SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT

2025/26



Working together
for a safer Scotland

WELCOME TO THE SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'S (SFRS) ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT FOR 2025/26.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reviews SFRS performance during 2025/26 against the SFRS Strategy 2025–28 and the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022.

It highlights strong progress across prevention, response, people, performance, innovation and investment, while recognising continuing pressures from changing community risk, climate change, workforce demand and constrained capital investment.

The year was marked by the lowest fire fatalities in six years and the lowest accidental dwelling fires and casualties in a decade; significant investment in firefighter safety, wellbeing and specialist response capability; publication of the SFRS Strategy 2025-28 and the Three-Year Delivery Plan; and continued progress on the Strategic Service Review Programme and wider digital and infrastructure modernisation activity.

The report also identifies the need to maintain momentum on service reform, operational readiness, digital capability, workforce sustainability and long-term investment in the estate, fleet, equipment and technology. It recognises that many of the Service's most significant transformation, workforce and infrastructure challenges remain ongoing and will require sustained focus, prioritisation and investment over future years.

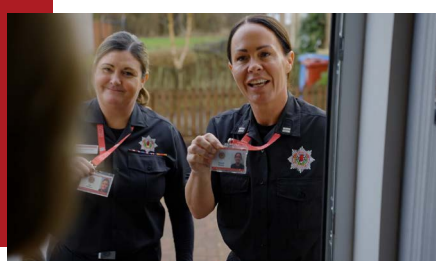
2025/26 MARKED:

THE LOWEST FIRE FATALITIES IN 6 YEARS

THE LOWEST ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES AND CASUALTIES IN A DECADE









INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Annual Performance Review Report for 2025/26.

This report explains how we performed against the SFRS Strategy 2025-28 and the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022. It provides a general picture of the Service as of 1 April 2026. Some information has been updated where this helps give a fuller picture before the Annual Performance Review meeting in November 2026.

During 2025/26, our people worked alongside communities and partners across the public, voluntary and private sectors to deliver vital services across Scotland. SFRS attended almost 79,000 incidents, supported vulnerable people and families, improved fire safety and helped communities prepare for new and changing risks. The professionalism, commitment and dedication of our staff, together with the contribution of our partners, remain fundamental to the outcomes we achieve.

This was the first full year of delivering our new Strategy. SFRS made good progress across all five Strategic Objectives, working with partners to strengthen prevention and safeguarding, enhance specialist response, improve wildfire preparedness and firefighter safety, support staff wellbeing and leadership, and modernise how we manage performance, technology, buildings and equipment.

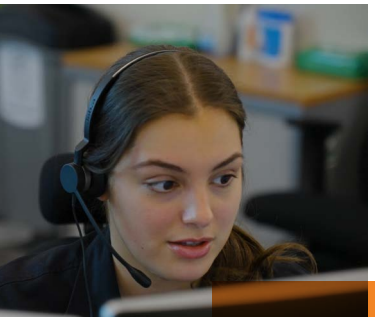
The Strategic Service Review Programme remained a major focus. As one of the largest change programmes since SFRS was created, it is central to ensuring the Service remains sustainable, effective and aligned to changing risk and demand. Key progress included public consultation and Board decisions on the Service Delivery Review, alongside continued work on the Corporate Services Review and Enabling Infrastructure programmes.

Important challenges remain. Community risks continue to change and become more complex, while climate change is increasing the likelihood and impact of incidents such as wildfire and flooding. These challenges cannot be addressed by any single organisation and require coordinated action across communities, partner organisations and public services.

Financial pressures continue to limit investment in our estate, fleet, technology and infrastructure. SFRS will therefore continue to prioritise, improve and make difficult choices so that today's operational needs are balanced with longer-term investment.

Looking ahead, our priorities remain clear. SFRS will keep firefighter and staff safety and wellbeing at the centre of decision making, continue the Strategic Service Review Programme, build digital and technology capability, invest in operational readiness, foster a positive culture and strong leadership at all levels, contribute to public sector reform, and work with partners and communities to prevent harm and improve outcomes across Scotland.

There is more to do, but progress during 2025/26 strengthened the foundations for a modern, sustainable and resilient SFRS.







UNDERSTANDING HOW WE MEASURE PERFORMANCE

SFRS measures performance at three levels:

- **Inputs** are the resources invested to deliver services, including funding, people, equipment, fleet, technology, estates and training.
- **Outputs** are the activities and services delivered by SFRS, such as Home Fire Safety Visits, Fire Safety Audits, community engagement activity, training delivery and emergency response.
- **Outcomes** are the changes achieved for communities, staff and the organisation as a result of these activities, including reductions in fire fatalities and casualties, improved firefighter safety, stronger community resilience and improved organisational performance.

Together, these measures provide a balanced picture of how SFRS creates value for the people and communities of Scotland.

HOW THIS REPORT SUPPORTS THE FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTLAND 2022

The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022 sets out Scottish Ministers' expectations of SFRS. This report shows how the Service's work supports the Framework's seven Strategic Priorities.

Fire and Rescue Framework Strategic Priorities:

1. Prevention and Protection
2. Response
3. Innovation and Modernisation
4. Climate Change
5. Effective Governance and Performance
6. People
7. Partnership

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS 2025/26

The overall picture of our year in numbers is one of a Service delivering tangible public value. Long-term reductions in fire-related harm suggest that sustained investment in prevention, protection and operational capability is making a difference. However, the changing nature of demand - with increasing non-fire incidents, support to partner agencies and emerging risks associated with climate change and societal vulnerability - reinforces the need for continued reform, modernisation and investment.

These figures demonstrate both the success of our current approach and the importance of ensuring SFRS remains equipped to meet the challenges of the future.

KEY INPUTS AND RESOURCES

- **£336.299m** resource spend against a budget of £336.745 m
- Capital expenditure of **£48.595m** was achieved against a budget of £48.595m, of which £0.973m relates to Right of Use Assets (Leases)

PREVENTION OUTPUTS

- **20,420** Home Fire Safety Visits
- **8,480** Fire Safety Enforcement Audits
- **3,114** Adult Protection Referrals
- **2,291** fire safety education engagements

RESPONSE OUTPUTS

- **78,585** incidents attended
- **25,409** fires attended
- **36,645** false alarms attended
- **16,479** non-fire incidents
- **208** wildfire incidents attended

KEY OUTCOMES

- Accidental dwelling fires have **decreased by 8.1%** in a three-year comparison from 3,864 in 2023/24 to **3,551** in 2025/26
- Fires in non-domestic buildings have **reduced by 18.0%**, falling from 1,533 to 1,256 over the same period
- Deliberate building fires have seen a **20.3% reduction**, from 1,158 in 2023/24 to 923 in 2025/26
- Non-fatal fire casualties have **declined by 11.4%**, from 587 in 2023/24 to 520 in 2025/26

HOW INCIDENTS HAVE CHANGED BETWEEN 2023/24 AND 2025/26

- **12.8% reduction** in building fires
- **2.0% increase** in non-fire incidents
- **34.5% reduction** in total false alarms
- **5.8% increase** in effect entry/exit incidents
- **15.9% increase** in assisting other agencies

** 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.**

20,420
HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS CARRIED OUT

78,585
INCIDENTS ATTENDED

25,409
FIRES ATTENDED

8,480
FIRE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT AUDITS CARRIED OUT

36,645
FALSE ALARMS ATTENDED

16,479
NON-FIRE INCIDENTS

7,570
EMPLOYEES

3,430
WHOLETIME OPERATIONAL STAFF

3,001
ON CALL OPERATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS

60
RURAL FULL-TIME STAFF

177
OPERATIONS CONTROL STAFF

902
SUPPORT STAFF

HOW THE INCIDENTS WE ATTEND ARE CHANGING

Comparison made between 2023/24 and 2025/26

15.9%
INCREASE IN ASSISTING OTHER AGENCIES

2.0%
INCREASE IN NON-FIRE INCIDENTS

34.5%
REDUCTION IN TOTAL FALSE ALARMS

12.8%
REDUCTION IN BUILDING FIRES

5.8%
INCREASE IN EFFECT ENTRY/EXIT INCIDENTS



STRATEGIC SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME

Fire and Rescue Framework Priorities: 2 Response | 3 Innovation and Modernisation | 4 Climate Change | 6 People | 7 Partnerships

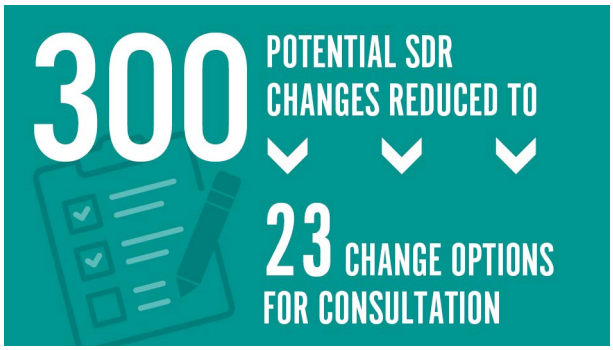
SFRS faces major and complex challenges. Community needs are changing, risks are evolving, and we must ensure the Service remains sustainable for the long term.

The Service has already achieved significant efficiencies through reform activity since 2013. However, changing community risk, workforce pressures, climate change and continued financial constraints mean it is time to look at how we could reshape the service to meet new risks and match our resources where they are needed most.

The Strategic Service Review Programme has been created to deliver this change. It has three connected parts: the Service Delivery Review (SDR), the Corporate Services Review and Enabling Infrastructure. Together, they will help shape how SFRS delivers prevention, protection and response in future, supported by new approaches, technology and safer working arrangements.

SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW

The SDR is an ongoing process to look at ways of reshaping and modernising the Service. The primary aim is to ensure that resources – staff, stations and appliances – are matched to operational risk and demand across Scotland. It is focused on reviewing how SFRS operates, because risk, demand and community needs have changed while our operating model has largely stayed the same. The review looks at whether stations, resources and crewing arrangements are in the right place to meet current and future risk across Scotland, including the risks posed by climate change.



The review used data, local knowledge and staff engagement to understand risk and demand. More than 300 potential changes were identified initially and reduced to around 129 options through assessment and evaluation. Following further analysis and consideration, 23 change options were taken forward for detailed development and consultation.

The programme then moved to a 12-week public consultation, supported by online and in-person engagement across Scotland. Forty engagement events were held, attended by around 840 people. More than 1,000 community organisations were contacted, and 3,672 consultation responses were received.



Additional assurance work was completed, including the review of equality and human rights assessments, local analysis, option-specific assessments and independent specialist support. This strengthened the evidence used to support future service decisions.

Recommendations from the Service Delivery Review were developed and presented to the SFRS Board. They were based on consultation feedback, operational analysis, financial evidence and equality considerations.

The Board approved a range of proposals to help SFRS remain sustainable, effective and fair. These changes will better match resources to risk and demand, support a more resilient workforce and create opportunities to reinvest in other priority areas of the service such as training and prevention.

The approved SDR changes will be delivered over up to five years and will require careful planning and engagement. The Service Delivery Review remains an ongoing process of ensuring resources, workforce arrangements and infrastructure continue to align with changing risk and demand across Scotland.

CORPORATE SERVICES REVIEW

The Corporate Services Review is focused on improving how support services are organised and delivered across SFRS so they better support frontline delivery and organisational priorities.

During 2025/26, the programme moved into a more developed phase. A revised corporate directorate structure was approved to provide clearer responsibilities and improve collaboration across support functions.

SFRS continued to develop a structured service management approach through our Service Management Framework and Catalogue, providing clearer information about Corporate Services, access arrangements and accountability for delivery.

