



SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

# ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT

2024/25



Working together  
for a safer Scotland

**WELCOME TO  
THE SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
SERVICE'S  
(SFRS) ANNUAL  
PERFORMANCE  
REVIEW REPORT  
FOR 2024/25.**

# TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	01
OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS 2024/25	03
STRATEGIC SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME	05
OUTCOME ONE: Community safety and wellbeing improves as we deploy targeted initiatives to prevent emergencies and harm	07
OUTCOME TWO: Communities are safer and more resilient as we respond effectively to changing risks	11
OUTCOME THREE: We will value and demonstrate innovation across all areas of our work	14
OUTCOME FOUR: We respond to the impacts of climate change in Scotland and reduce our carbon emissions	19
OUTCOME FIVE: We are a progressive organisation, use our resources responsibly and provide best value for money to the public	22
OUTCOME SIX: The experience of those who work for SFRS improves as we are the best employer we can be	24
OUTCOME SEVEN: Community safety and wellbeing improves as we work effectively with our partners	32



# INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) Annual Performance Review Report for 2024/25.

Over the past year, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has made a tangible difference to communities across Scotland. We responded to nearly 75,000 incidents, supported over 33,000 households through targeted fire safety visits, and reduced fire-related casualties by almost a third compared to a decade ago.

Our prevention work has continued to evolve to address emerging risks, such as lithium-ion battery fires, while our new Home Fire Safety Visit programme has enabled us to better identify and support those most at risk. We've also actively contributed to national working groups, including the Building and Fire Safety Ministerial Working Group and the High-Rise Continual Improvement Group, ensuring that lessons from Grenfell are embedded in Scottish policy and practice.

Providing an effective emergency response remained a priority. The Service enhanced its specialist capabilities with the introduction of Marine Tactical Advisors to support Scotland's extensive coastline and expanded its Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) response capacity, including the introduction of a real-time team tracking system.

To improve casualty care during major incidents, Ten Second Triage packs were introduced, enabling rapid and effective triage before medical professionals arrive. Significant

investments were made in modernising operational equipment and infrastructure, including new rescue pumps, battery-powered tools, and digital radios, all aimed at improving firefighter safety and operational efficiency. Training was also a key focus, with the rollout of a new Training Framework and Skills Maintenance Library to ensure staff remain competent and confident in their roles.

The Service advanced its innovation agenda to improve firefighter safety and operational efficiency. Key initiatives included partnering with Rowden Technologies and FireHazResearch to develop real-time situational awareness tools and contaminant exposure monitoring systems for firefighters; deployment of XVR simulation software to enhance training realism and effectiveness; and introduction of the On Call Bank Roster Scheme and localised recruitment and training pilots, improving appliance availability and candidate experience.

The Service remained at the forefront of Scotland's response to climate-related emergencies, including wildfires, flooding, and extreme weather events. The Service enhanced its wildfire preparedness through expanded training, deployment of specialised equipment, and the appointment of 14 Wildfire Tactical Advisors. SFRS also played a key role in national resilience efforts, including the multi-agency response to Storm Éowyn, which saw over 700 incidents managed in a single day.



Photograph by Alan Wilson





To support sustainability goals, SFRS invested in low-emission vehicles and building upgrades, aligning procurement with net zero targets. This included the acquisition of electric vehicles and modern rescue pumps, significantly reducing fleet emissions and improving operational efficiency. These actions reflect the Service's dual commitment to protecting communities from the impacts of climate change and reducing our own environmental footprint.

During the year, the Service continued to manage its resources responsibly, ensuring best value for the public. A key milestone was the development and publication of the SFRS Strategy 2025–28, which sets out clear objectives aligned with national priorities and guides service delivery and budgeting over the next three years.

The achievements highlighted in this report are a direct result of the dedication and professionalism of our people. The Service has continued to invest in its people, culture, and workplace to build a more inclusive, skilled, and resilient workforce.

The Service advanced its commitment to fair work and representation through events like the Women in the Fire Service conference, made improvements to maternity and adoption leave, and received recognition from Stonewall as one of the top 100 LGBTQ+ employers in the UK.

Significant investment was made in upgrading fire station facilities to support dignity, diversity, and contaminant control - although it is recognised that more work is required in this area. A Tactical Action Group was established to address gaps in health and wellbeing records, and a range of wellbeing initiatives were delivered, including a physiotherapy pilot and mental health support. The Service also enhanced its training infrastructure and programmes, including a new Breathing Apparatus training facility, immersive learning tools, and leadership development frameworks.

In addition to the continued dedication of our own people, we recognise that many of our successes were made possible through strong partnerships and the valuable contribution of our partner agencies. Our

collaborative approach continues to evolve, combining skills, insights, resources and commitment as we strive to improve the safety and wellbeing of the people of Scotland.

Despite performing against a challenging financial background, this report provides evidence that we have consistently continued to deliver an effective emergency response and prevention service for the people of Scotland. The Service has met ambitious savings targets set by the Scottish Government, demonstrating both resilience and commitment to public safety. However, significant and complex spending pressures remain.

SFRS remains committed to doing more for Scotland irrespective of these challenges, but this requires meaningful investment which will empower us to innovate, adapt and grow. Without it, our capacity to continue to evolve and meet future demands will be constrained.

To meet impending demands, drive essential change and build a sustainable Service for the future, we have launched our Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP) – a key priority for the next three years. With investment, SSRP will drive innovation, modernise our services and infrastructure, and enhance safety for both communities and firefighters. It will focus on upgrading and providing firefighters with modern facilities, fleet, and equipment; optimising service delivery by looking at how and where we deliver our services from; and improving our corporate services to ensure they are as efficient and effective as possible.

We trust that you find this report insightful, and it provides sound evidence of our commitment to progressing the Strategic Outcomes of the SFRS Strategic Plan 2022-25 and, in turn, the priorities within Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022.





# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS 2024/25

Any data provided throughout this report is provisional and for internal management purposes only. Verified data is published in both annual statistical returns (Fire Safety and Organisational and Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics) at the end of August and the end of October each year. Further data is also included in our Annual Report and Accounts which will be published in December 2025

## KEY PERFORMANCE

- **Accidental dwelling fires have decreased by 25.8%** in a ten-year comparison from 4,953 in 2014/15 to 3,674 in 2024/25
- **Fires in non-domestic buildings have reduced by 34.7%**, falling from 1,873 to 1,223 over the same period
- **Deliberate primary fires have seen an 8.6% reduction**, from 2,413 in 2014-15 to 2,205 in 2024-25
- **Fire casualties have declined by 32.7%**, from 886 in 2014/15 to 596 in 2024/25
- **The number of Fire Safety Audits undertaken has increased by 8.2%**, rising to 8,875 in 2024/25 from 8,206 in 2014/15
- **Three station upgrades** with contaminant control and dignified facilities completed in 2024/25
- **One station with RAAC panelling remediation** completed in 2024/25

## RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- **23.9%** of our light fleet are Ultra Low Emission Vehicles
- **£35,000 invested** in PPE for Flood First Responder Stations
- **£1.4m invested** to reduce emission output of 24 Light Weight Rescue Pumps
- **£397,735 investment** into delivering the Wildfire Strategy (PPE, equipment and vehicles) during 2024/25 as part of a £1.725m investment commencing in 2022/23

## PROVIDING BEST VALUE FOR THE PUBLIC

- **£314.593m resource budget** spend against a budget of £314.858m
- **£8.815m resource savings delivered**
- **£43.049m capital budget spend** (excl. Right of Use Assets (Leases)) against a budget of £43.049m and £0.496m capital budget spend for Right of Use Assets (Leases) against a budget of £0.526m.
- Average Age of Lightweight Rescue Pumps **reduced from 20.37 years to 6.4 years** <sup>[1]</sup>

[1] The reduction has been achieved through the ongoing standardisation and investment of front line appliance types. The introduction of medium weight, light weight and ultra-light weight appliances has allowed the aging legacy fleet to be replaced with a standard modern appliance that meets the operational needs and risks in the areas and reduced the age profile significantly.

# 33,187

HOME FIRE SAFETY  
VISITS CARRIED OUT

# 74,571

INCIDENTS ATTENDED

# 22,911

FIRES ATTENDED

# 8,875

FIRE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT  
AUDITS CARRIED OUT

# 35,455

FALSE ALARMS ATTENDED

# 16,205

NON-FIRE  
INCIDENTS

# 7,558

EMPLOYEES

# 3,433

WHOLETIME  
OPERATIONAL STAFF

# 2,976

ON CALL  
OPERATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS

# 60

RURAL FULL-  
TIME STAFF

# 171

OPERATIONS  
CONTROL STAFF

# 918

SUPPORT STAFF

## HOW THE INCIDENTS WE ATTEND ARE CHANGING

Comparison made between 2012/13 and 2023/24

# 3.9%

REDUCTION IN  
TOTAL INCIDENTS

# 75.1%

INCREASE IN  
NON-FIRE INCIDENTS

# 39.7%

INCREASE IN  
FLOODING INCIDENTS

# 9.9%

REDUCTION IN  
TOTAL FIRES

# 449.4%

INCREASE IN EFFECT  
ENTRY/EXIT INCIDENTS

# 212.7%

INCREASE IN ASSISTING  
OTHER AGENCIES

# 38.2%

REDUCTION IN NON-FATAL CASUALTIES IN FIRES





# STRATEGIC SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME

DELIVERING AGAINST FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK PRIORITY 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7

Since the formation of SFRS, we have continued to deliver an effective emergency and prevention service for the people of Scotland, whilst delivering an ambitious savings target set by the Scottish Government.

Despite making these savings and recent budget increases, we are still faced with significant and complex organisational pressures. SFRS remains ambitious for Scotland regardless of these challenges. But to realise our ambitions we require further investment. That investment will enable us to change, adapt, and evolve. Without it, our ability to keep evolving will be compromised.

We have set out our ambitious Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP) which will enable us, with further investment, to deliver the changes we need to make and to build a sustainable and effective Service for the future. This will allow us to develop new services, adopt new technologies and safeguard communities and firefighters in the future.

## There are three programmes within SSRP:

- Service Delivery Review – how and where we deliver our services from.
- Corporate Services Review- ensuring our corporate services are as efficient and as effective as possible.
- Enabling Infrastructure – providing firefighters with modern facilities, fleet and equipment to enhance community and firefighter safety.

A priority for the Service, several of our Functions and Teams have contributed towards the Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP). SSRP impacts most of the Strategic Outcomes within the Strategic Plan 2022-25 and, as such, programme progress is detailed in its own section of this report.

## SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW

The operating model of the Scotland's fire and rescue service has remained largely unchanged for many years, despite evolving community risks and demands. The Service Delivery Review (SDR) programme has been examining station location and appliance staffing to better align those with current needs.

The SDR programme is the culmination of several years of work, which began with the Service Delivery Model Programme (SDMP) which developed our Community Risk Index Model (CRIM). CRIM data, along with input from Local Senior Officers and station-level engagement, has informed our understanding of risk across Scotland.

From this, over 300 potential options for change were identified which were then further narrowed to 23 sustainable options through a series of workshops and a detailed options appraisal process.



Photo by Iain Masterton





In August and September 2024, our senior leaders reviewed the long list of options and agreed the hurdle criteria that would be applied to an initial assessment of options. A total of 129 options were assessed against two criteria.

