

Fire Safety and Organisational Statistics

2023-24

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

30 August 2024

Working together for a safer Scotland

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This publication and associated statistics are designated as Official Statistics.

This means that it is produced to high professional standards set out in the <u>Code of</u> <u>Practice for Official Statistics</u>. It is produced free from any political interference.

In 2019 the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was named in legislation as a Producer of Official Statistics which allows it to classify this series.

This publication is accompanied by the following documents:

- Tables and Charts Workbook
- Guidance Notes on Statistics
- Statistical News 2023-24

1. Main Points

Fire Stations and Capabilities

- **356** fire stations across Scotland, comprised of:
 - **74** Wholetime fire stations
 - **240** Retained Duty System fire stations
 - **42** Volunteer fire stations

- **470** crews, comprised of:
 - **116** Wholetime crews
 - Day crew
 - **311** Retained crews
 - 42 Volunteer crews

Vehicles

- **1,585** vehicles in the fleet, including:
 - 767 appliances, of which 621 are operational, 61 are for training and 85 are in reserve

Workforce

- At the end of 2023-24, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had a headcount of **7,512** staff
- 30.4% of total staff are over 50 years and 61.4% are over 40
- 3,422 are Wholetime Operational staff. This is down 68 (1.9%) on last year
- **5,531** staff are scheduled to crew appliances, **73.6%** of all staff

Attacks on Fire and Rescue Personnel

- 60 attacks in 2023-24, down from 80 last year
- **2** of these attacks resulted in an injury

Home Fire Safety Visits

- 36,738 Home Fire Safety Visits conducted, down from 38,699 (5.1% decrease)
- **9,744** visits to households in the most deprived areas and **4,572** visits to households in the least deprived areas
- Over the last **5** years, **6.6%** of all Scottish households were visited

Non-domestic Fire Safety

- 7,654 audits were completed in 2023-24, up from 6,712 last year
- 23.9% of audits were in houses of multiple occupation
- **21.0%** of audits were in care homes

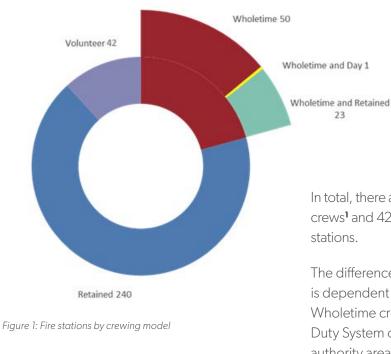
2. Fire Stations and Capabilities

There are 356 stations across Scotland. This is one fewer than was reported last year. This is a result of the closure of Leadhills Community Fire Station in South Lanarkshire.

There are three types of uniformed staff that crew these stations: Wholetime (24-hour staffing), Retained and Volunteer (on-call staffing). There are 74 Wholetime stations, 240 Retained Duty System stations and 42 Volunteer stations.

There are five station primary crewing models in use in Scotland: Wholetime, Wholetime and Day, Wholetime and Retained, Retained, and Volunteer. Two of these models include additional Retained staff to supplement the 24-hour Wholetime crew at the station. The 'Wholetime and Day' station has a 24-hour Wholetime crew and a second crew with Wholetime staff during the day (Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm) and Retained staff during the night and at the weekend. Of the 74 Wholetime stations, 50 are Wholetime only, 23 are Wholetime and Retained Duty System and 1 is a Wholetime and Day Station.





In total, there are 116 Wholetime crews, 311 Retained crews¹ and 42 Volunteer crews in Scotland across the 356 stations.

The difference in crewing models across Scotland is dependent on rurality. Urban areas have more Wholetime crews and rural areas have more Retained Duty System crews. For example, in the urban local authority areas of Dundee City and Glasgow City, all crews are Wholetime. In more rural areas such as Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands all crews are Retained Duty System.

¹ The actual number available varies depending on staffing levels.