The programme supported work on the Digital, Data and Technology Business Case and the Support Staff Pay and Reward Review, helping to ensure that future support services are designed around modern ways of working, improved digital capability and a workforce model that supports recruitment, retention and organisational performance.

A key milestone was approval of the Outline Business Case for the Corporate Business Solutions project. This identified an integrated cloud-based system as the preferred way to modernise People, Finance and Stores systems. Procurement is now underway.

These changes are helping create a more integrated, efficient and evidence-led organisation.

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Enabling Infrastructure covers key projects that modernise our systems, equipment and property.

This part of the programme supports modernisation by improving facilities and estates, investing in new technology and making sure our infrastructure supports the Service's long-term aims.

By improving systems, technology and infrastructure, this work supports safer working, better wellbeing and improved services for communities.

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Improving Facilities and Estates

During 2025/26, planning and solution-development activity progressed for a number of significant projects, including future options for the RAAC-affected sites at Dalkeith, Liberton and Livingston. This work helps position the Service to make informed investment decisions and deliver sustainable infrastructure that supports operational effectiveness, workforce wellbeing and future service delivery.

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus

Development of the Next Generation Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Project progressed during 2025/26. The programme will modernise a critical operational capability through the replacement of ageing respiratory protective equipment and associated systems. Planned improvements include enhanced entry control, communications and operational situational awareness, together with modern SCBA sets, Type 4 composite cylinders and telemetry-enabled Entry Control Boards.

The programme will support firefighter safety and help ensure the Service remains equipped to respond safely and effectively to current and emerging operational risks.

New Mobilising System (NMS)

The New Mobilising System will provide an integrated mobilising solution for Operations Control, including communications and dispatch capability across all three Operations Control centres.

During 2025/26, the Integrated Communications Control System was successfully introduced in Edinburgh, Dundee and Johnstone. Day-to-day management has now moved into normal business arrangements, with ongoing monitoring and maintenance.

SFRS continued work on the Computer Aided Dispatch part of the programme. Configuration, integration and testing were completed to ensure it works with existing SFRS systems and operational processes. Site Acceptance Testing was completed by March 2026, and the programme remains on track for operational delivery in November 2026.

Once fully introduced, the New Mobilising System will improve resilience, interoperability and support for emergency response across Scotland.

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

SFRS made good progress in preparing for the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme. This is a major national programme to modernise emergency service communications and improve digital support for frontline responders.

IBM and SFRS completed a readiness assessment. This helped confirm what still needs to be done and supported future planning, procurement and implementation.

SFRS continued work on the In-Vehicle Systems Project. The system is being rolled out in the East and North, while testing continues in the West. It will help crews access and manage operational information more effectively, improving awareness and decision making at incidents.

Further work focused on standardising specialist vehicles and connecting systems into the New Mobilising System. Project teams worked closely with Motorola and Airwave to manage technical issues. This work will create a more integrated and resilient communications environment, helping crews access improved information and respond more safely and effectively.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE:
SAFER COMMUNITIES THROUGH PREVENTION

Fire and Rescue Framework Priorities: 1 Prevention and Protection | 2 Response | 3 Innovation and Modernisation | 4 Climate Change | 5 Effective Governance and Performance | 7 Partnerships

> **"Through our work with communities and other organisations, the safety and wellbeing of the people of Scotland improves."**

Prevention is central to our role. By reducing risk before emergencies happen, SFRS supports wider public service reform and the Programme for Government, helps people stay safe, and works with partners to address the causes of harm and inequality.

TARGETING PREVENTION FOR IMPACT

SFRS continued to target prevention work at people and places most at risk. We used evidence, local knowledge and partnership working with local authorities, health and social care, Police Scotland and third sector organisations to identify vulnerable people earlier and provide support where it can make the biggest difference.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- 20,420 Home Fire Safety Visits completed.
- 3,114 Adult Protection referrals.
- 122 Child Protection and Wellbeing referrals.
- 119 Fire Safety Support and Education referrals.
- Lowest fire fatalities in six years.
- Lowest accidental dwelling fires and casualties in ten years

IN 2025/26, WE CARRIED OUT

20,420

HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS (HFSV)

In February 2025, SFRS introduced a revised Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) policy and procedure alongside a new HFSV app. The changes support a more targeted approach to prevention, focusing activity on people at greatest risk of fire using evidence from fatal fire analysis, local intelligence and information shared by partner organisations.

During 2025/26, SFRS staff carried out 20,420 Home Fire Safety Visits. The year was a period of transition as the revised approach was introduced across the Service. Activity was increasingly focused on those at greatest risk, while work with partners helped strengthen referral pathways and information sharing. Home Fire Safety Visits remained an important part of prevention activity, helping to identify vulnerability, reduce fire risk and

3,114 ADULT PROTECTION REFERRALS, AND

122 CHILD PROTECTION & WELLBEING REFERRALS

connect people with wider support services where additional needs were identified.

SFRS made 3,114 Adult Protection referrals and 122 Child Protection and Wellbeing referrals. These referrals helped vulnerable people access the right support. We received 119 Fire Safety Support and Education referrals for children and young people; many delivered with partner agencies.

Staff capability was improved through safeguarding training, guidance and professional development. This helped staff recognise and respond to risks such as hoarding, self-neglect and other signs of vulnerability that can increase the risk of fire or harm.

Safeguarding quality assurance visits were carried out across Service Delivery Areas. These checked how well procedures were being followed, identified good practice and highlighted areas for improvement. The learning helped improve referral and recording processes, increase awareness among crews and strengthen partnership working. It also informed a Safeguarding Refresher Module to improve consistency across the Service.

A National Safeguarding and Hoarding Working Group was set up to improve consistency and partnership working. SFRS remained involved in national safeguarding and public protection forums to share learning and influence prevention work.

SFRS worked with partners on wider issues linked to risk, including health inequality and community wellbeing. This included contributing to the Marmot Health Equity programme with local authorities and health boards.

This work helps reduce risk. In 2025/26, fire fatalities were at their lowest level in six years, while accidental dwelling fires and dwelling fire casualties were at their lowest levels in ten years. Vulnerability and inequality remain important risk factors, so SFRS will continue working with partners on issues such as self-neglect, hoarding and health inequalities.

PREVENTING HARM THROUGH EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement remains a key part of prevention. Through education programmes, youth activities and safety campaigns, SFRS helps people understand risk, make safer choices and build stronger, more resilient communities.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Youth Volunteer Schemes delivered.
- 4,000+ volunteer hours contributed by young people.
- 94 FireSkills programmes delivered.
- 713 young people participated in FireSkills.
- 46 FireSkills Employability Awards delivered.
- 2,291 fire safety education engagements delivered across schools, community groups, and alternative learning settings.





Work with children and young people remained important. On average, 13 Youth Volunteer Schemes ran across Scotland, with young people contributing more than 4,000 volunteering hours. FireSkills delivered 94 programmes involving 713 young people, including 46 Employability Award courses that helped participants build teamwork, communication, first aid and road safety skills.

SFRS delivered 2,291 fire safety education engagements in schools, community groups and alternative learning settings. Topics included home fire safety, deliberate fire setting, bonfire and fireworks safety and wider community safety.

SFRS marked ten years of Biker Down Scotland. Since 2015, the programme has delivered more than 500 courses and trained more than 6,000 riders. It provides motorcyclists practical skills in scene management, first aid and hazard awareness.

Seasonal safety campaigns also helped reduce risk. SFRS worked with the Scottish Government and partners on bonfire and fireworks safety, using school visits, community engagement and digital messages. Bonfire Night incidents have reduced by 39% over five years. During 2025/26, deliberate fires reduced by 29%, refuse fires by 35% and outdoor fires by 20%.

Through education, engagement and partnership working, SFRS continues to help people understand risk and take action to prevent harm.

STRENGTHENING SAFETY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Fire safety in buildings remains a core part of prevention. SFRS works with dutyholders, businesses and partners to reduce risk, improve compliance and learn from incidents. This helps make places safer to live, work and visit.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- 8,480 Fire Safety Audits completed across Scotland.
- 39 statutory notices served to address significant fire safety risks.
- 26 Prohibition Notices issued where serious and immediate risks to life were identified.
- 9 Enforcement Notices served requiring improvements to fire safety arrangements.
- 4 Alterations Notices issued to support ongoing management of fire risk.





Protection Officers completed 8,480 Fire Safety Audits across non-domestic premises in Scotland. These audits help dutyholders understand and meet their legal responsibilities and improve fire safety standards.

Where serious concerns were found, SFRS used enforcement powers in a proportionate way. In 2025/26, 39 statutory notices were issued, including Enforcement Notices, Prohibition Notices and Alterations Notices.

SFRS also continued to work closely with the Scottish Government and other partners on building and fire safety matters arising from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and wider post-Grenfell reform programme. This included providing operational expertise and professional advice to support the development of policy, guidance and national approaches to improving fire safety in Scotland's built environment. Through this work, SFRS helped influence measures designed to strengthen public safety and reduce risk in high-rise and other complex buildings.

SFRS improved how learning from fire investigations is used. Fire Investigation specialists developed a Fire Artefacts Project to identify, preserve and record items recovered from incidents. This will support training, professional development and partnership work with academic organisations.

Through regulation, education and learning from incidents, SFRS continues to improve fire safety in Scotland's buildings. This helps reduce risk, improve compliance and turn incident learning into practical improvements.

FUTURE RISKS AND BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Scotland's risks are changing. SFRS is working to identify future threats early and ensure communities, partners and crews are prepared. This includes horizon scanning, risk assessment, planning and partnership work.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Strategic oversight of emerging risks through the establishment of a New and Emerging Risks Group.
- Risk Preparedness Assessment completed, identifying 33 improvement actions to enhance organisational resilience.
- Approximately 630 events supported across Scotland, including high-risk and major events.
- 47 Event Operational Plans and 3 National Event Operational Plans developed.
- New Risk-Based Identification Scoring Tool developed to support consistent assessment and prioritisation of operational risk.

The New and Emerging Risks Group helped identify and manage future risks that may affect firefighter safety, public safety and service resilience. Key areas included lithium-ion batteries, Battery Energy Storage Systems, hydrogen, wildfire, flooding, water scarcity, cyber security and new building methods. The growing deployment of renewable energy technologies and associated energy storage infrastructure presents new operational challenges for the Service, reinforcing the importance of ongoing risk assessment, operational learning and specialist preparedness activity.

A Service-wide Risk Preparedness Assessment checked how ready SFRS is for national risk scenarios and disruptive events. It identified strengths and 33 improvement actions to strengthen resilience, preparedness and multi-agency response.

Operational Intelligence developed a Risk-Based Identification Scoring Tool, giving SFRS a clearer and more consistent approach to assessing and prioritising operational risks.

SFRS supported national resilience and public safety planning for around 630 events across Scotland. This included 47 Event Operational Plans and three National Event Operational Plans for major events such as Royal Week, Edinburgh Hogmanay, US Presidential visits and preparations for the Commonwealth Games 2026.