Following these workshops, 31 proposals proceeded to a Hurdle Criteria Workshop which was held in January 2025. This in-person meeting was facilitated by an external organisation and had 19 decision makers, including SFRS operational managers and other senior staff. Additionally, several stakeholder observers, including members of the public, attended.

The session resulted in the change options proposed being reduced to 23 and focusing on key strategic priorities:

- Matching operational resource to risk and demand
- Consolidation of the 2023 temporary withdrawal of ten 2nd or 3rd wholtime appliances
- Stations affected by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)
- Station upgrades for decontamination and dignified facilities
- Stations classified as long-term dormant – These are sites that don't have a sufficient crew to respond to incidents and recruitment efforts locally have been exhausted.

During 2025/26 we will continue to undertake the options development process and move to public consultation on those options over the summer 2025.

## CORPORATE SERVICES REVIEW

The Corporate Services Review aims to facilitate consistent levels of excellence across the functions of SFRS, enabling high performance by all. By redesigning these services around user needs, the review work aims to enhance productivity and deliver more efficiently and effectively on behalf of the Service. This element of SSRP also includes the development of the People, Payroll, Finance and Training project (PPFT).

During 2024/25, a new Senior Responsible Officer was appointed to run the Corporate Services Review and the programme's intended outcomes are:

- Corporate services deliver what the user needs first time
- Corporate services deliver higher levels of user satisfaction
- Corporate services are cost effective with increased levels of productivity

- Corporate services enable staff to have purposeful career paths and embrace change

Engagement events are planned for late summer 2025 to allow employees to help shape the future of Corporate Services and ensure the long term sustainability of SFRS.

## ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Enabling Infrastructure encompasses several key projects throughout the Service and focuses on modernising systems, equipment and property. This element of SSRP will play a pivotal role in supporting the modernisation of the Service. This includes upgrading facilities and estates, investing in new technologies, and ensuring that the infrastructure supports the strategic goals of the Service.

By providing sustainable, user-focused, and integrated systems, technology, and infrastructure, the programme will enhance the safety and wellbeing of our people and our communities.

In February 2025, a Programme Manager was appointed, and a series of workshops were held to define the programme in more detail. The programme includes, but is not limited to, the New Mobilising System (NMS) project which will entail a total of £40.99m over a period of 10 years for the service, the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP), and the Rostering and Availability project.





# OUTCOME ONE:

## COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLBEING IMPROVES AS WE DEPLOY TARGETED INITIATIVES TO PREVENT EMERGENCIES AND HARM

DELIVERING AGAINST FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK PRIORITY 1, 2, 3, 4 & 7

**W**e firmly believe that preventing problems from arising is better than dealing with them when they occur. The Christie report set out the Scottish Government's public service reform ambitions and its focus is embedded in our approach to prevention. We are committed to helping people and communities stay safe enabling us to support work across the Public Service system that addresses wider social and economic inequalities.

In 2025/26, we will introduce our new Prevention Strategy 2025-28.

IN 2024/25,  
WE CARRIED OUT

**33,187**

HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS (HFSV)

### HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS

As a result of our targeted HFSVs, over 33,000 households, many with elderly or vulnerable residents, received tailored fire safety advice and interventions, reducing their risk of harm and increasing their confidence in staying safe at home.

We work with partners to identify and support those most at risk of fire. In 2024/25, we carried out 33,187 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV). These visits are important to helping keep people safe from fire and other related risks within their household.

From February 2025, a new HFSV programme was implemented to better target high-risk households. Key changes include:

- New risk criteria and visit content
- A revised Home Safety Guide
- A digital platform for scheduling and recording visits
- Fire safety advice provided online or by post for those not eligible for a visit

Partnership working for HFSVs is paramount to assist with early intervention, co-production and shared responsibility. Many individuals involved in serious fires have other health and wellbeing considerations and are known to at least one other agency.





We introduced a new Data Sharing Framework, ensuring GDPR compliance, to help partners refer individuals to SFRS when fire risks are identified. In return, we refer individuals to relevant support services when necessary.

During the reporting period, extensive work was undertaken ahead of the launch, including development and delivery of training; production of policy, procedure and guidance; development of ICT systems; partner engagement; and internal and external communications.

## TARGETED MESSAGING

One of the ways we target our safety messaging is by employing evidence-based statistical analysis through the examination of emerging risks and trends. Through identifying the origin, cause and fire development, the analysis carried out by our Fire Investigation and Business Intelligence Teams has generated valuable insights into the patterns of fire-related harm within our communities, facilitating the implementation of targeted measures to reduce its impact.

By analysing factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, housing tenure, property types, dependencies and incident frequency, we have identified key factors contributing to fire incidents. This deeper understanding has enabled the implementation of specific measures and campaigns aimed at reducing the impact of fires on our communities.

### Electrical Safety

A working group was formed to consider the current and emerging risks that batteries and associated technology presents, such as Lithium-ion batteries, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), Hydrogen and Communications. The group has worked to measure and mitigate the impact this technology has on the safety and wellbeing of our employees, the public, partners, and the environment.

In December 2024, a UK-wide lithium-ion battery safety campaign was launched to provide information and safety guidance relating to the safe use, charging, storage and disposal of lithium-ion products to the public. The safety campaign will continue during 2025/26 to assist in addressing the raising number of incidents relating to lithium-ion products.

Adoption of the National Fire Chiefs Council's BESS guidance has provided the foundation for considering how SFRS can assist in the protection of our local communities and environment. BESS information and guidance has been added to the SFRS

website to encourage developers to promote collaborative working and information sharing at an early stage.

Work in 2025/26 will focus on collaborative working with partner agencies to strengthen our joint understanding and develop collective approaches to preparedness, response, and recovery to emergency incidents.

## Community Risk Identification, Mitigation & Engagement

The Community Risk Identification, Mitigation & Engagement (CRIME) Group reconvened in January 2025 to identify historic, current and emerging risks within our communities, as well as measure and mitigate the impact this has on the safety and wellbeing of SFRS employees, the public and partners.

The group will use this risk awareness to develop procedures and partnerships to facilitate data sharing and information gathering to assist pre-planning, operational response and related activities in restoring normality post incident. The group will use their collective skills, knowledge and experience to inform Community Safety Engagement activity and Fire Safety Enforcement in the built environment. A longer-term aim will be to establish pathways between SFRS and a range of key partners to identify risks in Scotland's built and natural environments.

### Protecting the Vulnerable

As a trusted emergency service, we regularly engage with some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. By working closely with partners, we can help prevent emergencies by identifying and supporting those who need extra help. We are committed to ensuring our staff have the knowledge and confidence to act on any concerns about child or adult welfare.

Taking direction from the Scottish Government 'National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland 2024', and as a member of the National Adult Support and Protection Learning and Development







Framework working group, SFRS reviewed our internal Safeguarding training approach. This ensures that all employees and volunteers meet the minimum standards to protect the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and vulnerable adults in our communities.

All front-facing employees and volunteers complete e-learning every three years, covering how to recognise, respond, refer and record any safeguarding concerns. Those working more regularly with vulnerable individuals attend multiagency training, as well as enhanced internal training sessions delivered by SFRS' safeguarding leads. The enhanced training is flexible, focuses on role, and has been extended to Mental Wellbeing Champions, Youth Volunteer Scheme instructors and Operations Control staff.

A course has also been developed and delivered to first line managers within Community Safety Engagement to support employees in delivering the SFRS safeguarding policies and to ensure they are supported with their own wellbeing. To complement our robust training, a range of guidance documents have also been updated with information including:

- Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law
- The Care System for Children and Young People
- Safeguarding and Financial Harm
- Referrals with Drug and Alcohol Partnerships
- Serious and Fatal Fire Learning Reviews

To uphold Safeguarding standards of excellence, SFRS launched a Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework in August 2024. This Framework monitors performance and identifies possible areas for improvement. The outcomes of the quality assurance meetings with local managers will direct our work with partners and the development of new training.



## PROMOTING FIRE SAFETY

Following the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in 2017, the Service has played a key role in Scotland's post-Grenfell response by actively contributing to the Building and Fire Safety Ministerial Working Group and the High-Rise Continual Improvement Group, supporting national efforts to improve building safety and ensure the lessons from the Grenfell Tower tragedy are fully embedded across Scotland.

As a key stakeholder, during 2024/25, SFRS has provided professional insight into regulatory alignment, competency frameworks, fire engineering practice, and fire safety enforcement. Our involvement has helped shape strategic dialogue on implementing Grenfell Inquiry recommendations in a Scottish context, supporting the development of consistent standards and improved governance.

Specific involvement has included our contribution to a national review of how 'high risk buildings' are defined; work to increase professional standards in fire safety enforcement by delivering a Recognition of Prior Learning course aimed at aligning Protection Officers with nationally recognised National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) standards see page 31 partnership working with the National Fire Chief's Council to explore and shape fire engineering education that remains relevant and accessible see page 31 active involvement with the Scottish Government Cladding Remediation Directorate on the remediation programme and the Single Building Assessment







(SBA) process; and development of practical guidance and delivery of targeted fire safety awareness campaigns for residents of high-rise buildings.

These collaborative activities reflect our continued commitment to partnership working and to continually strengthening public safety through evidence-based reform.

## UNWANTED FIRE ALARM SIGNALS

To support our vital community safety work, we changed how we respond to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS). UFAS are false alarms from automatic systems - calls where there is no fire or no action is needed. These calls previously accounted for around 30% of our operational activity, with over 28,000 incidents occurring annually.

In July 2023, we introduced a new UFAS Response Model for non-domestic premises, with the exception of premises providing sleeping accommodation:

- Crews no longer automatically attend automatic fire alarm calls unless there is a confirmed fire or clear signs of fire where the premises is one where people live or sleep.
- A call challenge process now verifies the need for a response.

UFAS INCIDENTS  
REDUCED BY

54%



Following implementation of the new response model \*, the first year showed:

- **UFAS** incidents reduced by 54%
- **UFAS** now make up 18% of all incidents (down from 30%)
- **19,333** incidents not attended
- Average of **53** non-attended calls per day

This reduction has resulted in multiple benefits for the Service and communities, including increased capacity of Wholtime Firefighters to deliver prevention activities and prepare for emergencies within communities. There has also been a reduction in blue light journeys, reducing road risk for our people and the public.



\* Compared to previous five-year average for Q2-Q1 period, (also includes COVID pandemic)



# OUTCOME TWO:

## COMMUNITIES ARE SAFER AND MORE RESILIENT AS WE RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO CHANGING RISKS

DELIVERING AGAINST FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK PRIORITY 2,3, 5, 6, 7

**A**s well as undertaking critically important prevention and safety assurance work, a key role of the Service will always be to respond to fires and other emergencies. During 2024/25, we responded to 74,571 incidents across the country.

As the nature of incidents and community needs continue to evolve, we remain committed to refining our strategies, resources, and processes to meet these emerging challenges. Our Service Delivery Review project, as outlined in the previous section, will help us align more closely with current community priorities and strengthen our ability to address future risks effectively.

### MAINTAINING SPECIALIST RESOURCES

The Service maintains a range of specialist teams to respond to a wide variety of complex incidents that go beyond standard firefighting:

#### Marine incidents

In partnership with National Fire Resilience Scotland, Marine Tactical Advisors (TacAds) were introduced into the Service.