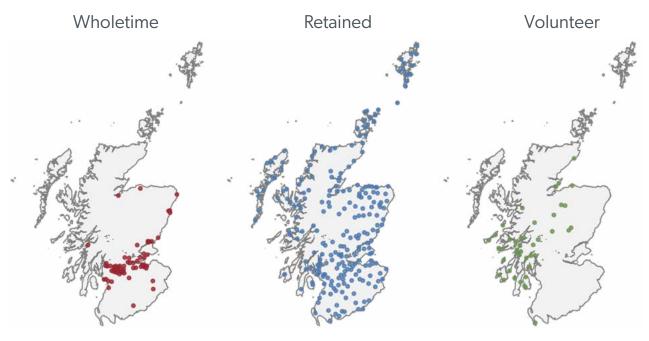


Figure 2: Map of fire stations by primary crewing

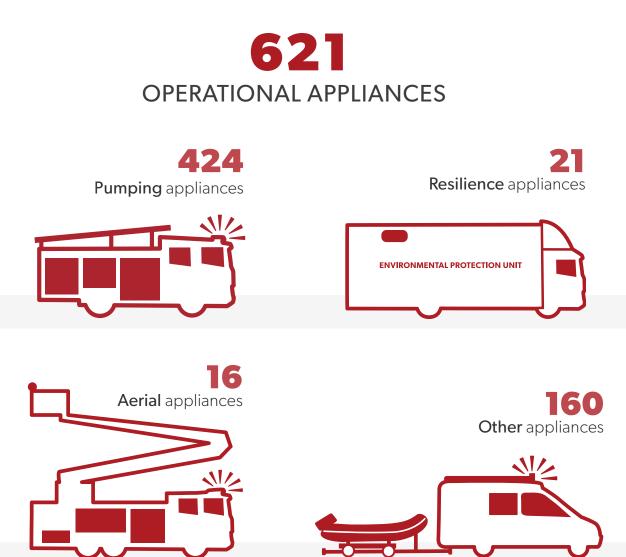
The operational capabilities of stations expand beyond firefighting. To see more information on operational response, please refer to the '*Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics*'.

A series of operational changes took place throughout 2023-24. In total, there was 345 stations with water pumping capabilities, the same as has been reported in recent years. Seven stations changed from having two water pumping capabilities to having one. Furthermore, High Reach Rescue capability reduced from 25 last year to 16 in 2023-24. For further information on the details of these operational changes, please refer to the **Operational Changes 2023-24** publication.

There are three regional control centres in North, East and West Service Delivery Areas. These determine the most appropriate response for operational incidents. As all fire stations form part of the operational network, incidents will be attended by the nearest available relevant resource.

3. Vehicles

In 2023-24, there were 1,585 vehicles in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) on 31st March 2024, down from 1,628 in 2022-23 (2.6% decrease).



The number of appliances ready for operational use is higher than the total response capability as some stations have additional appliances. Please see Guidance Notes for further details on vehicles included, and section 2 for details of operational capabilities. There were 424 pumping appliances, down from 429 in 2022-23 (1.2% decrease). There were 61 vehicles for training purposes, up from 55 in 2022-23 (10.9% increase) and 85 appliances held in reserve, down from 90 in 2022-23 (5.6% decrease).

There were 767 total appliances in 2023-24, down from 782 last year (1.9% decrease).

4. Workforce

Staff Headcount

On 31st March 2024, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) had a headcount of 7,512, which is 107 fewer than last year.²

There were 3,422 Wholetime Operational staff this year, down from 3,490 in 2022-23 (1.9% decrease). This makes up the largest category of staff. Of whom:

- 2,823 were Operational Crewing, up 25 from last year (0.9% increase)
- 263 were Incident Command Officers, up 1 from last year (0.4% increase)
- **335** Off Station, up 8 from last year (2.4% increase)
- 1 Trainee, down 102 from last year³

The second largest category is Retained Duty System. These staff provide on-call operational cover. There are 2,708 of this staff group, down from 2,735 last year (1.0% decrease). Together with Wholetime Operational Crewing, there are a total of 5,531 staff to crew operational appliances. This is 73.6% of total SFRS staff.

Retained Full-time staff work in areas with a cluster of Retained Duty System stations and supplement the local on-call cover, as well as conduct local community engagement. There were 55 Retained Full-time staff in 2023-24, the same as recorded last year. There were 269 Volunteer staff in 2023-24, up from 266 last year (1.1% increase). Along with Retained Duty System staff, Volunteer staff also provide on-call operational cover.