Alongside this work, community preparedness and resilience remained an important focus. Through Local Resilience Partnerships, Emergency Liaison Groups and national resilience forums, SFRS worked with partners to prepare for severe weather, infrastructure disruption, major events



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IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IDENTIFIED TO ENHANCE ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

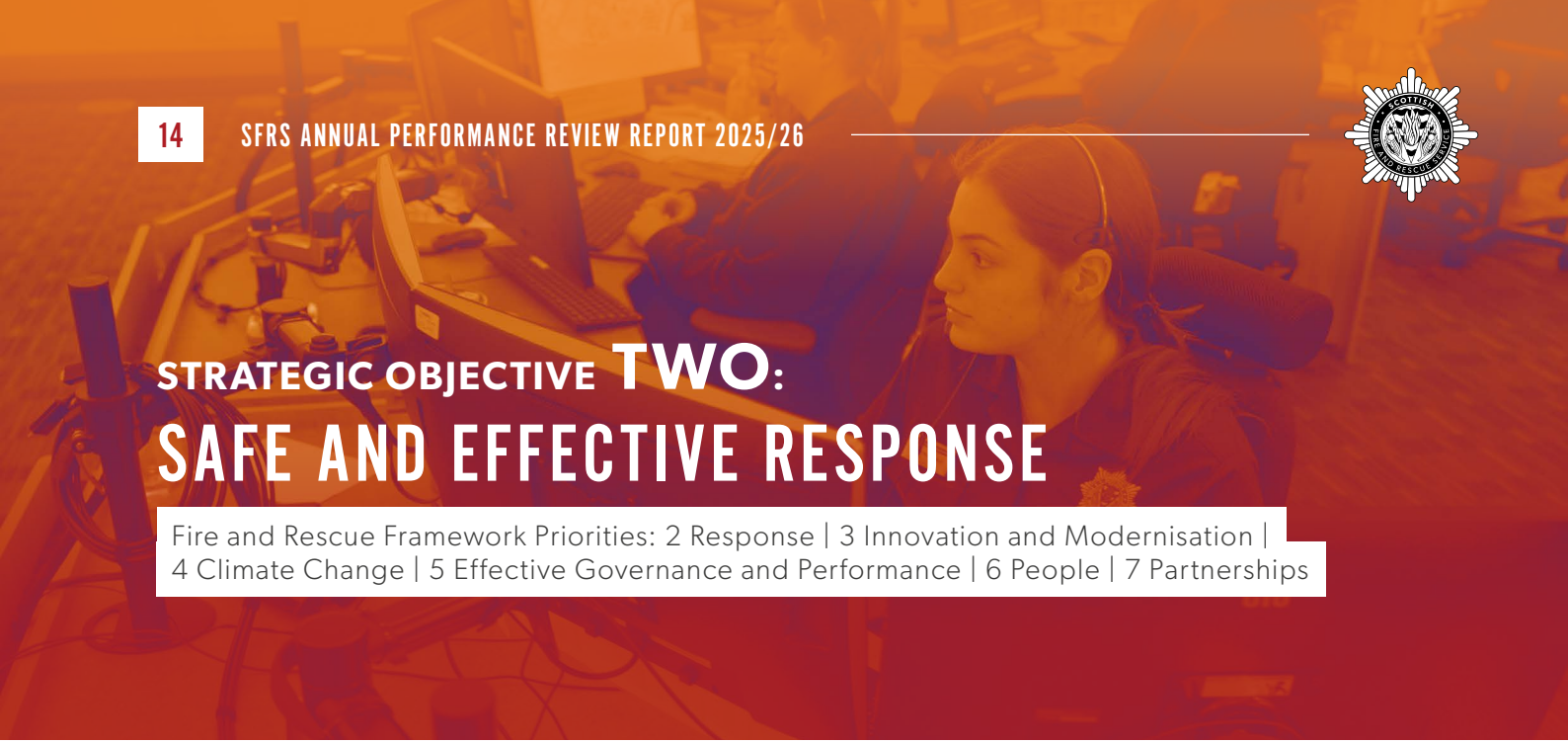
and other emerging risks. SFRS also strengthened the Community Asset Register, helping connect communities and emergency responders with local volunteers, resources and specialist skills during incidents. In addition, work with the Scottish Government, academia and resilience partners supported improved understanding of future risks, including the development of a national Wildfire Danger Assessment system to strengthen Scotland's preparedness for the impacts of climate change.

By using better risk information, planning and partnership working, SFRS is improving its ability to prepare for future risks and support safer, more resilient communities.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

While performance against many prevention measures remains positive, the underlying factors that contribute to community vulnerability remain complex and continue to evolve. Demographic changes, health inequalities, deprivation, and emerging risks associated with climate change will require continued partnership working and targeted intervention to ensure resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact.

Maintaining and expanding prevention activity will also require the Service to balance increasing demand across operational and community safety functions within a constrained financial environment. Future efforts will focus on strengthening evidence-led approaches, enhancing collaborative delivery with partners, and ensuring prevention resources remain aligned to those individuals and communities at greatest risk.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO: SAFE AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

Fire and Rescue Framework Priorities: 2 Response | 3 Innovation and Modernisation | 4 Climate Change | 5 Effective Governance and Performance | 6 People | 7 Partnerships

> **"We are an effective and trusted Fire and Rescue Service where our communities and people are safe."**

In 2025/26, crews attended 78,585 incidents across Scotland.

As incidents and community needs change, SFRS continues to review how resources, processes and response arrangements should develop. The Service Delivery Review, which forms part of the Strategic Service Review Programme, has examined how operational resources can be aligned more closely with current and future risk and demand. The approved changes will support a more resilient and sustainable Service while maintaining effective response arrangements for communities across Scotland.

RESPONDING TO THE GROWING THREAT OF WILDFIRE

Wildfire is a growing risk across the UK, with climate change increasing the likelihood, scale and impact of incidents. Scotland's landscape, weather patterns and extensive rural and remote areas make effective wildfire preparedness increasingly important. SFRS continues to strengthen its wildfire capability to help protect communities, infrastructure and the natural environment.

During 2025/26, SFRS continued to improve wildfire readiness, equipment, training and partnership working. This work was informed by operational experience and learning from major incidents, including the Dava Moor and Carrbridge wildfire, described as the UK's first "megafire". The incident extended across more than 240km in circumference and required a large-scale multi-day response involving around 400 firefighters.

Learning from major wildfire incidents and subsequent debrief activity helped identify opportunities to further strengthen capability and preparedness. This informed improvements to equipment, training, operational procedures, night-time operations and multi-agency working arrangements.





The Wildfire Project was completed across 37 stations. It provided specialist vehicles, all-terrain capability, wildfire equipment and enhanced training. New 4x4 vehicles, wildfire trailers, specialist personal protective equipment and welfare vehicles were introduced to support crews operating in challenging conditions and at prolonged incidents.

Specialist wildfire training also continued, including the development of Wildfire Tactical Advisers and Technical Backburn capability. SFRS chaired the Scottish Wildfire Forum and continued to work with partners through the Scottish Government's Wildfire Strategic Action Plan to strengthen prevention, preparedness, response and recovery arrangements across Scotland.

Together, these improvements are strengthening Scotland's resilience to wildfire, supporting firefighter safety and ensuring SFRS is better prepared to respond to increasingly complex incidents in the future.

While outside the reporting period covered by this report, the major wildfires in the Cairngorms during summer 2026 demonstrated the scale and complexity of the challenge facing Scotland. These incidents reinforced the importance of the capability, training and partnership arrangements developed through SFRS wildfire preparedness work.

STRENGTHENING SPECIALIST RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

SFRS invested in specialist response so crews and commanders can deal with complex and high-risk incidents safely. Progress across specialist areas improved national resilience and support for Incident Commanders.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Ongoing development of a future national Urban Search and Rescue response model, providing a clearer direction for capability development, investment planning and resilience.
- Management of Water and Flood Incidents Tactical Advisors introduced to strengthen command support during complex water rescue incidents.
- Marine Tactical Advisor capability established across all Service Delivery Areas.
- National work progressed to develop a more structured Large Animal Rescue capability.
- National Mass Decontamination capability availability increased.

Work on Urban Search and Rescue gave clearer direction for future capability. It also helped identify risks in areas such as trench rescue and confined

space operations, supporting better future investment decisions.

Water and marine response capability was strengthened. New tactical advisors now support Incident Commanders at complex water, flooding, river search, vessel, port and coastal incidents.

SFRS worked on a more consistent national approach to Large Animal Rescue. This supports community wellbeing, firefighter safety and improved planning for these types of incidents.

Mass Decontamination readiness improved significantly. A review of equipment and arrangements increased capability availability, improving readiness for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive events and large hazardous materials incidents.

SFRS also progressed on Detection, Identification and Monitoring equipment. This will improve preparedness for hazardous materials incidents and strengthen specialist capability management.

These developments improve SFRS's ability to respond to complex incidents, protect communities and support firefighter safety.

DEVELOPING OPERATIONAL COMPETENCE AND FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

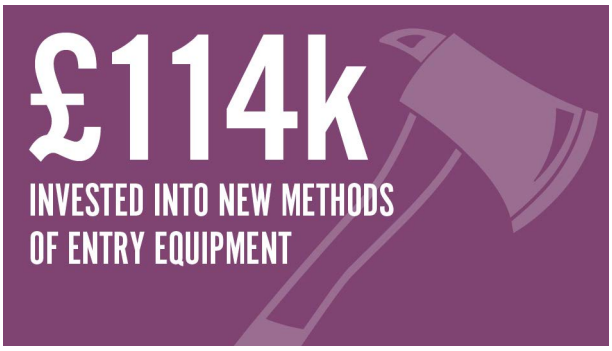
A safe and effective response depends on crews having the right skills, knowledge and confidence. SFRS continued to invest in training, standards and equipment so operational staff can respond safely to a wide range of incidents.

During 2025/26, SFRS continued to strengthen the connection between operational risk, training, health and safety, assurance and organisational learning. Training standards and operational guidance establish the required controls; training and competence arrangements support their implementation; and assurance, audit, debrief and investigation activity tests whether those controls are understood and operating effectively. Findings are progressed through established governance arrangements so that learning can inform changes to policy, training, equipment and operational practice. This integrated approach supports continuous improvement and provides greater organisational assurance over firefighter safety and operational readiness.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- National Safe Working at Height Tier 1 and Tier 2 rollout progressed across Scotland.
- £114,000 invested in new Methods of Entry equipment to improve firefighter safety and operational effectiveness.
- National extrication training standards modernised through collaboration with UK Rescue Organisation and Scottish Ambulance Service partners.
- Flexi Duty Officer Continuing Professional Development programme delivered across all fire groups using immersive simulation technology.
- Operational risk assessment learning enhanced through updated training and guidance.
- Training Standards Review Project launched to modernise national training standards.





Safe Working at Height training and equipment continued to be rolled out across Scotland. This gives crews improved skills and equipment for working at height and carrying out time-critical rescues, especially in remote and rural areas.

During 2025/26, SFRS completed the Post-COVID Breathing Apparatus Recovery Programme. The programme was introduced to address the impact of pandemic restrictions on operational training and involved firefighters from across the Service. Its completion provided assurance that operational competence had been strengthened in critical firefighting skills, supporting firefighter safety and preparedness for high-risk incidents. The learning from the programme has also informed a new Tactical Firefighting training approach for the future.

SFRS invested £114,000 in new Methods of Entry equipment. These tools improve access at incidents and reduce the physical strain on crews, helping lower the risk of injury.

Road traffic collision and casualty extrication training standards were updated with the UK Rescue Organisation and Scottish Ambulance Service. This supports safer, more consistent rescue work and improved outcomes for casualties.

SFRS also improved governance and assurance around specialist roles and training quality. This gives better confidence that training, competence and development are aligned to operational needs and future risks.

Leadership and command development remained a top priority. The first Flexi Duty Officer Continuing Professional Development programme used immersive simulation to help commanders practice decision making in realistic incident scenarios.

SFRS improved operational risk assessment guidance and learning materials. This supports better use of dynamic and analytical risk assessment at incidents and helps crews and commanders make safer decisions.

The Training Standards Review Project was launched to update national training standards and ensure they remain linked to operational risk, national guidance and future service needs.

This work helps maintain a skilled and resilient workforce, supports firefighter safety and keeps crews prepared for the changing risks facing Scotland's communities.