SFRS oversees the UK's longest coastline about 11,602 miles and with 13,822 vessel arrivals at Scottish ports in 2023. The introduction of a trained cadre of Marine TacAds enables the Service to provide skilled support and advice for all marine related incidents. These advisors have in-depth knowledge in specific areas and can assist Incident Commanders by offering strategic and tactical guidance to ensure the effective and safe resolution of operational incidents.

Following completion of training, 12 Marine TacAds became operational in March 2025 covering all areas across Scotland further strengthening our approach to marine rescues.

#### Marauding Terrorist Attacks

In support of SFRS's responsibility to respond to any Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) and/or Mass Casualty Incident (MCI), additional MTA Specialist Responder courses were held to increase numbers of the existing cadre. Ensuring we have a full complement of officers, strategically located around Scotland, supports a response to any MTA/MCI event and delivers on SFRS's commitment and capability to respond to two concurrent MTA/MCI events in Scotland at any one time.

Significant investment was made to replace expired stocks of trauma equipment, held on our Specialist Operations Response Units, ensuring our front-line are sufficiently resourced to undertake any tasks associated with a Marauding Terrorist Attack.

In consultation with other UK fire services, SFRS introduced a bespoke MTA Team Identification and Deployment Process. This system enables real-time tracking of team locations within the risk area, improving the safety of our crews.

DURING 2024/25,  
WE RESPONDED TO

**74,571** INCIDENTS



## TEN SECOND TRIAGE PACKS

To improve the Service's ability to respond to terrorist attacks and or Mass Casualty Incidents, Ten Second Triage packs have been procured for Specialist Operations Response Units. Provided by the Operations Organised Crime & Counter Terrorism Unit (OCCTU), the packs are rapid and simple tools designed to prioritise casualties during major incidents of mass casualty events before the arrival of dedicated medical professionals.

The packs provide an efficient resource to our specialist responders, improving their ability to triage casualties and resulting in a higher degree of care being provided to casualties, ensuring that the best care is given to the most in need.

The packs provide two key resources – a triage flowchart card and triage snap bands. The flowchart cards provide a guide on the rapid triage of casualties and provide a mechanism of recording the number of casualties and their respective category of trauma. The snap bands are used to categorise and indicate the outcome of the triage and indicate the severity of the casualty's condition.

This additional resource has been approved by the National Ambulance Services Medical Directors Group and the National Health Service Clinical Reference Group and endorsed by the National Fire Chiefs Council.

In 2025/2026, OCCTU will be liaising with the Service's Clinical Governance team to ensure that training is completed, and a rapid implementation date is achieved

## SUPPORTING RESPONSE THROUGH EQUIPMENT

As outlined in the previous Service Delivery Review section, Enabling Infrastructure is a key programme focusing on modernising systems, equipment and property. This work to upgrade facilities and estates and invest in new technologies focuses on our need to provide the right people and resources in the right place to provide Scotland with an efficient and effective emergency response service. It is equally as important to ensure that our firefighters have the right equipment and vehicles needed to carry out their varied role and to keep them safe.

During 2024/25, significant investments were made in modernising operational fleet and equipment to enhance emergency response capability and firefighter safety across Scotland. This investment supported the standardisation of four main operational vehicle types, reducing the average age of the fleet and cutting overall emissions through a targeted, data-led approach. This included the procurement of 30 Large Rescue Pumps and 20 Medium Rescue Pumps. Additionally, 31 sets of battery-powered rescue equipment replaced hydraulic tools, mitigating injury risk, while four new Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) vehicles are in build to support hazardous material responses.

### DURING 2024/25, SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS WERE MADE

**30** LARGE RESCUE PUMPS



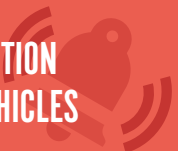
**20** MEDIUM RESCUE PUMPS



**31** SETS OF BATTERY-POWERED RESCUE EQUIPMENT



**4** NEW DETECTION, IDENTIFICATION AND MONITORING (DIM) VEHICLES







## FULL ROLLOUT OF 3,500 DIGITAL FIREGROUND RADIOS



Technological and safety advancements also played a key role during this reporting period. The full rollout of 3,500 Digital Fireground Radios began, with devices initially operating in analogue mode ahead of a digital upgrade scheduled for 2025/26. Standardisation of Thermal Imaging Cameras progressed, ensuring each station had at least one device, while new Air Bag Stabilisation and environmental bags were introduced to support rescue operations. Safe Working at Height (SWAH) capabilities were also expanded through new SWAH kits and technical rope rescue units, with significant investments in Personal Protective Equipment for firefighter safety.

## PROVIDING THE RIGHT SKILLS: TRAINING FRAMEWORK 2023-2028

As well as provided the right equipment, ensuring that our firefighters are trained is critical to effective service delivery and protecting their safety and that of communities.

In support of the SFRS Training Vision and Strategy 2023-2028, SFRS developed and published a new Training Function Framework. Made up of three key elements - Skills Maintenance, Training Delivery and Training Assets – the Framework provides a comprehensive approach to developing and maintaining the skills and competencies of SFRS employees, ensuring they are well-equipped and trained to perform their crucial roles safely.

A Skills Maintenance Library has been created to provide concise and definitive guidance to support Service Delivery supervisory managers and the wider training team. This library identifies specific skill sets and additional details including who delivers this training, frequency required, training hours needed, training location and refresher requirements.

## MAINTAINING RESILIENCE

The SFRS Risk Preparedness Assessment (RPA) Strategy was established to proactively identify and manage risks that could impact the Service's operational capacity, workforce, and public safety. It aligns with national risk frameworks including the Scottish Risk Assessment and National Security Risk Assessment, and applies a structured, phased approach to assess preparedness and mitigate threats ranging from cyber incidents to environmental hazards.

The RPA Strategy brings significant benefits by:

- Enhancing organisational resilience
- Improving risk responsiveness
- Strengthening collaboration
- Promoting public safety

By embedding a dynamic risk management approach and encouraging service-wide ownership, the Strategy reinforces SFRS's readiness to protect the people of Scotland from a broad spectrum of threats now and in the future.

In support of the Strategy, during 2024, the East, North, and West of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnerships (RRP) each carried out comprehensive assessments of their ability to respond to emergencies such as severe weather, pandemics, terrorism, power outages, cyber-attacks, and transport incidents. Each RRP tailored assessments to local conditions and coordinated with local partnerships and national agencies to prioritise improvements.

The 2024 RPA cycle demonstrated strong engagement, meaningful learning, and coordinated action across all RRP. While challenges remain, Scotland's preparedness has progressed, with SFRS playing a vital leadership role in both planning and response.







# OUTCOME THREE:

WE WILL VALUE AND DEMONSTRATE INNOVATION ACROSS ALL AREAS OF OUR WORK

DELIVERING AGAINST FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK PRIORITY 2, 3, 6 & 7

Innovation is about new processes and new ways of doing things. It allows us to look at the equipment we use or the services we provide and renew or update them by applying new processes, techniques or implementing new ideas that lead to improvement and modernisation.

## SOLVING CHALLENGES THROUGH INNOVATION

SFRS are working with the Scottish Government CivTech programme - a programme that brings the public, private and third sector together to create solutions that solve challenges and make people's lives better. SFRS has been working to solve two challenges through the programme:

- How can technology be used to improve situational awareness for emergency responders, before, during and after a wide range of incidents.
- How can technology identify and measure firefighter exposure to contaminants across a wide range of incidents.

Two companies, Rowden Technologies and FireHazResearch, were successful through the various stages of the programme and spent 15 weeks working with SFRS to develop their solutions to secure funding from the Scottish Government CivTech funding panel for the final stage of development which will take place over the next 12 to 24 months.



### Improve situational awareness

For this challenge, Rowden Technologies have worked alongside SFRS employees to develop a proposal which combines their 'District' platform with a solution called Team Awareness Kit, to demonstrate a transformative innovation for SFRS, redefining how first responders and control-room employees access real-time data.

The solution is a tablet/phone-based interface for dynamic risk assessment and management that updates in real time across devices for SFRS operators, supporting improved collaboration at incidents and integrating with SFRS current technology. The solution provides a shared picture of an incident no matter where people are located and is expected to provide improved coordination between team members in the field and sector commanders to support informed decision-making. It will also provide that shared picture of an incident that can be provided to those on route to or monitoring the incident.



The solution also has the ability to enhance communication and live data sharing, securely transmitting text, images, video, and map annotations, reducing radio clutter by providing visual updates. It provides geospatial intelligence integration with GIS data layers, sensors, drone feeds, and other intel to provide a comprehensive view of an environment.

In addition to the use by SFRS, it also provides an ability to be securely shared with partner agencies in live time. This provides an opportunity to enhance interagency collaboration promoting interoperability between SFRS and partner agencies.

The solution is scalable and will be customised to SFRS requirements, different use cases, incident levels and responses from small teams to national operations.

Away from the live incident, the solution provides an incident play back capability to enable after action reviews and cross training or can be used to support a subsequent enquiry. It can also be used to plan responses to incidents.

### Identify and measure firefighter exposure to contaminants

Firefighters are regularly exposed to a variety of harmful contaminants during and after incidents. Identifying these substances will help us better understand and manage the risks to firefighters, staff, and members of the public (who may encounter firefighting personnel or equipment post incident). Collecting and understanding data on both individual and cumulative exposure is key to improving long-term safety and health outcomes.

To better understand and manage these risks, SFRS launched a contaminant monitoring project in July 2024, overseen by

the internal contaminants working group. This group oversees research, evaluation of current practices and training.

Through the CivTech process, FireHazResearch led by Professor Anna Stec, is developing an innovative, data-driven solution designed to assess, mitigate, and reduce firefighters' exposure to toxic contaminants. By integrating advanced monitoring and assessment tools, the solution will enhance operational safety and efficiency, providing a safer working environment for firefighters. This system will ultimately help to protect health and wellbeing by reducing their long-term health risks, such as cancer and other occupational diseases.

The overall project is a joint venture between multiple organisations, leveraging their combined expertise and resources. As part of development, SFRS procured the following equipment and systems:

- 26 physiological monitoring sensors and vests, including software licences for the monitoring platform.
- 10 gas sensors with associated mobile phones and app integration for real-time air quality monitoring.
- 100 lateral flow test kits for the detection of Pyrene metabolites in urine, supporting biological monitoring.

Initial testing has been incorporated into controlled training environments to allow structured, repeatable data collection. The Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) Instructors based at the SFRS National Training Centre have been the primary participants due to the predictable and scheduled nature of their live fire activities.

In March 2025, the equipment was introduced to National Training Centre CFBT instructors. This session focused on familiarisation and practice in using the devices rather than formal data collection.

The findings from these first stages are informing the on-going development on the solution and are intended to lead to a wider roll-out across SFRS in due course.

## IMMERSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

SFRS is continuing to explore and develop innovative and new ways of working and has procured an immersive learning environment software package, XVR. Throughout the last year, our Learning and E-Development and Incident Command teams, have upskilled to use the software and identify where it can add value to current delivery methods.

Work is currently underway to develop Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) training scenario(s) and future work is planned to use XVR within our Incident Command courses.



XVR technology is being integrated into the Training for Operational Competence (TfOC) modules and has been included in Low-Speed Manoeuvres and organisational learning materials which are accessible to all Operational personnel.

