information Sharing Protocols with partners,

including Social Work, Housing providers, Health etc. to target those most vulnerable within our communities, by seeking referrals.

- From February 2022, all homes in Scotland have been required to have interlinked smoke and heat alarms. Scottish Government has provided SFRS with funding to purchase interlinked alarms which are now being fitted as part of the Home Fire Safety Visit programme to high-risk owner-occupied homes. This new standard for domestic smoke and heat alarms is expected to have a positive impact in reducing fire deaths and injuries in Scotland.
- After a fire, operational crews undertake Post Domestic Incident Response (PDIR). This is an opportunity to provide reassurance and fire safety advice to the public in neighbouring properties. Appropriate referrals can then be made to our partners should vulnerable individuals be identified.
- In partnership with Local Authority Housing and Regulatory Services, fire safety in high rise domestic buildings has been strengthened. This includes:
  - Upgrading lifts for use by the fire service in the event of a fire and standardising associated lift switches/keys;
  - Maintaining fire safety standards, equipment and facilities during refurbishment work;
  - Consideration and, where necessary, remediation of external wall systems, such as cladding;
  - Participation in an innovative project with fire safety consultants, CS Todd & Associates to trial an electronic system that logs vulnerable people in/out of high rise buildings. The system would allow SFRS to quickly identify the location of any vulnerable residents who may require assistance to evacuate in the event of fire.

Other benefits of this partnership approach include arranging additional waste uplifts to reduce fire risk, and urgently rectifying lift failures that impact on firefighter and public safety.

## Reducing Unintentional Injury and Harm

It is not uncommon for those at risk from fire to also be at risk from other injuries within the home, in particular from injuries arising from slips, trips and falls. Requests to the SFRS to provide assistance directly through a first responder role or to provide support to other agencies are increasing. Analysis of data indicates falls are a common cause of accidental deaths and injuries and account for a significant proportion of admissions to hospital. Those persons injured through falls may often be affected by other medical conditions such as dementia.

Out-with the domestic environment, we respond to a range of non-fire related emergencies. A common incident of this type within the City of Edinburgh is attendance at Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's) which results in the majority of non-fire related injuries. Responding to RTC's is a statutory duty for the SFRS, however, a collective approach is required amongst community planning partners to support risk reduction measures. We are also working with partners on Water Safety, given the potential for harm associated with Edinburgh's inland and coastal waterways.

### We said we would

- *Utilise our Home Fire Safety Visit programme to assess for non-fire related risk and refer those deemed at risk from injury and harm to partners to provide additional support.*
- *Raise the awareness of fire and rescue service personnel to those factors that increase the risk of unintentional injury or harm.*
- *Work in partnership to deliver targeted road safety programmes to young drivers.*
- *Focus resources where demand has been identified and deliver key safety messages.*

### What we do

- SFRS frontline staff submitted 95 'Adult Protection' and 3 'Child Protection/Wellbeing' referrals to our partners within the Social Work Department in 2021/22 to ensure appropriate support is delivered.
- Work is ongoing at a national level to evolve our Home Fire Safety Visit programme into a more holistic 'Safe and Well' Home Safety programme. In addition to providing fire safety advice, crews will be alert to other risks in the home and submit referrals for 'slips, trips and falls' and 'sensory impairment' in support of reducing unintentional harm. It is envisaged that, whilst keeping vulnerable residents safe in their homes, it will reduce the likelihood of hospitalisation and ease the burden in the Health Sector. Safe and Well visits are expected to launch in 2023.
- We continue to support road safety awareness through our commitment to staffing the Risk Factory, the Young Drivers Event at the Corn Exchange each year and through Fireskills/Employability youth engagement work.
- We continue to work with Pentland Hills Regional Park, its members and the Council to educate the public on water safety and have participated in multi-agency public awareness events at Harlaw Reservoir. We have also established an Edinburgh Partnership Approach to Water Safety (PAWS) Group. PAWS focuses on three aspects of water safety:
  - **Prevention:** Pro-active activities that reduce the likelihood of a water emergency occurring by raising awareness of safety issues, and by educating the public on how to be safe in and around water.

- **Improved Response:** Effective response to water emergency incidents through multi-agency exercises and training the public how to react to incidents safely via the Waterside Responder Scheme.
- **Review:** Implementation of the Drowning & Incident Review (DIR) after significant incidents to ensure learning from water emergency incidents to gain an understanding of the contributory factors and make interventions that may prevent similar events from occurring.
- A full water safety strategy is currently under development, and we plan to deliver Waterside Responder Courses in early 2023. These courses are delivered to business owners located near watercourses where evidence shows that people could be at risk. They involve the provision of throw lines and basic training on what to do if faced with a water-based emergency.