LEARNING, ASSURANCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

SFRS continued to use learning from incidents, audits and operational experience to improve firefighter safety, readiness and service performance.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Organisational Learning Group arrangements strengthened to improve oversight, accountability, and action tracking.
- National Premises Compliance Framework implemented across operational locations.
- Operational Assurance audit findings used to identify organisational strengths, risks, and improvement opportunities.
- Operational risk assessment training and guidance enhanced to support safer decision making.
- New audit arrangements developed to improve consistency, governance, and organisational learning.
- Document Conversion Project continued to improve accessibility and consistency of operational guidance.

The Organisational Learning Group improved how learning is captured, reviewed and tracked. Stronger reporting and action tracking made it easier to see what learning is being taken forward and why.

Operational Assurance audits provided insight into station readiness, equipment testing, record keeping, preparedness and health and safety arrangements. The findings identified good practice and highlighted where greater consistency is needed across the Service.

The National Premises Compliance Framework improved oversight of compliance risks across operational locations.

Operational risk assessment was strengthened through updated guidance, better learning materials and closer links between policy, training and assurance.

The Document Conversion Project continued to replace older operational documents with clearer, more consistent guidance aligned to National Operational Guidance and operational learning.

SFRS also contributed to national learning, policy development and resilience planning through engagement with the Scottish Government, emergency responders, academic institutions and sector partners. This included participation in national resilience forums, contribution to post-Grenfell fire safety and cladding oversight arrangements, support for the development of a national Wildfire Danger Assessment system, and leadership of initiatives that strengthen information sharing and preparedness across Scotland. Through this work, SFRS helped ensure operational experience, evidence and professional expertise informed national policy, guidance and resilience planning.

Learning from major incidents, including significant wildfire activity in 2025, identified ways to improve resilience, communications, coordination and partnership working.

By turning learning into practical improvements, SFRS continues to improve operational performance, readiness and firefighter safety.

MODERNISING OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

SFRS continued to modernise frontline equipment, communications, vehicles and training facilities. This helps crews respond safely and effectively to changing risks across Scotland.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Completion of the transition from analogue to digital handheld radios.
- Continued rollout of new Rescue Pumps and Light Pumps.
- New Rope Rescue Units prepared for operational deployment.
- Thermal Imaging Camera replacement programme progressed.
- Investigation and development work undertaken to support future drone capability.
- Local Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) facilities replaced.
- New Structural Collapse Simulator completed at the National Training Centre.

A key milestone was the move from analogue to digital handheld radios. The new radios provide clearer, more reliable communications, improved support for incident command and improved interoperability with emergency service partners.

Investment continued in operational vehicles and frontline equipment, including Rescue Pumps, Light Pumps, Rope Rescue Units, Command Support Units and aerial appliances.

SFRS explored new ways to improve operational effectiveness, including future drone capability and better integration between equipment and operational systems. These developments will support better incident intelligence and decision making.

Training facilities were improved, including replacement local Compartment Fire Behaviour Training facilities, a new Structural Collapse

Simulator at the National Training Centre and progress on a new regional Compartment Fire Behaviour Training facility in Perth.

Other programmes supported new breathing apparatus systems, thermal imaging cameras, specialist rescue equipment and hazardous materials detection capability.

RESPONDING TO MAJOR AND COMPLEX EMERGENCIES

SFRS continued to improve its response to major, complex emergencies and other high-risk events. The Service focused on making sure crews, commanders and specialist responders have the right information, training and support.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Enhanced preparedness for Marauding Terrorist Attacks (MTA) and Mass Casualty Incidents through expanded specialist responder capability and improved command arrangements.
- Blackberry AtHoc introduced to improve mobilisation and deployment of specialist responders and National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers.
- Airbox MOSAIC platform implemented to strengthen multi-agency situational awareness and information sharing.
- New deployment and identification arrangements introduced to improve command oversight and responder safety during MTA incidents.

The Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism Unit delivered training and planning activity to strengthen the Service's response to terrorist incidents and mass casualty events. This included improving specialist responder resilience, succession planning, command arrangements and deployment processes.



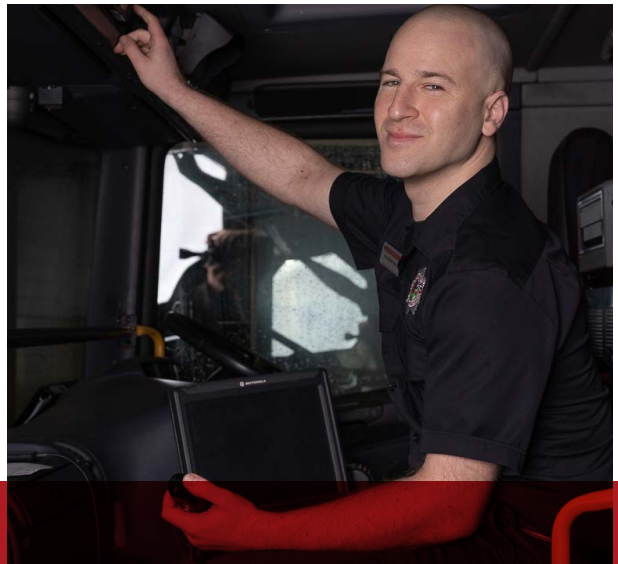
Blackberry AtHoc was introduced to help quickly identify, contact and deploy specialist responders and National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers during time-critical incidents.

The Airbox MOSAIC platform was introduced with Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service. It supports live information sharing, responder tracking and a shared view of major incidents, helping commanders make better decisions.

These changes strengthen SFRS's ability to respond to the most serious incidents, improve firefighter and public safety, and support better joint working with partner agencies.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Overall, progress under this objective shows a Service continuing to strengthen operational readiness, specialist capability, firefighter safety and learning from incidents. The continuing challenge is to deliver these improvements at pace while managing ageing assets, complex incident types and the growing operational consequences of climate change within a challenging funding envelope.





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE:
INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

Fire and Rescue Framework Priorities: 5 Effective Governance and Performance | 6 People | 7 Partnerships

Our people feel valued and are supported by a culture that embraces diversity and inclusion, empowerment, and accountability.

Our people are SFRS's greatest asset. Every day, they deliver prevention, protection, response and support services that help keep communities safe. The Service depends on the commitment, professionalism and skills of its workforce. Investing in people means supporting health, wellbeing, development, inclusion and future workforce planning, so staff have the support and skills they need to serve communities now and in the future.

7,570 EMPLOYEES

OUR PEOPLE

- 7,570 employees
- 3,430 Wholetime Operational Firefighters
- 3,001 On Call Operational Firefighters
- 60 Rural Full-time Staff
- 177 Operations Control Staff
- 902 Support Staff



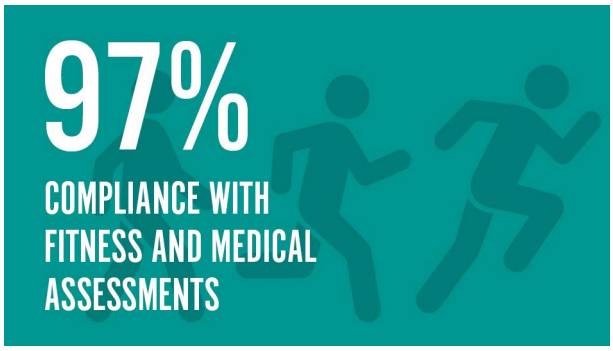
SUPPORTING HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The health, safety and wellbeing of our people are essential to a safe and effective Service. During 2025/26, SFRS improved wellbeing support, occupational health services and firefighter safety. The aim is to help staff stay healthy, feel supported and carry out their roles safely throughout their careers.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Compliance with fitness and medical assessments restored to 97% through delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Recovery Programme.
- In-house physiotherapy provision made a permanent part of the organisational structure following positive outcomes and demonstrated return on investment.
- Wellbeing Champion network expanded to more than 200 trained champions across the Service.
- Service-wide MSK Injury Prevention Month delivered to promote injury prevention and physical wellbeing.
- Health and Wellbeing Roadshows expanded access to wellbeing support across Scotland.
- Continued implementation of the Fire Contaminants Standard Operating Procedure supported by approximately £3 million of investment.
- Development of a new Operational Welfare and Relief Strategy to provide additional support during operational incidents.
- Review of stress management arrangements completed, supporting a more proactive approach to psychological wellbeing.

Wellbeing remained a priority. The Wellbeing Team delivered activity to support physical and mental health, encourage early help and improve access to support. MSK Injury Prevention Month gave staff practical advice on injury prevention, recovery, nutrition, fitness and rehabilitation. This supports both personal wellbeing and operational readiness.



Health and Wellbeing Roadshows gave staff direct access to advice, assessments and specialist support. These events covered fitness, musculoskeletal health, mental wellbeing and lifestyle factors that affect long-term health and resilience.

SFRS made strong progress on occupational health. The Health and Wellbeing Recovery Programme restored fitness and medical assessment compliance to 97%. Since January 2026, asbestos-related medical screening has started for operational staff. Return-to-work support was improved through physiotherapy, fitness programmes and occupational health input. In-house physiotherapy is now a permanent part of the support available to staff.

Peer support also improved. The Wellbeing Champion network grew to more than 200 trained champions, giving staff more local access to support. SFRS developed an Operational Welfare and Relief Strategy covering welfare, fatigue, hydration, rest and recovery during routine and long-running incidents. This work supports a safer, healthier workforce and helps maintain operational readiness.

PROTECTING FIREFIGHTERS FROM CONTAMINANTS

Protecting firefighters from contaminants remains a major health and safety priority. Firefighting can expose crews to harmful substances that may affect long-term health. SFRS has introduced measures to reduce exposure, improve decontamination and protect firefighter wellbeing.

£3m

INVESTED INTO EQUIPMENT, FACILITIES AND WORKING PRACTICES TO PROTECT FROM CONTAMINANTS

During 2025/26, the Fire Contaminants Standard Operating Procedure continued to be embedded across the Service, supported by the SFRS Contaminants Group and the Fire Brigades Union. Around £3 million has been invested in equipment, facilities and working practices to reduce exposure and improve firefighter safety.

Key improvements implemented during the year include:

- 2,200 reserve sets of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) made available across the Service.
- 36 reserve PPE stock locations established to support operational resilience.
- 353 contaminated PPE storage boxes deployed.
- 373 station zoning plans introduced to reduce the spread of contaminants within operational premises.
- 1,000 shampoo and bodywash dispensers installed in fire station shower facilities.
- Enhanced PPE laundering and recording arrangements implemented across the Service.
- Additional breathing apparatus cleaning facilities introduced at training centres.

These changes help reduce contamination before, during and after incidents. They give crews improved access to the equipment, facilities and processes needed to protect their health.

This work reflects national evidence and good practice. During the year, the National Fire Chiefs Council published its position statement on contaminants, reinforcing the importance of reducing exposure and protecting firefighter health.

By investing in facilities, equipment and safe systems of work, SFRS is reducing potential long-term health risks and creating safer working environments for firefighters across Scotland.

ADVANCING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

SFRS is committed to ensuring everyone feels valued, respected and able to contribute. During 2025/26, the Service continued to improve workplace culture, remove barriers and ensure decisions consider the needs of our workforce and communities.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Women's Experience Liaison Forum drove improvements relating to workplace inclusion, PPE, and maternity support.
- Revised support arrangements implemented for employees who are pregnant, on maternity leave or returning to work.
- Second annual Women in the Fire Service development and networking event delivered.
- SFRS maintained Gold Status under the Stonewall Proud Employer scheme.
- SFRS continued to strengthen support for the Armed Forces community through the work of the Veterans and Reservists Group.
- Continued review of recruitment and selection processes to improve inclusivity, accessibility, and workforce representation.

Equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights were built into service delivery and employment practices. Employee networks and the Organisational Culture and Leadership Programme helped increase staff voice and improve understanding of different experiences across the Service.

The Women's Experience Liaison Forum helped identify and address issues affecting women in the



workplace. This included PPE, facilities, pregnancy, maternity leave and return-to-work support. A revised management checklist was introduced so staff receive more consistent support.

The second Women in the Fire Service development and networking event supported learning, discussion and peer support, including topics such as women's health and operational experiences.

SFRS reviewed policies and guidance to support safer and more inclusive workplaces. This included work on preventing sexual harassment and supporting transgender employees. SFRS maintained Gold Status under the Stonewall Proud Employer scheme.

Improving workforce diversity remains a long-term priority. Work progressed to improve recruitment and selection so SFRS can attract a wider range of candidates and reduce barriers to employment. This includes developing more inclusive recruitment approaches, improving accessibility and strengthening engagement with communities that remain under-represented within the workforce.

SFRS also continued to strengthen support for the Armed Forces community through the work of the Veterans and Reservists Group. During 2025/26, work progressed to enhance support networks and engagement opportunities for veterans and reservists, while recognising the skills, experience and leadership they bring to the Service. Engagement with Armed Forces partners helped promote career opportunities within SFRS and support employment pathways for service leavers. A new Veterans and Reservists Framework was introduced to support the Armed Forces community across the Service, alongside leadership development activity designed to strengthen individual effectiveness and team performance. This work supported delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant and contributed to maintaining the Service's Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award status.

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments continue to be used in decision making. These consider protected characteristics, care experienced young people, carers and socio-economic disadvantage. SFRS continues to meet statutory duties on equality, human rights, corporate parenting and Gaelic language.

Partnership work also continued. Around 40 SFRS employees volunteered as mentors to care experienced young people through organisations such as Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways.

This work supports the creation of a more inclusive culture where people feel respected, supported and able to succeed. It helps SFRS better reflect and serve Scotland's communities.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP, SKILLS, AND PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

SFRS continued to invest in leadership, learning and professional skills during 2025/26. This helps staff do their current roles well, prepare for future roles and meet the changing needs of the Service. The Service focused on practical leadership development, vocational learning, better training systems and stronger quality assurance.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- 221 colleagues participated in Leadership Essentials programmes across 17 sessions.
- Six NFCC leadership programmes delivered across Supervisory and Middle Manager levels.
- 829 active learners supported across Modern Apprenticeships, SVQs, Learning and Development Awards and Core Skills programmes.
- 443 learners achieved certification during the reporting period.
- Approximately £662,000 in apprenticeship funding secured through Skills Development Scotland programmes.
- Workforce Pro training management system successfully launched for support staff.
- Learning and E-Development Team received the LearnPro Excellence in Partnership Award.

Leadership development remained a priority. SFRS continued work on a Leadership and Management Development Framework to give staff a clearer and more consistent route for developing leadership skills. The Leadership Essentials programme supported current and future leaders to build practical skills in communication, feedback, people management and day-to-day leadership.

SFRS worked with the National Fire Chiefs Council to deliver recognised leadership programmes. Six programmes were delivered for Supervisory and Middle Managers. Feedback showed these programmes improved confidence and leadership capability and helped create more consistent leadership standards across the Service.



Investment in skills and professional development continued through a wide range of learning opportunities. The Learning Partner Group reviewed and prioritised more than 200 learning and development requests. This helped ensure learning investment was focused on operational need, legal requirements and Service priorities.

Apprenticeship and vocational learning continued at scale. During the year, 829 learners were supported through Modern Apprenticeships, Scottish Vocational Qualifications, Learning and Development Awards and Core Skills programmes. A total of 443 learners achieved certification. Around £662,000 of apprenticeship funding was secured through Skills Development Scotland to support future workforce development.

SFRS also improved its learning systems. Workforce Pro was introduced for support staff, giving a more consistent way to plan, record and manage learning. This supports compliance, workforce planning and personal development. The Learning and E-Development Team received the LearnPro Excellence in Partnership Award for its work on learning technology that supports safety, readiness and compliance.

Learning at Work Week helped promote a culture of continuous learning, with flexible opportunities for staff across the Service. Other development activity included appraisal workshops and presentation skills sessions.

This work supports SFRS to build a skilled, confident and adaptable workforce with clearer development routes and learning linked to Service needs.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE FOR THE FUTURE

SFRS needs enough skilled people, in the right roles, to keep delivering services safely now and in

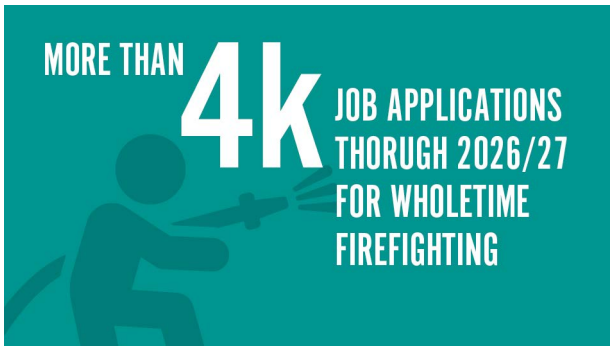
the future. During 2025/26, the Service improved workforce planning, recruitment routes and career pathways. This helps match staffing decisions to service demand, budgets and long-term workforce needs.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 4,000 applications received through the 2026/27 Wholetime Firefighter recruitment campaign.
- Highest-ever female recruit intake achieved, with 12 women representing 17% of a Wholetime Firefighter trainee course.
- Two Operations Control Trainee Firefighter Development courses delivered.
- Promotion processes delivered from Crew Commander through to Deputy Assistant Chief Officer level.
- New Retained Duty System to Wholetime Firefighter Migration Procedure implemented.
- Evaluation of revised Retained Duty System Terms and Conditions commenced.

Workforce planning remained a major focus, especially for operational roles. SFRS reviewed future staffing needs, including expected retirements, pension changes and wider workforce trends. This supports better planning for recruitment, promotion and training, so staffing levels remain aligned to operational need and available resources.

There was strong interest in Wholetime Firefighter careers. Improvements to the recruitment process gave candidates improved information, support and communication during assessment. Digital and social media activity helped promote the role more widely. More than 4,000 applications were received for the 2026/27 recruitment campaign, supporting efforts to attract people from underrepresented groups.



SFRS made progress on workforce diversity. The final trainee course of 2025/26 had the highest number of female recruits in SFRS history, with 12 women making up 17% of the intake. More progress is still needed to ensure the workforce better reflects Scotland's communities, but this demonstrates the positive impact of targeted attraction, engagement and recruitment activity. SFRS will continue to focus on reducing barriers to entry and encouraging applications from under-represented groups.

To support Operations Control, two Trainee Firefighter Development courses were delivered. These helped maintain control room resilience, support the introduction of the New Mobilising System and meet future staffing needs.

SFRS continued to support career progression. Promotion processes were delivered across operational and control roles, from Crew Commander to Deputy Assistant Chief Officer level. A new annual promotion resource plan gives staff improved information about future opportunities and helps them plan their development. The promotion framework was reviewed to improve guidance, processes and governance.



A key development was the new Retained Duty System to Wholetime Firefighter Migration Procedure. This gives experienced On Call firefighters a clear and consistent route into Wholetime roles and supports the Wholetime Target Operating Model. Initial transition programmes were delivered, and learning is being gathered to improve the process.

SFRS started evaluating the standardised Retained Duty System Terms and Conditions introduced in January 2025. The evaluation will look at the impact on recruitment, retention and appliance availability, and will help inform future planning for the On Call workforce.

Through improved workforce planning, targeted recruitment and clearer career pathways, SFRS is building a workforce that can meet future demand. This helps ensure the Service has the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles to serve Scotland's communities.



STRENGTHENING CULTURE, INCLUSION AND EMPLOYEE VOICE

SFRS is committed to a positive and inclusive culture where people feel respected, listened to and able to contribute. During 2025/26, the Service focused on improving culture, strengthening employee voice and ensuring fairness, inclusion and engagement are part of decision making.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Organisational Culture and Leadership Programme established as a strategic change programme.
- Seven priority culture and leadership workstreams agreed and progressed.
- Cultural Advisory Panel established to provide employee input and external expertise.
- Review of SFRS Values commenced as part of wider culture development activity.
- New quarterly Support Staff Representative Forum introduced.
- Development of a new SFRS People Plan progressed through extensive employee and representative body engagement.

The Organisational Culture and Leadership Programme continued as a major change programme. It focuses on improving culture, leadership and staff experience across the Service. Seven priority workstreams were agreed, covering values, leadership development, inclusive recruitment, employee voice, partnership working, inclusive facilities and professional standards. A key aim was to give employees more ways to influence the future of SFRS. Employee Voice workstreams were developed to improve engagement, support staff networks and strengthen partnership working. A Cultural Advisory Panel was introduced, bringing together employee representatives and external specialists to provide challenge, insight and independent views.

SFRS also began planning future work to review its values, helping ensure they continue to support the development of a modern, inclusive and future-focused organisation. SFRS began developing more values-based and inclusive recruitment approaches to help attract a wider range of people and better reflect Scotland's communities.

Partnership working with representative bodies remained important. Following a review of the Working Together Framework, a new quarterly Support Staff Representative Forum was introduced. This strengthens existing consultation and engagement arrangements, providing a dedicated forum for support staff, trade unions and management to discuss issues and share feedback.

Partnership working with representative bodies also supported the development of organisational policies, programmes and workforce initiatives. This included continued collaboration with the Fire Brigades Union through the Contaminants Group, which helped shape and implement measures to reduce firefighter exposure to contaminants and improve health and safety. Representative bodies also continued to contribute to discussions on workforce, wellbeing, culture and change programmes, helping ensure employee views informed decision-making across the Service.



SFRS continued to support Fair Work principles through engagement on pay, reward and workforce policies. After the two-year support staff pay agreement ended, work started on a wider review of the Support Staff Pay and Reward Framework. This will help ensure future arrangements are fair, clear and aligned to workforce and organisational needs.

SFRS progressed a new SFRS People Plan. Staff, representative bodies and stakeholders were involved in shaping the Plan. Once published, it will set out how SFRS will support its people, develop skills and improve staff experience across the Service.

This work supports SFRS to build a culture where people feel valued, supported and able to speak up. It supports better trust, stronger teamwork and a more modern and effective Fire and Rescue Service for Scotland.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Significant progress has been made in establishing the foundations for workforce, leadership, wellbeing, and cultural development. However, many of these programmes represent long-term organisational change rather than outcomes that can be fully realised within a single reporting year.

Embedding improvements in organisational culture, leadership capability, inclusion, wellbeing, and workforce sustainability will require sustained effort over future years. Priority will continue to be given to implementing the People Plan, delivering the Leadership and Culture Programme, strengthening workforce planning arrangements, and ensuring the Service remains an employer that attracts, develops, and retains a diverse and skilled workforce.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR: IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Fire and Rescue Framework Priorities: 3 Innovation and Modernisation | 5 Effective Governance and Performance | 7 Partnerships

Our organisational performance, productivity and resilience continually improves.

Good performance depends on clear decisions, strong governance and reliable information. These foundations help SFRS use resources effectively, remain accountable and continue improving services for communities.

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE, PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC DELIVERY

Strong governance and performance management help SFRS stay focused on the right priorities. During 2025/26, the Service improved how it plans, monitors and reviews performance, so decisions are better linked to risk, resources and community outcomes.