This tool enhances course delivery by providing realistic and relatable scenarios for candidates to develop safe, competent, and confident personnel and, in turn, support firefighter safety and the safety of the Scottish public.

## MOBILE APPS TO DEPLOY SPECIALIST RESOURCES

In 2024, SFRS purchased a mobile phone application to provide a more robust, secure and efficient system to identify, inform and deploy National Interagency Liaison Officers (NILOs) and Specialist Responders in the event of a terrorist attack and/or a Mass Casualty Incident in Scotland. It will also allow for a Recall to Duty for NILOs/MTA Specialist Responders if deemed necessary to help reduce the "Care Gap" of any casualties - a major finding and recommendation from the Manchester Arena Inquiry.

The app will introduce a more efficient way of working and enhance the capability and capacity of Operations Control to manage information in a prompt manner. All users and operators have been trained by the provider and testing to ensure reliability and full functionality is in progress.

## INNOVATING ON CALL PROCESSES

Innovation isn't just about the use of new technology; it's also about looking at new ways to approach things to help improve processes and outcomes. An example of this can be seen through the work that has been carried out to address the ongoing challenges of recruiting and retaining our critical On Call firefighters.

AN INCREASE OF  
**12,097**  
HOURS OF AVAILABILITY



INCREASE OF  
**5.25%**  
IN APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY



### Bank Roster Scheme

The Bank Roster Scheme is an initiative which allows On Call and Wholetime Duty System (WDS) employees to work paid shifts at an On Call station, providing an enhancement to the staffing model for key, strategic stations across On Call in Scotland and supporting appliance availability.

The Bank Roster Scheme was subject of an extensive trial and evaluation throughout 2024 and, following implementation of the standardised Retained Duty System (RDS) Terms and Conditions on in January 2025, a national Framework and Guidance on the application and use of Bank Rostering as a staffing tool is due for release in 2025/26.

This will allow for full use Bank Rostering across Scotland in a consistent and standardised manner.

Over the 12-month period from 1 April 23 to 1 April 24, there has been an increase of 12,097 hours of availability and an overall increase of 5.25% in overall appliance availability across SFRS as a result of Bank Working.

### Local On Call Recruitment, Training and Selection

During 2024/25, local recruitment, training and selection trials have concluded and are now in the advanced stages of informing Service decision making.

Several of these trials involved the greater use of localised options for selection and training of On Call recruits, which serves to remove potential geographical barriers to On Call recruitment for prospective applicants and assist with local area resilience through the provision of greater ownership for their own stations and applicants. The key trials which directly relate to greater localism are:

#### 1 Local Fitness Testing

The training of local On Call staff to achieve a Level 2 Fitness Qualification, which enables them to conduct fitness testing of local applicants.





- 10 On Call Support Watch Commanders (OCSWC) members participated in the trial, each committing to complete the Level 2 Fitness Instructor course
- 6 OCSWC members have successfully completed the training, while four are still in progress
- Cost per candidate £499 at time of delivery
- 65 Pre-Engagement Recruitment Programme (PREP) assessments completed
- 30 Practical Selection Test fitness assessments delivered by OCSWC
- Support provided to Wellbeing to assist with recovery programme

The upskilling of the OCSWC has resulted in several key benefits:

- **Reduced reliance on Wellbeing:** Less dependency on Wellbeing to conduct Practical Selection Testing within the area.
- **Enhanced Recruitment Process:** Fewer candidates will drop off the recruitment tracker as fitness assessments can now be scheduled to align with the recruitment timeline.
- **Reduction of Fitness Resits:** Aligning fitness testing with the recruitment schedule will decrease the instances where candidates need to retake fitness assessments due to expiration.
- **Enhanced candidate experience:** Candidates have benefited from a smoother, more streamlined process.
- **Boosted Wellbeing capacity:** Increased capacity within Wellbeing, allowing for greater flexibility and support.
- **Cross-border collaboration:** Dumfries & Galloway has supported several fitness assessments in East, North and South Ayrshire, fostering cross-border cooperation.
- **Single point of contact:** Candidates now have consistent support through a single point of contact, improving communication and efficiency.

- **Easily accommodated resits:** The system allows for simple resit arrangements, ensuring candidates receive the necessary support.
- **Financial benefits:** The upskilling initiative has led to cost efficiencies, reducing the need for external resources.
- **Support for area recruitment:** The programme has contributed to recruitment efforts by increasing local capabilities.
- **Harmonised recruitment journey:** Alignment of the upskilling with the recruitment process has resulted in a more cohesive experience for all involved.
- **PREP – Delivery of the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire** to allow the on boarding of candidates onto PREP.

Despite its successes, the pilot has also presented several challenges including the following disadvantages:

- **OCSWC work capacity:** The increased responsibilities may strain the work capacity of the OCSWC.
- **Large commitment:** The programme required a significant time commitment from participants, which could impact their workload.
- **Short-term staff impact:** The intensity of the course may have temporarily affected staff, leading to short-term disruptions.

## 2. Local Practical Selection Testing (PST)

Allowing local areas to carry out PST, negating the need for candidates to travel to a central testing facility.

- Conducted over three venues.
- Tiree Airport (27 and 28 February 2025) - A volunteer station consisting of a modular office, kit room, toilet, and Breathing Apparatus (BA) compressor room, attached to an appliance room building. There is no drill yard or tower. Five candidates attended and were successful. Significant savings in travel and accommodation cost with an average journey taking five hours to Oban the closest National PST location.
- Campbelltown Fire Station (28 February 2025) - five candidates attended, five were successful. Candidates attended from Gigha and Carradale saving significant travel and accommodation cost, with an average journey taking 2 hrs 10 minutes to Oban, the closest National PST location.
- Bowmore Fire Station (Islay) - Eight Candidates attended, seven were successful. Candidates attended from Port





Charlotte and Port Ellen units. Similarly significant savings were made on travel and accommodation with an average journey taking 3hrs 35 minutes to Oban, the closest National PST location.

In summary, based on 23 of 24 candidates progressing within the recruitment process and the financial savings made by the Services, it has been concluded that the Local PST pilot has been a success. Equally, in terms of the candidate experience, feedback has confirmed that savings in time, loss of earnings and expenses have vastly improved and in many of the cases, island candidates would not have applied if the process had not been conducted locally.



During this pilot, transportation and equipment set up was time consuming and labour-intensive and fitness testing and Personal Protective Equipment sizing was also carried out utilising OCSWCs that had recently qualified as fitness instructors. It was determined that this process requires separate resources to be allocated, a recommended minimum of two personnel, for the delivery of local PSTs.

### 3. Pre Recruitment Engagement Programme (PREP)

Allows local managers and candidates to follow a defined pathway through the recruitment process, allowing for suitability discussions, preparation for key assessment stages and the embedding of prospective On Call firefighters with their future colleagues.

SFRS has run two successful phases of the PREP programme:

**PREP Phase 1** was introduced across six Local Senior Officer areas as a recruitment tool designed to support both candidates and recruitment managers throughout the On Call recruitment process. Its primary goal was to keep candidates engaged and to maximise their chances of success.

**PREP Phase 2** was launched following the earlier success. A further six Local Senior Officer areas across the country were selected to participate in a pilot programme. This second phase built on the tools developed in Phase 1, while adding

practical support for candidates. It focused on the seven elements of the PST and provided increased opportunities for engagement with station personnel.

Evaluation of these phases was undertaken with a view to establishing PREP across SFRS. This work is nearing completion with proposals due to progress through the governance process via the On Call Strategic Co-ordinating Group.

### Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and In Vehicle Systems (IVS) Project

The Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme a UK Home Office initiative to replace the current Airwave mobile radio system used by emergency services with a new Emergency Services Network (ESN). The Programme will offer faster, more reliable and more versatile communication capabilities for the Service.

Over the past year, we made steady progress in preparing for the national upgrade to the new critical communications system. Key team subject matter expert roles were successfully filled, bringing in new expertise to guide fleet, training, and project delivery.

One of the major achievements was the resolution of legal and technical issues surrounding new mobile devices and vehicle equipment. With these challenges addressed, plans were put in place to install all new systems - Airwave vehicle radios, Panasonic tablets, and supporting infrastructure - at the same time. This approach aimed to reduce operational disruption and improve logistical efficiency.

The development of a new software platform (Guardian Fire Mobile) to support frontline operations also moved forward significantly and will be ready for deployment in autumn. Staff from across the organisation were involved in shaping and testing the system, and a basic version was prepared for final checks before wider rollout. Training was delivered, and early user feedback was positive.

In parallel, new tablets and mobile network connections were tested in the Highland area. The pilot received encouraging results, which were used to inform plans for a broader rollout across the service.

Behind the scenes, important agreements were signed with government partners, and a new service provider was appointed to support the next phase of the national programme.

Planning efforts then focused on coordinating all these elements to ensure a smooth transition to stage two In Vehicle Systems Hardware and software deployment in 2025.



# OUTCOME FOUR:

## WE RESPOND TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN SCOTLAND AND REDUCE OUR CARBON EMISSIONS

DELIVERING AGAINST FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK 1, 2, 4 & 7

Photograph by JASPERIMAGE

### EXTREME WEATHER AND WILDFIRES

As climate change continues to accelerate, we have continued to be on the front line in responding to the impacts of climate change in Scotland, including extreme weather events which have led to flooding and wildfires.

To ensure our preparedness, we continued to deliver our Wildfire Strategy to develop and enhance our wildfire capability, including training to ensure firefighters have the tools they need to manage wildfires effectively and safely.

Our wildfire strategy has enhanced the safety of rural communities, ensuring faster, more effective responses to wildfires that threaten homes, livelihoods, and Scotland's natural environment.

SFRS responds to wildfires using a four-tiered system that includes latest technology and techniques to bring this type of incident to a conclusion. The Service has strategically placed wildfire resources around Scotland ready to be deployed when required.

In June 2024, the initial phase of Wildfire Level 2 training for the 10 Tier 3 <sup>[2]</sup> wildfire stations was completed. Following this, a training implementation plan as developed for delivery of this training to all 25 Tier 2 <sup>[3]</sup> Wildfire stations. This training was completed in January 2025 and supplementary training sessions are now being delivered.

SFRS have increased the number of trained Wildfire Tactical Advisors (TacAd) to 14, with representation across all service delivery areas. Tactical Advisors are trained to provide operational tactical advice and support to SFRS Incident

Commanders at Wildfire incidents and going forward will lead on any technical burning activities.

A training programme to introduce 'technical burning' as a tool for management of wildfire has now been implemented and we have also addressed emerging risks by implementing additional wildfire packages consisting of a 4x4 towing vehicle, trailer and all-terrain vehicle, complete with tools and equipment.

Partnership working and prevention remain key elements of the SFRS Wildfire Strategy and the SFRS continued to engage with various stakeholders at both local and national level over the past year, with the aim of ensuring that Scotland has a progressive wildfire prevention and mitigation culture. This included being a key partner in the delivery of the UK Wildfire Conference, held in Aberdeen in November 2024. In conjunction with this, SFRS ran a National Wildfire TacAd training day, with over 30 tactical advisors from across the UK attending.

INCREASED THE NUMBER OF  
TRAINED WILDFIRE TACTICAL  
ADVISORS (TACAD) TO

14

[2] There are 10 Tier 3 fire stations. These stations are equipped with all-terrain vehicles and fogging lance units.