Non-fire related incidents are classed as Special Service incidents. Overall, these have not changed significantly over the last few years, other than an isolated spike in Q2 of 2021/22:

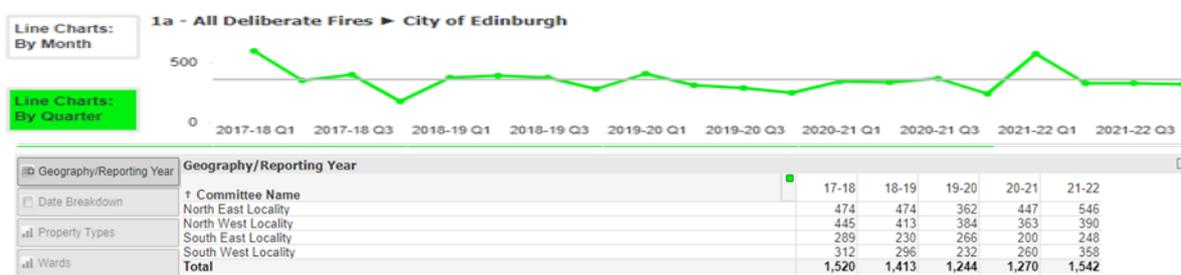


Table 3: All Special Service Incidents

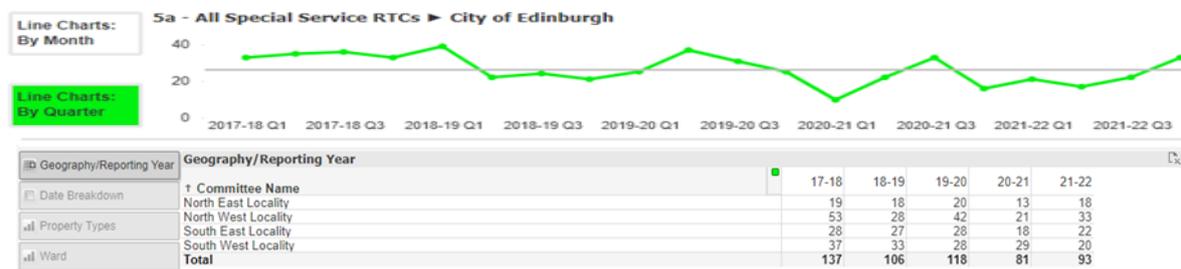


Table 4: All Special Service RTCs

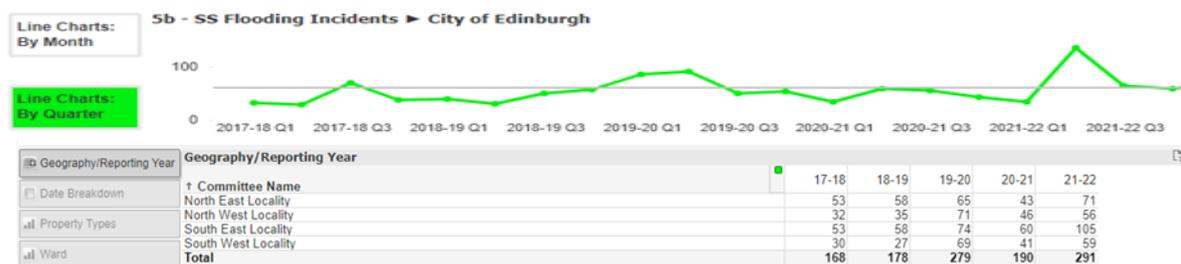


Table 5: All Special Service Flooding Incidents

The number of RTCs have increased very slightly (+12 on the previous year). Flooding incidents continue to rise at a concerning rate, reflecting the impact of climate change. This, combined with the risk of drownings both in hot summer weather and in winter due to frozen surfaces giving way, underlines the importance of our PAWS water safety work.

## Reducing Deliberate Fire Setting

Deliberate fire setting is a significant problem for the SFRS in the City of Edinburgh. In the main, deliberate fires are secondary fires categorised into either refuse, grassland or derelict building incidents. There is a close link between deliberate secondary fires and other forms of anti-social behaviour.