Control room staff answer emergency calls and manage communications and the logistics of attending emergencies. There were 171 Control room staff in 2023-24, down 1 from last year (0.6% decrease).

Support staff are not uniformed and work in functions across the organisation. There were 887 support staff in 2023-24, down 14 from last year (1.6% decrease).

² All workforce statistics represent the headcount on the last day of the financial year (31st March) and do not represent any fluctuations in staff numbers throughout the year.

³ Please note that the number of trainees fluctuates as trainees are recruited at different periods throughout the year. This figure does not represent the total number of trainees recruited throughout 2023-24.

Staff Headcount

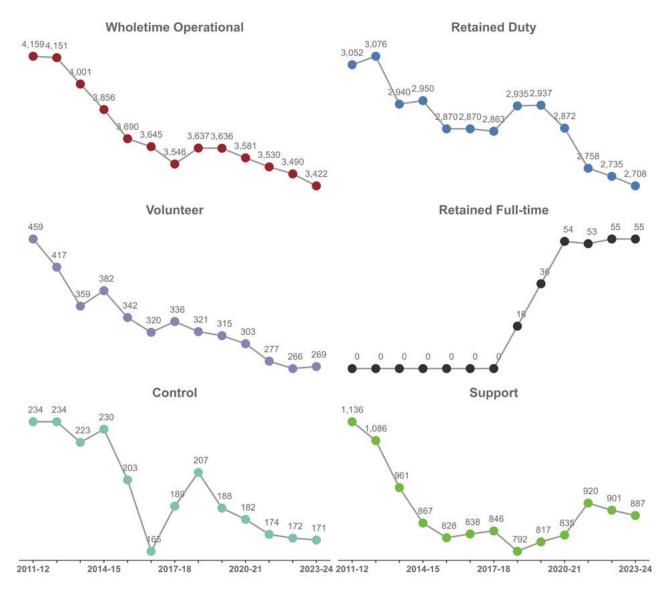


Figure 3: Headcount by staff type.

Staff Full-Time Equivalent

Not all staff work the typical hours of their staff group i.e. people working in a part time role. For this reason, this set of statistics adjusts for the number of contracted hours to give a fair comparison of change over time.

Volunteers are not contracted to work a specific number of hours and so, they are not included in these Full-time Equivalent statistics.

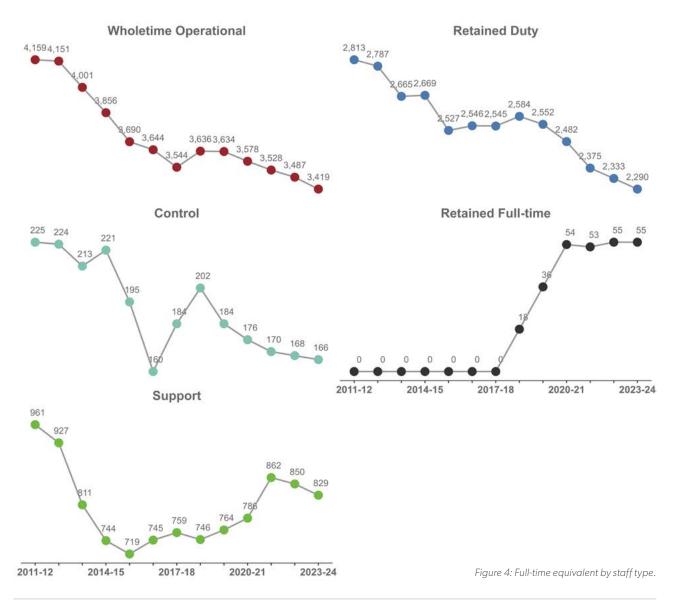
Over the last ten years, the Full-time equivalent for uniformed staff (including Wholetime Operational, Retained Duty System, Retained Full-time and Control staff) has decreased from 6,879 FTE in 2013-14 to 5,930 FTE in 2023-24 (13.8% decrease). Wholetime Operational FTE has decreased from 3,487 in 2022-23 to 3,419 in 2023-24 (2.0% decrease).

Retained Duty System FTE has decreased from 2,333 in 2022-23 to 2,290 in 2023-24 (1.9% decrease).