[3] There are 20 Tier 2 fire stations. These stations use sprinter vans with leaf blowers, excavation tools and beaters, and four of stations also have 4x4 van.



This partnership work and the work to deliver the Wildfire Strategy is essential to ensure that Scotland is resilient to the negative impact that climate change might bring, and that the devastating impact of wildfire on Scotland's rural communities is minimised.

In addition to our work to mitigate wildfires, we have also continued work to address the growing risk of flooding. During 2024/25 SFRS invested £35,000 in flood response Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including helmets and personal flotation devices to improve firefighter safety. An additional £30,000 was spent on the procurement of 200 life jackets to support water rescue operations.

## STORM ÉOWYN

On 23 January 2025, the Met Office issued a red weather warning across Scotland due to the potential for very strong winds, with gusts of up to 121 km/h (75 mph) inland and 130 km/h (80 mph) in coastal areas. Heavy rainfall was also predicted to affect many areas, causing disruptions.

Storm Éowyn was one of the biggest challenges faced by SFRS crews in recent times.

In the 24-hour period from 7am on Friday 24 January, the storm saw our three Operations Control rooms receive more than 1,200 calls and our firefighters respond to more than 700 incidents, 300 of those were weather-related calls including road traffic collisions, reports of loose and unsafe structures and damage to properties from falling debris and trees.

This was a significant multi-agency national response at all levels, and all staff across SFRS stepped up and demonstrated the value we add nationally in these circumstances.

Subsequently, on 6 March 2025, the Service took part in an Emergency Service Times webinar, alongside the Met Office, to discuss the operational preparation and response to incidents of this scale to share our learning with partners.

## REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

As well as responding to the impacts of climate change, we are committed to reducing and limiting our own carbon emissions.

SFRS has continued to monitor, quantify and track the carbon footprint of purchased goods to record the impact of and align procurement decisions with the Service's net zero targets.

**£1.4 MILLION**  
**WAS ALLOCATED FOR THE**  
**PURCHASE OF 24 7-TONNE**  
**LIGHTWEIGHT RESCUE PUMPS**



A comprehensive review of Transportation Procurement suppliers, and their ability to meet SFRS demands, was undertaken and has yielded positive outcomes fostering strengthened cross-directorate collaboration and learning.

To significantly reduce emissions, £1.4 million was allocated for the purchase of 24 7-tonne Lightweight Rescue Pumps. These vehicles represent a major upgrade, from Euro 2 to Euro 6 compliance, and will particularly benefit rural areas. This investment also reduces the average age of vehicles in this category from 20.37 to 6.4 years.

Further progress during the reporting period includes:

- Acquisition of twenty electric cars to replace returned leased electric vehicles, reinforcing our commitment to ultra-low emission vehicles.

Additionally, we expanded our light fleet with:

- 11 Ford Ranger pick-ups
- 9 Kia Niro EVs
- 16 eVito panel vans
- 4 eCitan small panel vans

Funding was allocated to enhance building efficiency through upgrades to building management systems, heating design, photovoltaic (PV) system installations, and electrical infrastructure reinforcing SFRS's net zero and carbon management goals. The allocated funding was fully utilised, and installations are now in operation. However, it is expected to take up to a year before the resulting savings become measurable, particularly during the winter months when energy usage is highest. Insights from the heating system design have already been applied to guide future developments.

## INNOVATIVE ELECTRIC VEHICLE TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

We partnered with Dundee and Angus College to provide our Fleet Technicians with training in Electric Vehicle maintenance, system repairs and battery replacements.





Staff from the Scottish Ambulance Service and Police Scotland also participated in the bespoke Blue Light Services training course, allowing all partners to train and certify technicians to The Institute of the Motor Industry accreditation Levels 1, 2 and 3 allowing them to work safely on high voltage systems and to achieve the legislative certification of all technicians. This training ensures that technicians are equipped to safely maintain and repair Electric Vehicles in their blue-light specific fleet, enabling effective response to critical incidents in their crucial nationwide and frontline service.

This investment into training highlights the emergency services' commitment to embracing the transition by leading the charge in electrifying their fleets while empowering staff with the knowledge and cutting-edge skills to perform their duties effectively.

Expressing pride in the college's pivotal role in facilitating this essential training, Caryn Gibson, Business Partnerships Manager at Dundee and Angus College, said:

**'We were thrilled to join forces with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in upskilling their technicians to meet the challenges posed by Electric Vehicles. These technicians play a vital role in ensuring the safety and operational efficiency of emergency response teams, highlighting the importance of ongoing training and development'.**

By upskilling our technicians with essential Electric Vehicle training, we will be fully prepared to transition our fleet to electric battery powered vehicles as we aim towards becoming carbon neutral by 2045.







# OUTCOME FIVE:

**WE ARE A PROGRESSIVE ORGANISATION, USE OUR RESOURCES RESPONSIBLY AND PROVIDE BEST VALUE FOR MONEY TO THE PUBLIC**

DELIVERING AGAINST FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK PRIORITY 2, 5 & 7

**A**s a public sector organisation, we are committed to managing our finances and resources responsibly to ensure that we provide the best value for money to the public.

One of the ways we do this is to ensure that we have planning and improvement processes in place to identify the activities we plan to undertake every year to deliver benefits to the people of Scotland.

## SFRS STRATEGY 2025-28

During 2024/25 we worked towards developing the SFRS Strategy 2025-28, replacing the SFRS Strategic Plan 2022-25. The Strategy sets the direction for how we will evolve over the next three years and is an important step towards progressing our Long-Term Vision as a Service.

Developed to have regard to the seven strategic priorities that Scottish Government have set for us within the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland, the Strategy provides a set of

clear objectives and outcomes that the Service will deliver to the people of Scotland. As a collective, the objectives define our overall direction and will be central to how we plan our activities and our budget over the next three years.

Detailing how we will deliver the Strategy, our Three-Year Delivery Plan was also published, outlining our key commitments over the next three years and the activities that will take place over in year one of the rolling plan.

Our progress against each of the activities contained within the Plan will be monitored quarterly with updates being reported to Executive and Non-Executive Boards, ensuring these business-critical activities remain on track and that we continue to use our resources responsibly.

The Strategy 2025-28 was later published in July 2025.

## MANAGING MAJOR CHANGE

During 2024/25, the Service progressed several key change and improvement projects, some of which are highlighted in the Strategic Service Review Programme and Innovation sections of this report.

It is crucial that we manage the major projects identified within the SFRS Three-Year Delivery Plan effectively and efficiently to ensure they deliver against their objectives and realise anticipated benefits for the Service and the communities we serve.

During 2024/25, extensive work has continued to update existing practices to improve governance of projects, and to build effective project management methodology that fits the needs of SFRS. This work has also included investment in our Portfolio Office to bring additional capabilities:





## Investment in Our Portfolio Office

During the 2024/25 reporting period, several new roles were successfully recruited to enhance the capacity and capability of the Portfolio Office in delivering its Change Portfolio against a robust project lifecycle & reporting framework:

- **Reporting and Management Information Lead** to develop reporting tools, support the implementation of Wrike PPM, and develop project benefit profiles and benefit realisation plans.
- **Business Change and Implementation Manager** to support projects and impacted business areas through implementation, manage business change across the Change Portfolio, and enhance SFRS capacity and capability for delivering change.
- **Planning and Resource Lead** to develop planning and resourcing capabilities, and support projects in producing and maintaining planning artefacts.
- **Senior Business Analyst (x3)** to document and develop business processes to identify key business needs to inform technical solutions. These three roles are currently embedded within the Rostering, New Mobilising System, and PPFT project teams to support delivery of those projects.
- **Programme Manager (Enabling Infrastructure)** to manage a new programme consisting of in-flight and upcoming change projects that support the improvement of SFRS infrastructure.

## Introduction of a Project Management System

The Wrike Project and Programme Management (PPM) system was introduced to improve how we capture and report on project timelines, scope, benefits and interdependencies. This system contains comprehensive project and programme plans, resourcing profiles, and highlight reports for the strategic portfolio. It provides an accessible online platform that enhances visibility and oversight of centrally stored programme and project information, supporting improved



dependency mapping and progress reporting while reducing dependence on manual spreadsheets, Word documents, and presentation slides.

This improves monitoring and reporting capabilities for the Change Portfolio within SFRS and enables more holistic analysis of the progress across various programmes.

## Implementing change through Improvement Projects

Our partnership with Cardiff University enabled the Service to develop and deliver the Service Improvement Foundation Course. Upon completion of the course, employees are equipped to analyse a process using mapping and diagnostic techniques, as well as using a variety of problem-solving LEAN principles and tools to identify and tackle issues resulting in process and quality improvements. By ensuring that employees are trained in LEAN improvement techniques, continuous improvement across SFRS can be effectively standardised.

Overall, Improvement and Quality maturity levels across the Service have significantly increased over the last five years as a direct result of the Improvement Foundation Course, with 76 employees being qualified.





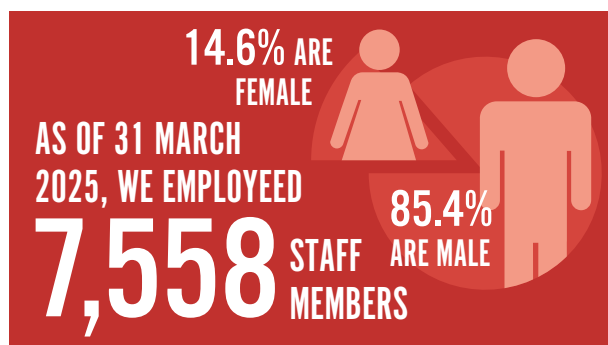


# OUTCOME SIX:

THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE WHO WORK FOR SFRS  
IMPROVES AS WE ARE THE BEST EMPLOYER WE CAN BE

DELIVERING AGAINST FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK PRIORITY 6 & 7

**A**s an aspirational employer, we will aim to attract and retain the best people to deliver our services to the public. We are committed to better representing the communities we serve.



As of 31 March 2025, we employed 7,558 people; 85.4% employees were male; and 14.6% were female.

Our Equality and Diversity Charter is our guarantee to people living, working and visiting Scotland on how we will continue to build equality into all areas of our business.

As part of this, we continually review and monitor our policies and practices to ensure positive outcomes for all staff groups.

In September 2024, we hosted our first ever Women in the Fire Service event where more than 100 people came together over two days to share stories, strengthen connections, discuss common challenges and celebrate women across SFRS. Further workshops are being planned for 2025/26.

## SCOTLAND'S FAIR WORK APPROACH

In support of Scotland's Fair Work Approach that defines work which offers effective voice, fulfilment, opportunity, respect and security we undertook several initiatives throughout the year.

A new colleague benefits provider was introduced in July 2024, providing an enhanced package of benefits with improved App-based access, with additional benefits added in September 2024. The Service introduced further enhancements to paid maternity and adoption leave for all colleagues during 2024, as part of our family friendly arrangements.

Improvements to the Service's Job Evaluation processes have been taken forward with a revised policy and newly developed appeals process approved following extensive consultation with stakeholders. These aim to enhance the trust, understanding and transparency related to these arrangements and will be introduced in early 2025/26.