### We said we would

- *Identify those parts of Edinburgh`s communities affected by deliberate fire setting and share this information with our partners.*
- *Utilise our Young Firefighters, Fire Reach, Firesetters and school`s education programmes to raise awareness of the impact of fire related anti-social behaviour.*
- *Work with partners to develop joint strategies to reduce the risk posed by deliberate fire setting and to mitigate its impacts.*

### What we do

- In partnership with Police Scotland, SFRS adopts a targeted approach when dealing with secondary fires and anti-social behaviour (ASB). Our Community Action Team (CAT) and operational personnel deliver educational programmes within schools in response to any developing trends. For example, our Bonfire education activity delivers fire safety education with the focus on reducing fire related ASB and hoax calls. In addition to reducing harm, this work contributes to reducing the financial impact on Local Authority budgets and protects our natural and built environment.
- Information sharing with partners and effective multi-agency partnership working is focussed on reducing deliberate fire setting and fire related anti-social behaviour. The effectiveness of this approach is exemplified through the outcomes of the Bonfire CIP, Operation Moonbeam and Operation Crackle in relation to Bonfire night in Edinburgh.
- We have responded to ASB, violence to crews and wilful fire raising in the Liberton and Sighthill area by undertaking joint patrols with local youth groups. These patrols have seen the number of fire and ASB incidents in these areas drop and provide an opportunity for SFRS and partners to approach young people for enrolment on our Fireskills intervention programmes.
- Fireskills programmes deliver diversionary activities for young people with the aim of reducing fire-related anti-social behaviour, while developing life skills. The associated Employability Award results in 4 points towards a Level 4 SVQ. This can enhance the employability of our young people as well as boosting self-confidence and providing a sense of achievement.
- Plans are underway to establish a Youth Volunteer Scheme (YVS) in Edinburgh. The YVS offers young people aged 13 to 18 a three-year opportunity to develop life skills. Young people engaged in the scheme can achieve recognised certification and awards for their efforts and contribution. We will encourage care experienced young people to take part and will launch a new recruitment drive for volunteers to run the scheme in 2023.



Table 6: All deliberate Fires

2021/22 saw an increase in secondary fires, returning to around 2017/18 levels. As can be seen from the graph above, this is due in the main to a spike in Q1 of 2021/22 which corresponds to a period of hot weather.

## Non-Domestic Fire Safety

While most fire deaths and injuries happen in the home, fires in Non-Domestic property have the potential to result in multiple casualties/fatalities and have a detrimental effect on the built environment, local businesses, employment, the provision of critical services and our heritage. Evidence suggests that business premises affected by a serious fire experience a high failure rate.

### We said we would

- *Undertake our fire safety audit programme in accordance with the SFRS Enforcement Framework.*
- *Engage with duty holders to promote responsible fire safety management of premises that come under the auspices of Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.*
- *Work in partnership to ensure the appropriate provision of fire safety standards are incorporated in new premises under construction or premises undergoing material changes.*
- *Work in partnership with other enforcement agencies and organisations to support legislative compliance.*

### What we do

- Our annual risk-based programme of enforcement audits runs from April to March and targets “relevant premises” that fall within the scope of Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and associated Regulations. During the pandemic, the Enforcement Team conducted some audits remotely, allowing us to engage with duty holders while minimising the risk of COVID transmission.
- The National [SFRS Fire safety Enforcement \(Protection\) Framework](#) document sets out the priorities for the audit programme and is about focusing resources on those premises which pose the greatest risk to life safety in the event of fire. The Framework informs the development of our annual Local Enforcement Delivery Plan (LEDP). The LEDP identifies the types and numbers of premises which will be prioritised for audit and contains our performance data. Completed LEDPs are published on our website at the end of the auditing year.
- In a long running arrangement, one of our enforcement officers is seconded to City of Edinburgh Council Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Team and conducts joint inspections with partners.
- Enforcement audits are scored by Risk Level (from Very Low to Very High) and by Management Compliance Level (from 1 to 5, 1 being the best):
  - MCL 1 and 2 are classed as ‘broadly compliant’ and minor ‘areas for improvement’ respectively
  - MCL 3 results in SFRS working with duty holders on an agreed action plan to address fire safety deficiencies
  - MCL 4 & 5 results in formal enforcement action by SFRS (Enforcement/ Prohibition Notices).
- Our performance for 2021/22 has shown considerable improvement over the preceding year, as COVID restrictions began to ease. See below for further performance detail.

Management Compliance Level	Audit Activity 2020/21	Audit Activity 2021/22
1	321	566
2	25	85
3	1	27
4	-	-
5	1	3
Total	<b>348</b>	<b>712</b>

Table 7: Audit Activity 2020/21 & 2021/22

Post Fire Audits	2020/21	2021/22
Total	55	90

Table 8: Post Fire Audits 2020/21 & 2021/22

A Post Fire Audit is undertaken after a fire occurs in 'relevant premises'. The purpose is to assess compliance and to educate/remind duty holders of their responsibilities.

Post fire audits are an example of an unplanned audit that can occur at any time. Other reasons for unplanned audits include fire safety complaints, requests from partner agencies or joint initiatives with partners and the targeting of specific premises type in line with the Service's Enforcement Framework.

In 2021/22, two statutory notices were served. A Prohibition Notice due to serious risk and an Alterations Notice which requires the duty holder to notify SFRS before making any material changes. No Enforcement Notices were issued. This is a positive picture as duty holders across the area are largely compliant, with MCL1/2 recommendations being the predominant enforcement outcome.