2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- SFRS Strategy 2025-28 published, establishing a new strategic direction for the Service.
- Three-Year Delivery Plan introduced to provide a clear framework for delivery and performance monitoring.
- Development and Board approval of a new Performance Management approach.
- Continued to refine Portfolio Governance and arrangements to support an evolving Change Portfolio.
- Corporate Governance audit concluded with a significant assurance opinion.
- New Operations Performance Management Framework implemented.
- Capability Assurance activity expanded across specialist operational capabilities.

A major milestone was publishing the SFRS Strategy 2025–28 and the Three-Year Delivery Plan. These set out what the Service will focus on over the next three years and how progress will be monitored. They also link our priorities to the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland and the long-term direction of the Service.

A new Performance Management approach was developed and approved by the Board in April 2026. It links strategy, delivery plans, performance indicators, risk and assurance. This is intended to provide leaders and the Board with clearer, more integrated information to support purposeful scrutiny of organisational performance, informed decision-making and effective oversight of strategic priorities.

A new Operations Performance Management Framework was introduced. This gives Operations a more consistent way to monitor progress, manage risk and review improvement activity.

Capability Assurance work improved oversight of specialist operational capabilities. This helps identify performance issues, improvement needs and future investment priorities.

Governance for change projects continued to mature during the reporting period. Portfolio Governance and Assurance arrangements were refined to strengthen oversight of investment decisions, project delivery, benefits realisation and strategic priorities.

The Change Portfolio Investment Group and Change Portfolio Progress Group provide structured routes for scrutiny and decision making.

The Design and Assurance Forum provided challenge and review before projects moved into delivery. This helps ensure proposed solutions are practical, affordable and aligned with business, technology, data and process requirements.

Internal Audit reviewed Corporate Governance arrangements and gave a significant assurance opinion. This means the governance framework was found to be well designed and operating effectively.

These changes help SFRS make better decisions, track delivery more clearly and strengthen accountability.

DELIVERING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

SFRS needs to keep improving so it can meet future challenges. During 2025/26, the Service strengthened how change projects are managed, prioritised and delivered.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Strategy & Change Function operating model embedded to provide a more structured approach to change delivery and continuous improvement.
- Service Improvement Foundation Course completed across three cohorts, with 76 employees achieving Lean Competency System qualifications.
- Change Community of Practice re-established to share learning, tools, and best practice across the Service.
- Revised demand management process embedded to improve prioritisation and governance of change activity.
- Business Readiness approach introduced across major change projects to support successful implementation and benefits realisation.

The Strategy and Change function embedded its operating model. This provides clearer support for continuous improvement, portfolio management, governance, business design and programme delivery.

A revised demand management process improved how change proposals are assessed and prioritised. This means new work is assessed against strategic fit, affordability, risk and capacity before it moves forward. Business Readiness arrangements were introduced to help teams prepare for change and realise benefits.

The Service also invested in improvement skills. In partnership with Cardiff University, 76 employees completed the Service Improvement Foundation

Course and achieved Lean Competency System qualifications. Participants used improvement methods on real SFRS challenges linked to strategic priorities.

The Change Community of Practice was re-established so colleagues can share tools, learning and experience. This supports more consistent and confident delivery of change across the Service.

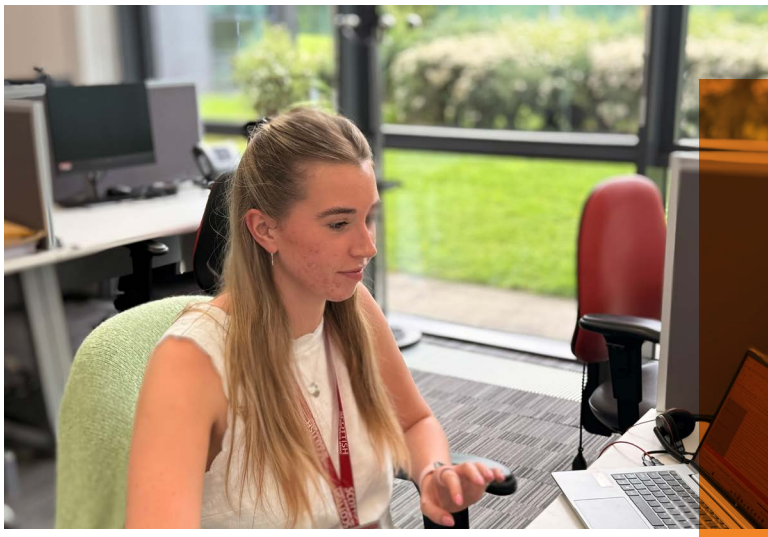
These changes improve SFRS's ability to deliver change in a more structured, practical and sustainable way.

USING DATA, INSIGHT AND TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT BETTER DECISION MAKING

Good decisions need accurate and timely information. SFRS improved how it uses data, reporting and digital tools so leaders and teams can better understand performance, risk and delivery. This helps leaders and operational teams make better-informed decisions for communities across Scotland.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Continued implementation and development of the Wrike Project and Portfolio Management platform.
- Portfolio reporting enhanced through improved cost, time, benefits, and resource management information.
- Development of a new Operational Intelligence Power BI dashboard to provide improved performance insight and risk visibility.
- Financial reporting arrangements matured, improving transparency and oversight of change investment.
- Increased use of analytical tools and management information to support organisational planning and decision making.



Wrike continued to be embedded as the project and portfolio management system. It supports planning, resource management, dependency tracking and reporting across change projects. This reduces manual work and gives improved visibility of progress.

Portfolio reporting improved. Better information on cost, time, benefits and resources helps senior leaders identify issues earlier and take action. Financial reporting also improved transparency around project funding and spend.

Data and analytical insight supported both operational and strategic decision making during 2025/26. Information on incidents, risk, community vulnerability and operational activity was used to support prevention planning, resource allocation and the Service Delivery Review. This helped ensure decisions were informed by evidence and aligned with current and emerging risks across Scotland.

SFRS also expanded its use of business intelligence tools to improve understanding of operational risk and service demand. Development of a new Operational Intelligence Power BI dashboard brought together information on incidents, risk, high-risk premises and operational activity, providing improved insight to support prevention activity, operational planning, resource deployment and performance monitoring.

Together, these developments are helping SFRS become a more evidence-led organisation. Improved

data, reporting and analytical insight support decisions about prevention, response, resource allocation and organisational change, helping the Service deliver better outcomes for communities.

STRENGTHENING ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE AND ASSURANCE

Good assurance, risk management and resilience help maintain public trust and support safe, effective services. During 2025/26, SFRS improved assurance arrangements, strengthened risk oversight and continued work on cyber security.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Cyber Security improvement programme progressed following an independent maturity assessment.
- Internal Audit programme delivered across key areas including Risk Management, Budgetary Management, Freedom of Information and Estates Management.
- Quarterly audit performance reporting and scrutiny maintained through the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- Improved governance and oversight arrangements for organisational assurance frameworks.
- Continued focus on risk management, assurance, and resilience across strategic and operational activities.

SFRS strengthened cyber resilience after an independent Cyber Security Maturity Assessment. This informed a multi-year improvement programme. Cyber security remains a significant corporate risk and will need continued focus across the Service.

Independent assurance remained important. BDO was appointed as Internal Auditor and reviewed areas including Risk Management, Budgetary Management and Investment Prioritisation, Personal Protective Equipment, Estates and Facilities Management, and Freedom of Information.

SFRS monitors audit actions during the year and reports progress to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee through an audit dashboard. This helps ensure improvement actions are followed up and completed.

Assurance work is now more closely linked to performance and risk management through strengthened governance and reporting arrangements, including enhanced assurance reporting to the Board and its Committees. Independent audit work found that governance structures, reporting processes and scrutiny arrangements were operating effectively, providing clearer oversight of performance, risk and internal control. This has improved visibility of organisational strengths, emerging risks and areas requiring management action.

Risk management continues to support organisational resilience. Audit activity, assurance reviews and governance scrutiny help SFRS identify, manage and respond to strategic risks.

Overall, these arrangements help SFRS manage risk, protect public resources and maintain confidence in the Service.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

The Service has continued to strengthen its governance, planning, assurance, and performance management arrangements during the reporting period. While these developments provide an important foundation, the longer-term challenge will be ensuring that new frameworks, processes, and reporting arrangements translate into measurable improvements in organisational performance and delivery outcomes.

Future activity will focus on embedding these arrangements across the organisation, improving the use of performance information to support decision-making, and strengthening the link between strategic planning, resource allocation, and outcomes. Continued attention will also be required to ensure organisational capacity remains aligned to the scale and pace of change being delivered.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FIVE: INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT

Fire and Rescue Framework Priorities: 2 Response | 3 Innovation and Modernisation | 4 Climate Change | 6 People | 7 Partnerships

We are more innovative and achieve sustained investment in our technology, equipment, estate, and fleet, making us more effective and efficient.



DRIVING INNOVATION THROUGH RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND COLLABORATION

Innovation helps SFRS prepare for new risks, changing community needs and future operational challenges. During 2025/26, the Service worked with government, industry, universities and partners to test new ideas, improve firefighter safety, support better decision making and strengthen service delivery.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Continued participation in the Scottish Government's CivTech programme to develop innovative solutions for emergency response and firefighter safety.
- Progressed research and development activity to inform a future national Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) capability.
- Research, Development, Innovation and Implementation (RDII) Group established to support innovation activity across the Service.
- Innovation activity supported developments in operational equipment, mobilising systems and vehicle technology.

A key area of work was SFRS's continued involvement in the Scottish Government's CivTech programme. This brings public, private and third sector organisations together to develop new solutions to difficult public sector challenges.

SFRS worked with industry partners on two main innovation challenges: improving operational

situational awareness and better understanding firefighter exposure to contaminants.

With Rowden Technologies, SFRS continued developing a digital incident management tool. It is designed to improve the shared picture before, during and after incidents by bringing together live information, mapping, risk assessment and incident coordination. Operational staff helped test and review the system. The aim is to give commanders, crews and partners improved information so they can make safer and faster decisions.

Innovation work also focused on firefighter contaminants. SFRS worked with FireHazResearch, led by Professor Anna Stec, to better understand exposure to harmful substances during firefighting. The project uses monitoring equipment, air quality sensors and biological testing to build evidence that can help protect firefighter health. Initial testing has informed further development, with wider trials planned.

SFRS explored future use of Uncrewed Aircraft Systems, or drones. This work looked at how aerial information could support Incident Commanders at wildfires, floods, water rescues and large fires. It considered operating models, governance, training and how drones could improve awareness while reducing firefighter exposure to risk.

The new Research, Development, Innovation and Implementation Group gives SFRS a more structured way to test and develop new ideas. It brings together staff from different functions and supports work with external partners, so that innovation is focused on Service priorities and practical benefits.

Research and partnership working continued to play an important role in innovation. SFRS worked with universities, government, emergency services and industry partners to improve understanding of emerging risks and develop evidence-led solutions. This included collaboration on lithium-ion battery fire research, development of a national Wildfire Danger Assessment system, and joint fire investigation research with academic and forensic partners. These partnerships help ensure operational practice, training and future investment decisions are informed by the best available evidence and emerging knowledge.

Innovation activity also supported major Service improvement programmes, including new Breathing Apparatus (BA) capability, development of the future National Mobilising System (NMS), and deployment of Integrated Vehicle Systems (IVS). These initiatives are covered elsewhere in this review but collectively demonstrate how innovation is being applied to enhance firefighter safety, strengthen operational effectiveness and support future readiness.

Through research, collaboration and new technology, SFRS is developing safer and more effective ways of working for firefighters, partners and communities.