To support SFRS in enhancing organisational culture and values, a cultural action plan and several sub-groups have been established as part of the Culture Development Group. Various priorities and actions were progressed across 2024/25 with some key achievements noted below:







- The SFRS Colleague Experience Survey, launched in late March 2024, saw a 27% response rate. High-level analysis identified the top areas of performance and for improvement, which were shared with colleagues. Further analysis of the survey results has taken place, and plans are in progress to discuss this with colleagues across the Service via in person feedback groups. These will help to shape action plans and inform ongoing activity related to employee experience within the Service.
- More than 200 supervisory managers completed the People Essentials component of the Management Development Framework, while a further 41 colleagues took part in NFCC leadership development programmes. This foundational work will be built on in 2025/26 through SFRS' continued prioritisation of leadership and culture.



## EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Whether it is in our employment practices or in the services we provide, our commitment to equality, diversity and human rights is an important part of our working culture. We believe that everyone should be treated with dignity, respect and consideration and that all our employees have a role to play in delivering this important agenda. To support our commitment, work has included:

- Progress on the development of the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) toolkit, including a revised EHRIA template.
- Continued work to meet SFRS's statutory obligations for mainstreaming equality including reviewing its corporate Equality Outcomes and preparing the annual Mainstreaming Report.
- The publication of the bi-annual Gender Pay Gap in April 2025 to meet SFRS's statutory obligations. This identified the overall Gender Pay Gap within SFRS had remained relatively consistent since 2023. As of November 2024, the mean Gender Pay Gap within SFRS



remained in favour of females, at -3.1% (i.e. in favour of females), compared with the current U.K. average of 7% (as recorded by the Office of National statistics in 2024). The report highlighted the wide range of projects and initiatives under way across the Service to continue improving and building as diverse and representative a workforce as possible.

The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Team continued to support the mainstreaming of equality through a business partnership approach. The following initiatives are a sample of work progressed across 2024/25:

- Our Corporate Parenting Working Group continued to engage directly with care experienced young people to better inform how we meet their needs in service provision and remove barriers to employment. We hosted an emergency services event for care experienced young people where we displayed the range of career opportunities available and sought feedback on how we can improve our guaranteed interview scheme.
- SFRS partnered with Women in the Fire Service to host a Scottish Women in the Fire Service weekend in September 2024. The event was an opportunity for colleagues to focus on topics such as women's health, career development and train in specialist operational roles that might not be available in all SFRS locations. A second event was then hosted at Dingwall Community Fire Station where male and female SFRS colleagues from across the Highlands came together to learn. The event included guest speakers from Menopause Health Highland, Fire Brigades Union Scotland, Dundee Operations Control and the SFRS Talent Development Team.



- The Women's Experience Liaison Forum (WELF) facilitated improvements in PPE provision ensuring that women had the right equipment and were able to access it easily. The WELF also shaped the updates to our Maternity Returners guidance to support line managers better prepare and support returning mothers.
- We reviewed relevant SFRS policies against the new duty to prevent sexual harassment and where revisions were required, these were made in advance of the legislation coming into effect. Some initial online training was promoted and work commenced in developing in-house training content.
- SFRS were delighted to receive a Gold Award from charity partner Stonewall in recognition of our support for LGBTQ+ colleagues. The Gold Award coincides with the Service also being ranked 67th within Stonewall's list of "Top 100 Employers in the UK".

## SUCCESSION AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

There has been continued focus on strategic workforce planning, taking account of the fiscal context, the Strategic Service Review Programme, and the ongoing impacts of the Pensions Remedy to ensure the Service can effectively respond to future challenges and maintain operational capacity.

This has included enhancements to workforce planning approach for support staff with analysis and regular updates shared through appropriate governance channels. The development and communication of an annual resourcing plan to support Wholetime Firefighter recruitment, along with promotion processes has improved SFRS planning arrangements and the candidate experience. Improved visibility and transparency of the resourcing plan enables colleagues to tailor their development towards upcoming processes with awareness of key dates and timescales.

A review of our Wholetime Firefighter recruitment and selection process commenced. This includes an end-to-end review of the attraction strategy and positive action activity, as well as assessments undertaken, and is aimed at achieving a more streamlined approach. Actions will be phased over the short, medium and long term to improve Service outcomes, candidate experience and applicant pool diversity.

A cross functional working group has been established to discuss, gain feedback and support actions and engagement with other Fire Services has taken place to inform the Services approach. Early improvements include purchase of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform to support application sifting, the review of application and interview questions to ensure these assess whether candidates have the values,

behaviours and skills required for the role, and scoping of a pacer to support candidates undertaking the fitness (bleep) test. Further improvements are scheduled for Phase Two (April 2026) including a full review of the fitness and Practical Selection Tests.

A Short Life Working Group was established to support the development of a SFRS Migration Procedure, allowing competent On Call personnel to migrate to the role of Wholetime Firefighter. Migration can then be used as part of a blended approach, alongside external recruitment and inter-service transfers, to address workforce requirements for the role of Wholetime Firefighter. The evaluation of the 2022 Migration Pilot and a further migration transition course undertaken in January 2025 is being used to inform and guide the development of the Migration Procedure and supporting arrangements. Applications for 2025 are anticipated to open in summer 2025.

The evaluation process for both consisted of face to face discussions with candidates, line managers, Training Function instructors and Support Staff involved in the administration of the process, as well as use of the MS Forms platform to gather quantitative data. These evaluations identified key learning and improvement opportunities regarding:

- The eligibility criteria to be applied for prospective migration candidates and the need to have a defined criteria to support the endorsement process, but also to inform development plans and the appraisal process as part of the candidates preparation for a Migration process.
- The length of the migration course and its syllabus. This has resulted in the course being enhanced from a 1-week to a 3-week course, incorporating more scenario based training events and additional Breathing Apparatus training.





- The Selection Day has been further developed to include a fitness test as part of the assessment criteria.
- Greater information and clarity has been provided to both candidates and line managers on the 'route to competency,' in particular regarding the achievement of the SVQ and how Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be applied to meet the evidential needs of this.
- The development of an SFRS Migration Procedure and accompanying FAQ was also completed, thereby providing a formal confirmation of the Migration process and criteria that would be applied. This document (and evaluation recommendations regarding Communications and Engagement) was used to inform a series of line manager and candidate information sessions scheduled for summer 2025.

The impacts of Migration have been monitored since the initial pilot and will continue to be monitored as SFRS matures the Migration process as a recruitment tool. From the 35 initial firefighters who migrated in 2022, 34 remain employed as Dual Contracted personnel: continuing their On Call commitments alongside their WDS role. Of the candidates who formed the January 2025 cohort, 8 out of 9 continue to be employed on a Dual Contracted basis. Migration has a particular benefit for Operational Delivery, allowing the service to run targeted Migration campaigns for specific vacancies to meet Target Operating Model needs, thereby reducing overtime costs and making a positive contribution to appliance availability. The expedited route to competence also ensures that a greater number of competent firefighters will be present within the SFRS structure, providing a throughput of candidates for the Emergency Response Driver (ERD) pathway and for qualified firefighters who can undertake the role of Crew Commander.

## THE PROVISION OF SUITABLE FACILITIES

In addition to building a workforce that reflects Scotland's diversity and fostering a nurturing and supportive culture, we are committed to providing our people with appropriate and dignified facilities that meet the needs of our increasingly diverse workforce.

During 2024/25, improvement work took place across several stations to reconfigure the internal layouts to provide sleeping accommodation and washing facilities compliant with the Service's approach to control of contaminants. Work also included mitigations to those buildings with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) roofing.

As well as attracting a workforce that is representative of Scotland and providing a nurturing culture, we continued to work to try to provide our people with the suitable toilet and washing facilities required.

**Galashiels Community Fire Station** - refurbishment works were completed to provide suitable toilet and washing facilities and contaminate control in line with SFRS Standard Station Design. Additional works involved installation of a structural solution to the RAAC roof panels and the installation of new bi-fold doors to all the four appliance bays.

**Newcraighall Fire Station Community Fire Station** - underwent a refurbishment to provide suitable toilet and washing facilities and contaminant control in line with SFRS Standard Station Design. Considerate reconfiguration of space has allowed provision for an increased number of personnel and the installation of a new compressor which will alleviate some of the operational challenges currently faced in the area. This also resulted in individual shower cubicles and enhanced opportunities to increase diversity across the Service.

**Dingwall Community Fire Station** - has undergone refurbishment works to provide suitable toilet and washing facilities and contaminate control in line with SFRS Standard Station Design. An extension to the rear accommodates shower pods, drying room and dirty entrance assisting with contaminate control procedures allowing reconfiguration within the existing building. Additional roof works were also incorporated to replace the end of life roof structure.

With fire station property condition sitting at 44% poor or bad rating and suitability at 75% poor or bad, there are many challenges to be met. For this reason, a further £650,000 was allocated across the property estate for minor works. The three Regional Property Managers reviewed the property condition survey information and worked with Local Senior Officers to prioritised projects to be delivered.







## HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFETY

Despite the dedicated efforts across the Service, our Health and Wellbeing outcomes for the reporting period show a degree of underperformance against established targets.

While preparing to move health and wellbeing records to Cority, our new electronic management system, we undertook a review to ensure consistency. These records relate to the completion of statutory medical and fitness health assessments, designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of operational staff.

From the circa 6,000 records reviewed, we discovered significant recording issues, which prompted a complete audit. It has taken significant time to complete this audit, and work was concluded at the end of September 2024. The audit highlighted that approximately 1,600 colleagues' records were incomplete and therefore did not meet our required standards.

To address this proactively and ensure a swift return to desired performance levels, a Tactical Action Group, chaired by a member of the Strategic Leadership Team, was established. This group is responsible for developing and coordinating a comprehensive recovery plan and mitigation strategy, focusing on targeted interventions and continuous monitoring to improve our Health and Wellbeing outcomes moving forward. As an example, these interventions included an increase in provision of support from Heales (medical provider), the introduction and upskilling of uniformed staff to support the fitness assessment process and revised scheduling arrangements through our Central Staffing teams to ensure our operational availability was not compromised.

Despite this challenge, we delivered several wellbeing initiatives designed to support the physical and mental health of our people.

- **Health and Wellbeing Events** - A programme of online and in-person events took place across the Service to proactively support colleague health and wellbeing. This included injury prevention, menopause awareness, and wellbeing roadshows as part of the Service's preventative wellbeing activity.
- **Physiotherapy Service** - To minimise the effects of Musculoskeletal (MSK) absence across the Service and to support the prevention of MSK injury, the pilot of an in-house physiotherapy service has continued to be embedded throughout the reporting period. This service will be evaluated in 2025/26 to inform the future approach.

- **Wellbeing Record Audit** - Following an audit of our wellbeing records, an improvement approach was established to ensure compliance with Service standards relating to firefighter fitness. This includes a review of policies and operating procedures and further development and embedding of the Health and Wellbeing.



- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Provision Review** - A thematic review of mental wellbeing support at SFRS was undertaken by His Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) in Scotland. The associated action plan was agreed, and work began to align the current SFRS Wellbeing Action Plan to the HMFSI action plan, however, due to the focus on the Wellbeing Recovery Plan and the reallocation of resources to support this it is intended to replan the action plan when recovery has progressed.
- **Safety Culture Framework** - To promote a positive safety culture with the aim of fostering effective safety management implementation through the Health and Safety Management System, the development of the Safety and Assurance Culture Strategy/Framework was undertaken. The Safety and Assurance Strategy captures safety culture as a topic, the implementation of such will be managed via a Safety and Assurance Culture Action Plan.