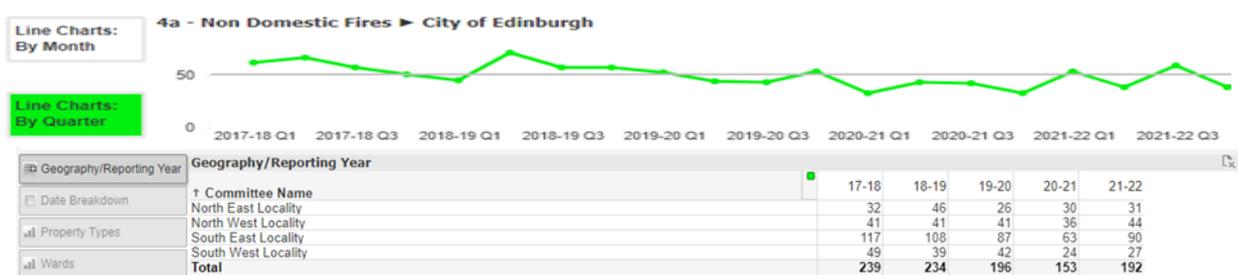


Table 9: Non-Domestic Fires

## Reducing Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (False Alarms)

False Alarms include calls to SFRS that are made with good intent, malicious acts and Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS). 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. The SFRS is committed to working with partners and other stakeholders to reduce Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals.

### We said we would

- *Engage with premises owners/occupiers to identify the cause of every UFAS incident.*
- *Work with owners/occupiers to implement and support their management of fire alarm systems and the introduction of demand reduction plans.*
- *Identify premises which attract a significant operational response and re-assess the response required.*

### What we do

- Our operational crews aim to identify the cause of UFAS when attending UFAS incidents and may provide basic advice to the responsible person on site to prevent recurrence. Duty holders should also monitor trends and take action to prevent recurrence.
- In partnership, we aim to reduce the burden of UFAS on the public, local businesses and SFRS. We work closely with duty holders in the Health and Education sectors, who experience the highest volume of UFAS. In particular, we have effective working relationships with NHS Lothian and Edinburgh, Heriot Watt and Napier Universities and engage with City of Edinburgh Council regarding UFAS in secondary schools.
- We implement the national SFRS UFAS Policy to ensure that persistent UFAS incidents within premises are addressed appropriately. This consists of a four-step approach: education at the time of incident, formal letter, enforcement audit and for non-sleeping risks, a single pump attendance at normal road speed. One of our Enforcement Officers is a “UFAS Champion” and oversees local implementation of the policy, while analysing trends and engaging appropriately with duty holders.
- In 2021, SFRS conducted a 3-month public consultation on our operational response to UFAS. The consultation identified that most stakeholders supported the option which means that before dispatching appliances, SFRS will establish if Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) in workplaces have been triggered by an actual fire. This change, which will reduce attendance rates by up to 57 per cent, will bring Scotland into line with most other UK Fire and Rescue Services. Hospitals, residential care homes and sleeping risk premises will remain exempt and appliances will continue to be mobilised automatically to any fire alarm activations within these facilities. It is anticipated that 37,524 hours could be released each year for firefighters to enhance their training – and carry out community safety work, including supporting the most vulnerable to stay safe from fires within the home.
- SFRS is reviewing the initial UFAS response model implementation date of April 2023. Implementation is interdependent with other projects which need to be aligned. An online duty holder engagement event, the date of which is not yet finalised, will be planned approximately 6 months ahead of the implementation date. SFRS will communicate the revised implementation date to stakeholders directly, as well as provide information via our website and social media platform.

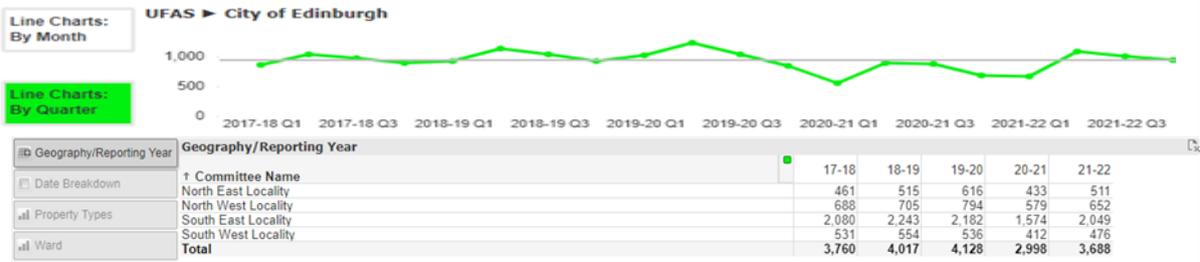


Table 10: UFAS Incidents