HARNESSING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Digital technology strengthens how SFRS manages information, records work and makes decisions. During 2025/26, new digital tools reduced manual processes, improved data quality and gave staff better access to information.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Secure Technology Asset Register application launched to provide a single source of truth for secure technology assets.
- Community Safety Engagement Activities application introduced to improve recording and reporting of engagement activity across Scotland.
- Transitioned to the Fire and Rescue Data Platform (FaRDaP), providing a modern and resilient national platform for incident recording and operational data.
- Electronic contractor sign-in solution implemented across the estate, replacing paper-based processes.
- Wildfire Tactical Advisor digital application developed to support operational decision-making during wildfire incidents.
- Operational Intelligence Reference and Resources Hub developed to support operational personnel.
- Hydrant inspection and maintenance planning tool developed to support a more risk-based and efficient approach to hydrant management.

The Data and Technology Solutions team developed several new applications using reusable digital components. This makes future development faster and reduces duplication. One example was the Secure Technology Asset Register, which gives SFRS one reliable place to manage secure technology assets such as Airwave radios.

A new Community Safety Engagement Activities application replaced older systems and spreadsheets. It provides a more consistent way to record and report community safety work across Scotland, improving data quality and reducing administration.

SFRS completed the transition to the Fire and Rescue Data Platform (FaRDaP), a new national system for recording and managing incident data. The platform provides a modern and resilient data infrastructure that improves efficiency, data quality and operational learning across the Service.

Digital tools were used to improve estate management. A new electronic contractor sign-in system replaced paper records at stations and other premises. This supports health and safety, improves audit records and makes contractor activity easier to monitor.

Operational response was supported through digital innovation. A Wildfire Tactical Advisor application was developed to replace paper-based processes with a mobile tool. It uses mapping and geographic information to provide live mapping, documents and collaboration tools during wildfire incidents.

Operational Intelligence improved how information is accessed. The new Operational Intelligence Reference and Resources Hub is being developed as one place for operational guidance and information on building construction, specialist rescue and emerging risks such as wildfire, hydrogen and Battery Energy Storage Systems.

A new hydrant inspection and maintenance planning tool was developed. It uses simple visual status indicators to help plan inspections and maintenance more efficiently. This should reduce unnecessary journeys, support better resource planning and help reduce vehicle mileage.

These digital developments support operational effectiveness, reduce administration and improve access to information.

INVESTING IN FLEET, EQUIPMENT AND OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY

SFRS requires modern, reliable vehicles, equipment and technology so crews can respond safely and effectively. During 2025/26, investment continued in frontline appliances, specialist equipment and operational technology to improve firefighter safety and support long-term resilience.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Introduction of new 18-tonne Rescue Pumps as part of a long-term fleet replacement programme.
- Progression of the Detection, Identification and Monitoring vehicle replacement programme.
- Commencement of a major project to renew Breathing Apparatus.
- Thermal Imaging Camera replacement programme initiated.
- High Reach vehicle replacement programme progressed to support future operational resilience.
- Twenty-four new Light Pumping Units commissioned to replace ageing volunteer appliances, with deployment being prioritised to the highest-risk locations based on operational need, asset condition, and fleet resilience requirements.
- Continued investment in light fleet replacement and expansion of the electric vehicle programme.



Fleet and equipment modernisation continued throughout the year. New Rescue Pumps began entering operational service as part of a long-term replacement programme. These appliances provide improved reliability, better equipment and stronger frontline capability.

Specialist response capability improved through continued work on replacement Detection, Identification and Monitoring vehicles. These support complex rescue and hazardous materials incidents.

Firefighter safety was supported through replacement and improvement programmes. This included work on commencement of a major project to provide new breathing apparatus with modern telemetry and lighter cylinders, replacement thermal imaging cameras, hydraulic rescue equipment, lifting and stabilisation equipment, and improved cleaning and maintenance arrangements for respiratory protection.

SFRS continued planning for future capability needs, including replacement High Reach vehicles and specialist aerial appliances. This helps ensure operational assets match current and future risk.

SFRS also invested in the wider fleet. Twenty-four new Light Pumping Units were commissioned to replace end-of-life volunteer appliances that are significantly beyond their planned replacement date and increasingly difficult to maintain due to limited manufacturer support. Given the associated risks to performance, reliability and SFRS's ability to maintain a compliant fleet, deployment is being managed through a careful assessment process to ensure the new appliances are allocated to the highest-priority locations, based on asset operational need, asset condition and risk. Replacement activity also continued across cars, vans and four-wheel-drive vehicles. The electric vehicle programme expanded to support operational needs and reduce carbon emissions.

These investments improve firefighter safety, strengthen operational performance and help SFRS respond to current and emerging risks.

MODERNISING OUR ESTATE AND TRAINING INFRASTRUCTURE

SFRS requires safe, modern and reliable buildings and training facilities to support operational readiness, firefighter wellbeing and effective service delivery. During 2025/26, the Service continued to improve stations, welfare facilities and training infrastructure, despite financial pressures and long-standing estate challenges.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- Construction of the new Perth Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) facility continued.
- Design work progressed to enhance welfare facilities at the Sumburgh CFBT site.
- Improvements to firefighter welfare and contaminant-control facilities progressed at Kilmarnock, Stirling, and Alloa Fire Stations.
- Calton Fire Station refurbishment and accommodation improvements completed.
- Multi Vista digital construction monitoring system expanded across the estate.

Training infrastructure remained a priority. Construction continued on the new Perth Compartment Fire Behaviour Training facility, which will provide a modern regional training asset for operational crews. At Sumburgh, design work progressed to improve welfare facilities for staff attending training.

SFRS continued to improve operational workplaces. At Kilmarnock, Stirling and Alloa Fire Stations, projects progressed to improve welfare facilities, provide more suitable accommodation and support better contaminant-control arrangements.

At Calton Fire Station, refurbishment and accommodation improvements were completed. These changes improved welfare facilities and supported wider estate plans.

SFRS also used digital tools to improve estate management. The Property Team expanded use of the Multi Vista digital construction monitoring system. This records building projects through photographs, helping with quality checks, defect management, long-term asset records and project oversight.

These estate and training improvements help create safer, more resilient and more practical working environments. They support firefighter wellbeing, operational readiness and sustainable emergency response for communities. Progress in this area was recognised through an independent internal audit, which provided Moderate Assurance over the design and effectiveness of the Service's estates management arrangements and highlighted a number of areas of good practice in asset management, governance and compliance.

However, the scale of investment still needed is significant. SFRS estimates an overall backlog of around £818 million across the estate, fleet, equipment, digital technology and business systems. Around £496 million of this relates to the estate alone. Some buildings are no longer fit for purpose, and limited capital funding increases maintenance and repair costs for ageing assets.

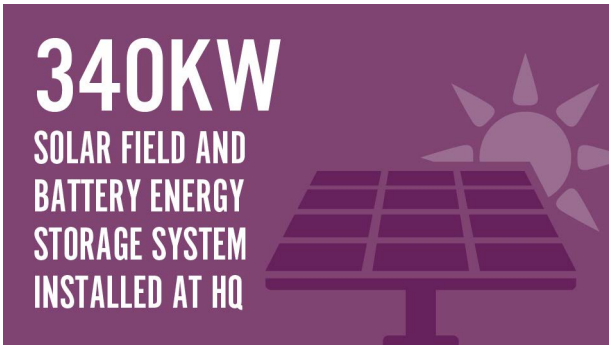
REDUCING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

SFRS has a responsibility to reduce its environmental impact and support Scotland's transition to a low-carbon future. Through the Carbon Management Plan and wider sustainability activity, the Service is reducing emissions, improving energy efficiency and ensuring its estate, fleet and infrastructure remain resilient to the effects of climate change.

Several Carbon Management Plan projects were delivered in 2025/26. These focused on reducing carbon emissions and lowering energy costs.

A 340kW solar field and battery energy storage system was installed at the national headquarters and training campus. It is expected to provide

more than 250,000kWh of renewable electricity each year. This should save around 75 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent and more than £35,000 each year. The site was suitable because it has high electricity demand and enough open space for 524 solar panels.



LED lighting upgrades were completed at the national headquarters and training centre and at Clydesmill Fire Station. These upgrades reduce electricity use, lower maintenance costs and improve the working environment. Further LED upgrades are planned across the Wholetime and corporate estate during the Carbon Management Plan 2025–30.

The programme to upgrade remote heating systems at retained stations continued during 2025/26. This work helps reduce energy use, improve control of heating and lower running costs across the estate.

Sustainability is also being considered across wider investment and modernisation activity. This includes expanding the electric vehicle programme, improving the energy efficiency of operational buildings and incorporating environmental considerations into future estate and infrastructure projects. These actions support delivery of the Service's Climate Change Response Plan and contribute to Scotland's wider net-zero ambitions.

These improvements help reduce carbon emissions, improve resilience and create a more sustainable estate while maintaining safe and effective services for communities across Scotland.

MODERNISING WORKFORCE MODELS AND BROADENING COMMUNITY IMPACT

As community needs change, SFRS is developing new ways to deploy staff, recruit people and deliver services. Workforce availability, particularly within the On Call system, continues to present challenges in some communities due to changing working patterns, demographic change and the increasing demands placed on individuals and employers. Alongside this, the Service Delivery Review identified opportunities to modernise workforce models and better align resources to current and future risk and demand. During 2025/26, the Service focused on strengthening the On Call workforce, improving recruitment support, creating clearer career routes and exploring new approaches to service delivery that support long-term sustainability and resilience.

2025/26 HIGHLIGHTS

- New On Call governance and support structures introduced across the Service.
- National rollout of the On Call Pre-Recruitment Engagement Programme.
- Thirty-six On Call personnel successfully transitioned to Wholetime roles through the new migration arrangements.
- Modular Task and Task Management pilot activity progressed to improve local delivery models.
- More than 160 Flexi Duty Officers trained and equipped to administer Naloxone.

Maintaining a strong and reliable On Call workforce remained a key priority. On Call firefighters provide an essential service in many rural, remote and island communities, but recruitment, retention and appliance availability continue to be affected by changing demographics, employment patterns and competing demands on people's time. During 2025/26, SFRS continued to implement a range of improvement activities aimed at strengthening workforce sustainability, improving



recruitment pathways and enhancing local support arrangements.

A revised governance structure was introduced to strengthen oversight of On Call workforce issues and improve coordination of improvement activity across the Service. This supported ongoing work to address recruitment and retention challenges, improve appliance availability and ensure local communities continue to receive an effective emergency response.

Recruitment activity was strengthened through the national rollout of the On Call Pre-Recruitment Engagement Programme (PREP). The programme provides prospective firefighters with early information, guidance and support to improve understanding of the role, reduce barriers to entry and enhance readiness for recruitment and selection activities. Combined with enhanced local testing arrangements and targeted engagement activity, PREP has strengthened applicant engagement, improved the candidate experience and supported the development of a more sustainable pipeline of On Call firefighter candidates across Scotland.

SFRS improved career routes between On Call and Wholetime roles. During the year, 36 On Call firefighters moved into Wholetime Firefighter roles through the new migration process. A review is now underway to capture learning and improve the approach for the future.

New workforce delivery approaches were tested through Modular Task and Task Management pilots. These look at how local resources can be used more flexibly while still maintaining competence, resilience and safe service delivery.

SFRS widened its role in community wellbeing. The Naloxone Project is now part of operational practice. More than 160 Flexi Duty Officers have been trained and equipped to carry and administer Naloxone. The project has already been linked to two life-saving interventions and shows how SFRS can support wider public health priorities with partners.