## MANAGEMENT OF FIRE CONTAMINANTS

Research has found that toxic contaminants encountered during firefighting activities are a serious risk to firefighter health. In direct response, the Service has taken significant steps throughout 2024/25 to mitigate these risks and protect firefighter health, including:

### Dedicated Contaminants Group

Working in close partnership with the Fire Brigades Union, the SFRS Contaminants Group has led the development of a comprehensive Fire Contaminants Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and a Fire Contaminants Management Arrangement. These pieces of work outline clear responsibilities and actions to reduce firefighter exposure to harmful substances.

To support implementation of the SOP, SFRS has invested heavily in new equipment and infrastructure, such as the following:

- 350 storage boxes for contaminated personal Protective Equipment were ordered at a cost of £206,000.
- 2,200 additional sets of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) distributed across approximately 35 locations, to ensure immediate replacement of contaminated kit.
- External airing cages and rails installed at SFRS premises, allowing lightly contaminated PPE to air off in designated areas.
- Shampoo and bodywash dispensers fitted at around 200 stations to support personal decontamination.

- Professional cleaning equipment including manual mask washers, and drying cabinet, now available at National Training Centres.

To further reduce the risk of the transfer of fire contaminants and secondary contamination within SFRS premises, zoning arrangements have been implemented in all relevant premises, supported by clear signage and educational posters.

### Enhancement in the Training Environment

SFRS has prioritised contamination control within its training environments. In alignment to the new Contaminants SOP, we have implemented a new Post-Fire Decontamination Process which provides clear and consistent guidance for both operational crews and instructors.

Key improvements include:

- The introduction of Safe Systems of Work across our training centres to embed best practices within all learning environments.
- The investment in additional Breathing Apparatus cleaning machines to enhance effective respiratory equipment decontamination.
- The procurement of additional fire kit for both students and instructors to minimise cross-contamination during training exercises.

These measures represent a significant step forward in protecting our employees, reinforcing a culture of safety and prevention, and reflect our continuing commitment to creating a safe and health-conscious learning environment.






## TRAINING AND LEARNING

We are committed to ensuring that our people possess the skills, knowledge, and capabilities needed to meet both current and future organisational demands and increase firefighter and public safety. In 2024/25, we made significant progress in supporting this goal through a range of initiatives, including developments in the following areas:

**£1 MILLION**  
**WAS ALLOCATED FOR THE**  
**PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION**  
**OF REPLACEMENT CFBT UNITS**



### OPERATIONAL TRAINING ENHANCEMENTS

#### Breathing Apparatus (BA) Programme

This reporting period has seen significant advancements in our Breathing Apparatus (BA) training programmes, directly contributing to the competence, currency, and confidence of our operational staff and, by extension, strengthening public safety across Scotland.

#### Breathing Apparatus (BA) Recovery & Modernisation

The comprehensive modular one-day BA courses, launched previously, have been successfully embedded across diverse operational settings. This programme integrates Tactical Ventilation, BA Search and Rescue, and Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT), offering a flexible yet robust training solution. To ensure consistent delegate preparedness and enhanced learner engagement, a mandatory pre-course package is now accessible via our Learning Content Management System.

A strategic investment of £1 million was allocated for the procurement and installation of replacement CFBT units. This ensures the continued delivery of high-quality, immersive BA training, which is crucial for enhancing firefighter safety and operational effectiveness.

#### Enhanced Initial Training & Specialised Modules

Further strengthening our training framework, the BA Working Group has successfully designed and piloted a

new three-week BA Initial course for trainee firefighters. This enhanced programme significantly increases opportunities for live search and rescue training, notably boosting trainee confidence in operational BA use. A modular version of this course is also under development for On Call personnel, with pilot implementation planned to gather valuable user feedback.

In a collaborative effort with Service Delivery and other key stakeholders, a dedicated smoke curtain training module has been developed and delivered. This initiative further solidifies our operational readiness as smoke curtains offer a crucial component of a holistic fire management strategy, enhancing life safety, improving firefighting efficiency and minimising property damage.

#### Future-Proofing BA Training Facilities

Looking to the future, the design phase for a new £2 million CFBT/BA training facility at our Perth training site has been completed. This state-of-the-art unit is envisioned as the future standard for BA training, replacing existing BA villas. It will incorporate advanced smoke capture systems and dedicated areas for contaminant control, enabling a wider range of realistic training scenarios, including marine, commercial, high-rise, and basement operations. This significant investment underscores our commitment to providing cutting-edge facilities that prepare our personnel for the most complex and high-risk environments, directly strengthening our overall operational effectiveness and undeniably contributing to improved public safety outcomes across Scotland.





## Fire Engineering Degree Course

Following extensive engagement with further education providers across the UK, we successfully secured four part-time placements on the B.Eng Fire Engineering degree course at the University of Central Lancashire. This is the only such programme currently available in the UK.

This milestone reflects our ongoing commitment to learning the lessons from the Grenfell Tower tragedy and directly addresses key recommendations from the Inquiry, particularly the need to strengthen technical competence in the regulation of fire safety.

The degree course will support the professionalisation of our workforce and form a cornerstone of our development pathway, enabling employee to progress from competent practitioner to professionally qualified fire engineer.

This action is fully aligned with the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators, ensuring our personnel meet nationally recognised standards in knowledge, skills, and ethical responsibility. In doing so, we will enhance the credibility, independence, and effectiveness of our fire safety enforcement activities while supporting delivery of our Strategic Outcomes.

This investment in capability strengthens succession planning and ensures we will remain agile, competent, and prepared for the increasing complexity of the built environment. It will also support our commitment to continuous improvement and workforce development, further embedding a culture of professionalism and technical excellence within the Protection function.

## Fire Safety Enforcement – Recognition of Prior Learning

In response to the findings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and wider UK reform of fire safety regulatory standards, SFRS has taken proactive steps to enhance the technical competence of personnel and bring the organisation into alignment with the training and qualification standards adopted across the UK.

A key component of this work has been the revision of the Service's foundation fire safety training, which is now delivered at SCQF Level 8, an uplift from the legacy SCQF Level 7 qualification. This ensures that all newly trained personnel meet current national expectations and strengthens the credibility of our regulatory activity.

To address the competence gap for those who completed earlier training, a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) course was introduced. This enables existing Protection Officers to formalise their knowledge and attain the enhanced

qualification. This approach aligns with the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators and provides assurance of professional competence in line with evolving national standards.

While this approach introduces a temporary variation in qualification levels, it is being actively managed alongside the development of a formal maintenance of competence programme that will adopt the principles of the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators.

## Management Development Framework

The Service continued the roll out of the SFRS Management Development Framework (MDF) – a Framework that aims to improve leadership and management skills within the Service, ultimately enhancing its ability to serve the people of Scotland. During 2024/25, 15 People Management Essentials (day 1) sessions to 185 Supervisory colleagues across employee groups were delivered. Early insights captured through delegate evaluation informed improvement actions. This has included on-line and flexible (weekend/evening) delivery to our remote and rural colleagues and a focus on newly promoted Supervisory managers ensuring a meaningful, accessible and impactful learning experience. Design and development of the wider Supervisory MDF elements progressed with delivery planned for 2025/26.

In partnership with the NFCC, the Service continued Supervisory Leadership Development Programmes delivery with an additional two cohorts and launched a Middle Manager Leadership development programme pilot with one cohort during 2024/25.

Improvement actions from our 2023/24 learning cycle, aligned to our Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) process, were applied in 2024/25. This included additional scrutiny and assurance of recommendations with quarterly reports via SFRS governance and increased Learning Partner activity (6-weekly Learning Partner Group meetings and regular engagement). These actions have enhanced the internal LNA process, improved fiscal monitoring and supported agile, transparent and informed decision making.

SFRS had a successful Learning at Work Week in 2024 with 182 registrations resulting in 143 colleagues attending the varied programme delivered by internal facilitators and external guests celebrating 'Learning Power'. Events provided a range of flexible learning methods including facilitated online and in person sessions supported by a wide array of self-directed learning resources. Evaluation was positive and has informed development and improvements for the 2025/26 programme.



# OUTCOME SEVEN:

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLBEING IMPROVES  
AS WE WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH OUR PARTNERS

DELIVERING AGAINST FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK PRIORITY 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7

**T**eamwork is one of our core values and we acknowledge the wide-ranging benefits partnership working can bring.

We have a broad range of legal obligations that see us collaborate with others in various areas of our work. These include:

- Preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies <sup>[4]</sup>
- Participating in community planning and enhancing outcomes for communities by addressing the needs of service users <sup>[5]</sup>
- Supporting local strategic planning and the delivery of community justice outcomes <sup>[6]</sup>
- Promoting inclusive growth and better outcomes for Island communities <sup>[7]</sup>

Beyond these statutory duties, we also engage in many voluntary partnerships at both local and national levels. Nationally, we collaborate with Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service through the Reform Collaboration Group (RCG) to improve cooperation among the Blue Light Services. We also partner with private sector organisations on initiatives related to community and firefighter safety.

Locally, we are involved in partnerships that address a wide range of community needs—from food security for vulnerable individuals to employability programmes that help young

people enter the workforce. These efforts significantly enhance community safety and wellbeing.

We adopt this collaborative approach because it helps break down barriers between public services and fosters a shared commitment to meeting community needs. Our partnership work is continually evolving and tailored to the specific issues at hand, with varying levels of formality. The goal is always to align on shared objectives and take coordinated action to improve outcomes for the people of Scotland.

By combining our expertise, resources, and dedication with those of our partners, we add real value to communities across Scotland. Our collaborative efforts contribute directly to the National Performance Framework and locally through Community Planning Partnerships and Local Outcome Improvement Plans.

Ultimately, our mission is to enhance the safety and wellbeing of Scotland's people—and we believe working in partnership is the most effective way to achieve that.

Throughout this report there are examples of how partnership and collaborative working allows us to deliver more for the people of Scotland. We also publish 'SFRS Working in Partnership,' an annual publication dedicated to recognising the great work we carry out alongside partners to deliver more for the people of Scotland.

During 2024/25 we published the third 'SFRS Working in Partnership' document and started developing the fourth. Due to be published in Autumn 2025, this document features some of the wide-ranging partnership and collaborative

[4] Civil Contingencies Act 2004

[5] Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

[6] Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016

[7] The Island (Scotland) Act 2018



activities that have taken place throughout 2024/25 and highlights opportunities to share innovation and best practice throughout the SFRS. The report provides examples of over 60 active partnerships, a selection of some of the initiatives in this report are below:

### Safe Aberdeenshire

The first Safe Aberdeenshire Initiative took place at Mintlaw Academy, Aberdeenshire in July 2024, to deliver comprehensive safety education to all Senior Three (S3) and Senior Four (S4) pupils.

Developed by us, Police Scotland, Royal National Lifeboat Institution, National Health Service and Aberdeenshire Council, the event allowed partners to address a wide range of critical issues such as substance abuse, e-scooter safety, lithium battery hazards, water safety, and anti-social behaviour. Pupils were also able to learn about Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, and open discussion around tackling poverty and inequalities took place. The initiative empowered young people across the area with essential knowledge and skills with a view to improving community safety and resilience.

This initiative underscores the importance of cross-agency collaboration in safeguarding our youth and enhancing community well-being in Aberdeenshire. Chloe Borwick, Business and Community Support Officer at Mintlaw Academy, said:

**'As you know it is our vision that every pupil leaves Mintlaw Academy as a better version of themselves, ready to succeed in all aspects of life and we would like to express our gratitude to you for your continued support in helping us achieve this through community – connected learning, providing real world learning opportunities and providing inspiration for our young people. Thank you'.**

Due to its success, the initiative is planned to be further rolled out to key secondary schools across Aberdeenshire.

### Lighting Reach App

We worked in partnership with Lighting Reach, who developed an app aimed at helping residents of Edinburgh manage their finances. This app is specifically designed for individuals at risk of financial vulnerability. It allows users to access various benefits they may be entitled to and apply for different funds to assist with bills, heating, food, and more.

Our crews, Community Fire Stations and Community Action Team promoted this app by distributing leaflets at Home Fire Safety Visits. Additionally, these materials were distributed to local food banks, libraries, and health centres.

In collaboration with our Community Action Team, Lighting Reach participated in several public events to engage the community and encourage the use of this app. As part of this partnership, Lighting Reach will provide a link and signpost to our Website for Home Fire Safety Visit and advice.

### Wigtownshire Multi-Agency Road Safety Events

In partnership with Police Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway Council Youth Work and the Scottish Ambulance Service, we designed and delivered multi-agency road safety events in response to the increased number of road traffic incidents involving young people across Wigtownshire. Alongside our partners, we collaborated to provide essential safety messages and reassure young, mature, and new drivers about what to expect on the roads as winter approaches.

Advanced Paramedic Manager Fraser Erskine said:

**'This was a fantastic event for Scottish Ambulance Service staff to be involved with;' and expressed his willingness to assist with any further projects or events.**

Dumfries and Galloway Council Youth Work Leader Laura Kilty said:

**'I can see the benefit of these types of events for new drivers to attend to get all the various types of safety messages being provided by partners. Especially the new concept of our Virtual Reality headsets which is the type of thing the young people are happy to try.'**

This initiative was part of a trial across Wigtownshire and may be rolled out across the area in the coming months.

### Hundreds of Young People benefit from new FireSkills Accreditation

Our East, North and South Ayrshire employees have built on an already strong partnership with Ayrshire College by working in collaboration to develop the new FireSkills Employability Award. In addition, Ayrshire College has been appointed as the new accrediting body for our FireSkills course.

Our FireSkills course is aimed at young people between the ages of 12-18 years old and seeks to engage young people in a series of challenging activities. We developed a syllabus which would be relevant and challenging to the candidates, including a range of sessions based on firefighter drills which can help to develop key skills such as problem solving, first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, team working, leadership and communication.





The FireSkills Employability Award builds on the sessions from the FireSkills programme. It aims to give young people formal recognition of their achievement.

Through our partnership with Ayrshire College, participants will now receive a FireSkills Employability Award in recognition of their efforts, recognised by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework providing four credits at Level 4. The course enables learners to build a portfolio of evidence based on activities within informal education settings and identify transferable skills and recognise prior learning for further education and employment opportunities. The FireSkills Employability Award has been designed to suit a wide range of learners and there are no pre-requisites for entry on to the programme. Because of the delivery level it is suggested this programme would be best suited for those 14 years and over.

The partnership was launched at a graduation ceremony at Kilmarnock Community Fire Station in September 2024, where 10 young people who completed the course were awarded certificates in front of proud family members.

Angela Cox, Principal and Chief Executive Officer at Ayrshire College said:

**‘We are proud to partner with the Service to provide accreditation for the FireSkills Employability Awards. This programme not only equips young people across Scotland with vital life-saving skills but also helps them develop key abilities and skills that will support their future education and employment opportunities.’**

By engaging young people, many of whom have struggled with more formal education, and/or experienced challenging life journeys, in this way and by working in partnership, both us and Ayrshire College can both demonstrate our commitment to contributing to National priorities such as making our communities safer, youth justice and education and lifelong learning, among others.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework accreditation was made available to all our FireSkills courses throughout Scotland, encouraging young people to gain an insight into a working fire station and developing key skills for life at the same time and it is expected around 400 young people will benefit.

### Dizzy Heights Training in the Community

We worked in partnership with Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service and North Lanarkshire Council to develop a realistic scenario to evaluate high-rise incident response procedures of all organisations, as well as consolidating the skills and knowledge of staff responding to the incident.

The scenario involved a report of a fire on the third floor of Allershaw Tower block in Wishaw. There were persons reported missing, presumed to be in the tower block and multiple on-going fire survival guidance calls to the residents above the fire. Our crews from Motherwell, Bellshill, Coatbridge, Clydesmill, Springburn, Pollock and Bo’ness Community Fire Stations participated along with our external partners from Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, North Lanarkshire Council and The University of the West of Scotland.

The exercise included evacuations using fire escape hoods and utilised eight fire appliances and two Command Support Units. Twelve casualties were rescued from various floors and passed to the Scottish Ambulance Service Paramedic teams. The exercise was made more complex as the lifts were de-commissioned in preparation for the building’s demolition.

This beneficial exercise was a terrific opportunity to provide a realistic learning environment to allow us and our partners to demonstrate an effective multi-agency approach to bring an incident to a safe conclusion. It enhanced the knowledge and understanding of our and multi-agency partners in responding to such incidents, whilst ensuring interoperability between emergency services at a large-scale incident. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of communications and the use of our procedures on Incident Command, Breathing Apparatus and Evacuation procedures.

Discussing the benefits of the event, Teresa Murphy, MRCVS, Resilience Planning Manager, North Lanarkshire Council said:

**‘I would like to take this opportunity to thank Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for organising the training and for the invitation to participate. I have spoken to other colleagues who agree that it was a very useful exercise and the objectives that we can relate to were met particularly regarding enhancing knowledge of a multi-agency response.’**

### Warm Space Caring for the Local Community

Our Perth Community Action Team, in partnership with Perth Cathedral, set up a Warm Space within Saint Ninians Cathedral, Perth. Our Community Action Team, Perth and Kinross Council and Electrical Safety First all contributed to funding in setting up the Warm Space and providing electric blankets. The Warm Space runs every Monday morning from November to March.

Several organisations attended Warm Space and provided information and support, including, Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Wardens and the energy charity SCARF who provided free home energy advice to help tackle fuel poverty and reduce emissions.



The purpose of the partnership was to help combat loneliness, poverty (particularly energy related) by providing individuals with hot food and beverages at no cost to visitors, a place to socialise and offer a warm welcome to all areas of the local community. We provided fire safety advice on how to heat homes safely and gave out cellular and electric blankets to those in need. A mixture of ages attended and although some individuals belong to the congregation, many do not.

This successful partnership has resulted in numerous Home Fire Safety Visits being completed, and referrals made to partner organisations such as Community Alarms and Citizens Advice Bureau. Additionally, several cellular and electric blankets were given to vulnerable individuals.

In a similar initiative, throughout the winter of 2024/25, our City of Glasgow area hosted Warm Space events within Easterhouse and Knightswood Community Fire Stations.

These events were scheduled during periods where those experiencing fuel or food poverty, loneliness or pressures of mental wellbeing could visit a station for a chat, free hot drinks and light snacks.

Positive feedback received from individuals who attended Warm Space include:

**‘Everyone is kind and friendly here.’**

**‘I was nervous at first, but I got a great welcome and I keep going back.’**

**‘The Fire Service Community Action Team are incredibly supportive; they have provided snacks and cosy blankets as well as valuable information sessions.’**

The initiative was supported by Police Scotland, Glasgow Life, and Weekday WOW (a 50+ adult health and wellbeing group) with food and drink donations from local Greggs bakeries and Morrisons.

### Orkney Drugs Dog

In partnership with the Orkney Alcohol and Drug Partnership (OADP), we welcomed The Orkney Drugs Dog charity into Kirkwall Community Fire Station by providing office space.

Orkney Alcohol and Drug Partnership works alongside Scottish Government, local partners and community members to reduce alcohol and drugs-related harm across Orkney, delivering accessible and effective services by listening and responding to those with lived and living experience of alcohol and drug use in the community. As a partner, we support this mission through signposting and

low-level interventions to improve outcomes from the use of drugs and alcohol on Orkney.

Another key member of this partnership is The Orkney Drugs Dog charity which plays a vital role by providing trained dogs to help reduce the supply of controlled and harmful substances coming into Orkney, while also delivering education and intervention across the community.

This innovative and successful co-location has enabled a strong partnership with their dog handler, who has played a key role in supporting community-based events and FireSkills programmes, strengthening working relationships and enhancing community safety.

### Work Related Death Protocol

SFRS have collaborated with partners from other key investigative agencies to review and update the national Work-Related Death Protocol, led by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). Finalised in early 2025, this revision marks a significant milestone in strengthening Scotland’s approach to investigating work-related deaths.

We will formally sign the revised protocol alongside other signatories, including the Health and Safety Executive, Police Scotland, and the British Transport Police. The protocol outlines agreed principles for the investigation of work-related deaths in Scotland, enhancing coordination, accountability, and transparency across all participating organisations.

SFRS involvement ensures that the specialist expertise of our Fire Investigation and Protection Officers can be fully integrated into any multi-agency inquiries involving work-related fatalities. The protocol clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each agency, formalises information-sharing arrangements and reinforces the legal framework for joint investigations, including decisions such as the initiation of prosecutions or Fatal Accident Inquiries.

The protocol will support timely, thorough, and legally robust investigations. It also seeks to ensure that bereaved families are treated with respect, kept appropriately informed, and that public confidence in the investigative process is upheld.

The inclusion of SFRS strengthens Scotland’s coordinated approach to incident response and reinforces our role as a professional and informed contributor to the criminal justice and public safety agenda.

This work supports our Strategic Outcomes by embedding collaborative working, enhancing the quality of serious incident investigations, and advancing the delivery of criminal justice and prevention in the public interest.



## Prevention Strategy

The Prevention Directorate worked to develop a new Strategy which sets out the current and future direction of the Directorate for the next three years. This emphasises the importance of a universal prevention offering for the entire country, ensuring that all communities in Scotland benefit from the strategy. This approach aims to provide equitable services across different regions, addressing the unique needs of each community. The strategy incorporates Marmot principles, focusing on reducing health inequalities and improving the social determinants of health. This involves working with partners to deliver community-based improvements and ensuring that prevention efforts are proportionate to the needs of specific communities.

As part of a two-year collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland, three Local Senior Officer areas are working in partnership with councils and health boards across, Aberdeen City, North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire. The project highlights that reducing health inequity requires action on eight key objectives, referred to as the Marmot 8.

They are to:

- tackle discrimination and racism, and their outcomes
- give every child the best start in life
- enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and control their lives
- create fair employment and good work for all
- pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together
- ensure a healthy standard of living for all
- create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention

The programme focuses on actions to improve health equity, actively sharing learning to drive improvements. Working with Professor Michael Marmot, this collaboration will aim to improve Scotland's health, increase wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.





**firescotland.gov.uk**

**Annual Performance Review  
Report 2024/25**

**Version 1.0  
August 2025**