Through modern workforce models, better recruitment support and wider public safety work, SFRS is adapting to changing community needs and strengthening future service delivery.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Progress has been made in advancing investment, innovation, digital transformation, and infrastructure improvement activity. However, significant challenges remain associated with ageing assets, increasing investment requirements, and the scale of transformation needed to support future service delivery.

The Service continues to face difficult choices in balancing immediate operational priorities with longer-term investment needs. Future focus will include progressing digital transformation, addressing asset sustainability challenges, strengthening cyber resilience, and prioritising investment activity that delivers the greatest operational and strategic benefit. Achieving these ambitions will require continued prioritisation, effective partnership working, and careful management of financial and organisational capacity.



APPENDIX A: CONSOLIDATED HIGHLIGHTS 2025/26

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: SAFER COMMUNITIES THROUGH PREVENTION

Targeting Prevention for Impact

- 20,420 Home Fire Safety Visits completed.
- 3,114 Adult Protection referrals carried out.
- 122 Child Protection and Wellbeing referrals made.
- 119 Fire Safety Support and Education referrals made.
- Lowest fire fatalities in six years.
- Lowest accidental dwelling fires and casualties in ten years.

Preventing Harm Through Education and Community Engagement

- 13 Youth Volunteer Schemes delivered.
- 4,000+ volunteer hours contributed by young people.
- 94 FireSkills programmes delivered.
- 713 young people participated in FireSkills.
- 46 FireSkills Employability Awards delivered.
- 2,291 fire safety education engagements delivered across schools, community groups, and alternative learning settings.

Strengthening Safety in the Built Environment

- 8,480 Fire Safety Audits completed across Scotland.
- 39 statutory notices served to address significant fire safety risks.
- 26 Prohibition Notices issued where serious and immediate risks to life were identified.
- 9 Enforcement Notices served requiring improvements to fire safety arrangements.
- 4 Alterations Notices issued to support ongoing management of fire risk.

Future Risks and Building Community Resilience

- Strategic oversight of emerging risks through the establishment of a New and Emerging Risks Group.
- Risk Preparedness Assessment completed, identifying 33 improvement actions to enhance organisational resilience.
- Approximately 630 events supported across Scotland, including high-risk and major events.
- 47 Event Operational Plans and 3 National Event Operational Plans developed.
- New Risk-Based Identification Scoring Tool developed to support consistent assessment and prioritisation of operational risk.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: SAFE AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

Strengthening Specialist Response Capabilities

- Ongoing development of a future national Urban Search and Rescue response model, providing a clearer direction for capability development, investment planning and resilience.
- Management of Water and Flood Incidents Tactical Advisors introduced to strengthen command support during complex water rescue incidents.
- Marine Tactical Advisor capability established across all Service Delivery Areas.
- National work progressed to develop a more structured Large Animal Rescue capability.
- National Mass Decontamination capability availability increased.

Developing Operational Competence and Firefighter Safety

- National Safe Working at Height Tier 1 and Tier 2 rollout progressed across Scotland.
- £114,000 invested in new Methods of Entry equipment to improve firefighter safety and operational effectiveness.
- National extrication training standards modernised through collaboration with UK Rescue Organisation and Scottish Ambulance Service partners.
- Flexi Duty Officer Continuing Professional Development programme delivered across all fire groups using immersive simulation technology.
- Operational risk assessment learning enhanced through updated training and guidance.
- Training Standards Review Project launched to modernise national training standards.

Learning, Assurance and Continuous Improvement

- Organisational Learning Group arrangements strengthened to improve oversight, accountability, and action tracking.
- National Premises Compliance Framework implemented across operational locations.
- Operational Assurance audit findings used to identify organisational strengths, risks, and improvement opportunities.
- Operational risk assessment training and guidance enhanced to support safer decision making.
- New audit arrangements developed to improve consistency, governance, and organisational learning.
- Document Conversion Project continued to improve accessibility and consistency of operational guidance.

Modernising Operational Response

- Completion of the transition from analogue to digital handheld radios.
- Continued rollout of new Rescue Pumps and Light Pumps.
- New Rope Rescue Units prepared for operational deployment.
- Thermal Imaging Camera replacement programme progressed.
- Investigation and development work undertaken to support future drone capability.
- Local Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) facilities replaced.
- New Structural Collapse Simulator completed at the National Training Centre.

Responding to Major and Complex Emergencies

- Enhanced preparedness for Marauding Terrorist Attacks (MTA) and Mass Casualty Incidents through expanded specialist responder capability and improved command arrangements.
- Blackberry AtHoc introduced to improve mobilisation and deployment of specialist responders and National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers.
- Airbox MOSAIC platform implemented to strengthen multi-agency situational awareness and information sharing.
- New deployment and identification arrangements introduced to improve command oversight and responder safety during MTA incidents.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

Supporting Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- Compliance with fitness and medical assessments restored to 97% through delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Recovery Programme.
- In-house physiotherapy provision made a permanent part of the organisational structure following positive outcomes and demonstrated return on investment.
- Wellbeing Champion network expanded to more than 200 trained champions across the Service.
- Service-wide MSK Injury Prevention Month delivered to promote injury prevention and physical wellbeing.
- Health and Wellbeing Roadshows expanded access to wellbeing support across Scotland.
- Continued implementation of the Fire Contaminants Standard Operating Procedure supported by approximately £3 million of investment.
- Development of a new Operational Welfare and Relief Strategy to provide additional support during operational incidents.
- Review of stress management arrangements completed, supporting a more proactive approach to psychological wellbeing.

Advancing Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights

- Women's Experience Liaison Forum drove improvements relating to workplace inclusion, PPE, and maternity support.
- Revised support arrangements implemented for employees who are pregnant, on maternity leave or returning to work.
- Second annual Women in the Fire Service development and networking event delivered.
- SFRS maintained Gold Status under the Stonewall Proud Employer scheme.
- SFRS continued to strengthen support for the Armed Forces community through the work of the Veterans and Reservists Group.
- Continued review of recruitment and selection processes to improve inclusivity, accessibility, and workforce representation.

Developing Leadership, Skills, and Professional Excellence

- 221 colleagues participated in Leadership Essentials programmes across 17 sessions.
- Six NFCC leadership programmes delivered across Supervisory and Middle Manager levels.
- 829 active learners supported across Modern Apprenticeships, SVQs, Learning and Development Awards and Core Skills programmes.
- 443 learners achieved certification during the reporting period.

- Approximately £662,000 in apprenticeship funding secured through Skills Development Scotland programmes.
- Workforce Pro training management system successfully launched for support staff.
- Learning and E-Development Team received the LearnPro Excellence in Partnership Award.

Building a Sustainable Workforce for the Future

- More than 4,000 applications received through the 2026/27 Wholetime Firefighter recruitment campaign.
- Highest-ever female recruit intake achieved, with 12 women representing 17% of a Wholetime Firefighter trainee course.
- Two Operations Control Trainee Firefighter Development courses delivered.
- Promotion processes delivered from Crew Commander through to Deputy Assistant Chief Officer level.
- New Retained Duty System to Wholetime Firefighter Migration Procedure implemented.
- Evaluation of revised Retained Duty System Terms and Conditions commenced.

Strengthening Culture, Inclusion and Employee Voice

- Organisational Culture and Leadership Programme established as a strategic change programme.
- Seven priority culture and leadership workstreams agreed and progressed.
- Cultural Advisory Panel established to provide employee input and external expertise.
- Review of SFRS Values commenced as part of wider culture development activity.
- New quarterly Support Staff Representative Forum introduced.
- Development of a new SFRS People Plan progressed through extensive employee and representative body engagement.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Strengthening Governance, Performance and Strategic Delivery

- SFRS Strategy 2025-28 published, establishing a new strategic direction for the Service.
- Three-Year Delivery Plan introduced to provide a clear framework for delivery and performance monitoring.
- Development and Board approval of a new Performance Management approach.
- Continued to refine Portfolio Governance and arrangements to support an evolving Change Portfolio.
- Corporate Governance audit concluded with a significant assurance opinion.
- New Operations Performance Management Framework implemented.
- Capability Assurance activity expanded across specialist operational capabilities.

Delivering Organisational Change and Continuous Improvement

- Strategy & Change Function operating model embedded to provide a more structured approach to change delivery and continuous improvement.
- Service Improvement Foundation Course completed across three cohorts, with 76 employees achieving Lean Competency System qualifications.
- Change Community of Practice re-established to share learning, tools, and best practice across the Service.
- Revised demand management process embedded to improve prioritisation and governance of change activity.

- Business Readiness approach introduced across major change projects to support successful implementation and benefits realisation.

Using Data, Insight and Technology to Support Better Decision Making

- Continued implementation and development of the Wrike Project and Portfolio Management platform.
- Portfolio reporting enhanced through improved cost, time, benefits, and resource management information.
- Development of a new Operational Intelligence Power BI dashboard to provide improved performance insight and risk visibility.
- Financial reporting arrangements matured, improving transparency and oversight of change investment.
- Increased use of analytical tools and management information to support organisational planning and decision making.

Strengthening Organisational Resilience and Assurance

- Cyber Security improvement programme progressed following an independent maturity assessment.
- Internal Audit programme delivered across key areas including Risk Management, Budgetary Management, Freedom of Information and Estates Management.
- Quarterly audit performance reporting and scrutiny maintained through the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- Improved governance and oversight arrangements for organisational assurance frameworks.
- Continued focus on risk management, assurance, and resilience across strategic and operational activities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT

Driving Innovation Through Research, Technology and Collaboration

- Continued participation in the Scottish Government's CivTech programme to develop innovative solutions for emergency response and firefighter safety.
- Progressed research and development activity to inform a future national Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) capability.
- Research, Development, Innovation and Implementation (RDII) Group established to support innovation activity across the Service.
- Innovation activity supported developments in operational equipment, mobilising systems and vehicle technology.

Harnessing Digital Technology to Improve Service Delivery

- Secure Technology Asset Register application launched to provide a single source of truth for secure technology assets.
- Community Safety Engagement Activities application introduced to improve recording and reporting of engagement activity across Scotland.
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- Operational Intelligence Reference and Resources Hub developed to support operational personnel.

- Hydrant inspection and maintenance planning tool developed to support a more risk-based and efficient approach to hydrant management.

Investing in Fleet, Equipment and Operational Capability

- Introduction of new 18-tonne Rescue Pumps as part of a long-term fleet replacement programme.
- Progression of the Detection, Identification and Monitoring vehicle replacement programme.
- Commencement of a major project to renew Breathing Apparatus.
- Thermal Imaging Camera replacement programme initiated.
- High Reach vehicle replacement programme progressed to support future operational resilience
- Twenty-four new Light Pumping Units commissioned to replace ageing volunteer appliances, with deployment being prioritised to the highest-risk locations based on operational need, asset condition and fleet resilience requirements.
- Continued investment in light fleet replacement and expansion of the electric vehicle programme.

Modernising Our Estate and Training Infrastructure

- Construction of the new Perth Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) facility continued.
- Design work progressed to enhance welfare facilities at the Sumburgh CFBT site.
- Improvements to firefighter welfare and contaminant-control facilities progressed at Kilmarnock, Stirling, and Alloa Fire Stations.
- Calton Fire Station refurbishment and accommodation improvements completed.
- Multi Vista digital construction monitoring system expanded across the estate.

Modernising Workforce Models and Broadening Community Impact

- New On Call governance and support structures introduced across the Service.
- National rollout of the On Call Pre-Recruitment Engagement Programme.
- Thirty-six On Call personnel successfully transitioned to Wholetime roles through the new migration arrangements.
- Modular Task and Task Management pilot activity progressed to improve local delivery models.
- More than 160 Flexi Duty Officers trained and equipped to administer Naloxone.

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