Retained Full-time FTE has remained the same when compared to last year at 55 in 2023-24 and 2022-23.

Control FTE has decreased from 168 in 2022-23 to 166 in 2023-24 (1.1% decrease).

Support FTE has decreased from 850 in 2022-23 to 829 in 2023-24 (2.5% decrease).



Wholetime Staff Roles

There were 3,422 total Wholetime Operational staff in 2023-24, down from 3,490 the previous year (1.9% decrease).

In Operational Crews, there were 375 Watch Commanders (down 1 from last year), 558 Crew Commanders (down 16 from last year) and 1,890 Firefighters (up 42 from last year).

There were 263 Incident Command Officers in total in 2023-24, up 1 from last year (0.4% increase). Of whom, there were 5 Brigade Commanders, 31 Area Commanders⁴, 71 Group Commanders and 156 Station Commanders. Staff in Off Station roles work in a variety of departments across the organisation. These are staff that are trained to carry out operational duties and that can be called up to attend operational incidents if required. In Off Station roles, there were 232 Watch Commanders (up 7 from last year), 82 Crew Commanders (up 1 from last year) and 21 Firefighters (the same as was recorded last year).

There was 1 Trainee on 31st March 2024, down from 103 last year. It is important to note that this figure does not represent the total number of trainees recruited throughout 2023-24.

Туре	Brigade Commander	Area Commander	Group Commander	Station Commander	Watch Commander	Crew Commander	Firefighter
Incident Command Officers	5	31	71	156	-	-	-
Operational Crews	-	-	-	-	375	558	1,890
Office Station	-	-	-	-	232	82	21
Trainees	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Figure 5: Wholetime staff by role and duty system, 2023-24.

4 Area Commander also includes Deputy Assistant Chief Officer posts.

Sex

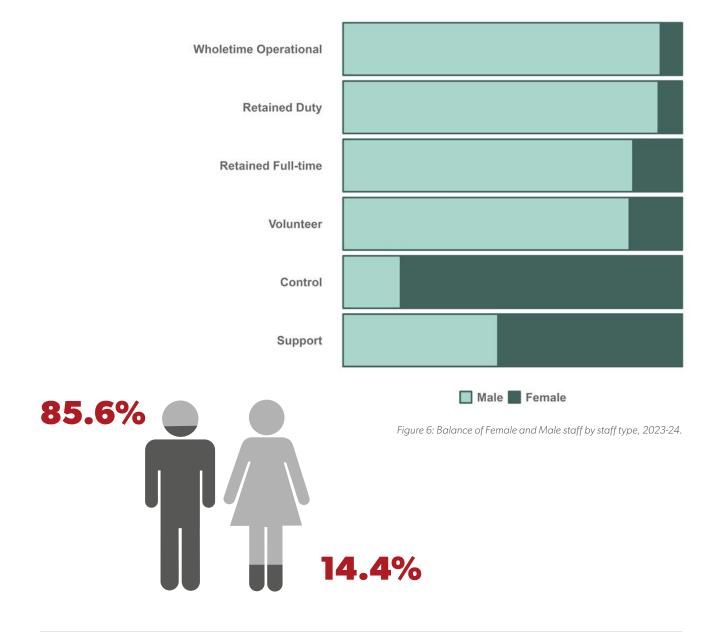
In 2023-24, the SFRS workforce was made up of 85.6% males and 14.4% females. This is a similar balance to what has been reported in recent years, with 85.7% of staff being male last year and 85.5% of staff being male in 2021-22.

Wholetime Operational, Retained Duty System, Volunteer and Retained Full-time are predominantly made up of male staff, making up 93.6%, 92.9%, 84.4% and 85.5% respectively.

Control staff are made up of predominantly female staff, with 83.0% of staff being female in 2023-24.

Support staff have historically had a more even balance between males and females. The same is true for 2023-24, with 54.3% of staff being female and 45.7% of staff being male.

Since 2018-19, the number of female Wholetime Operational staff has risen by 12.2%, and the number of male Wholetime Operational staff has decreased by 6.9%. The number of female Retained Duty System staff has decreased by 5.0% over the same time period, and the number of males in this staff group has decreased by 7.9%.



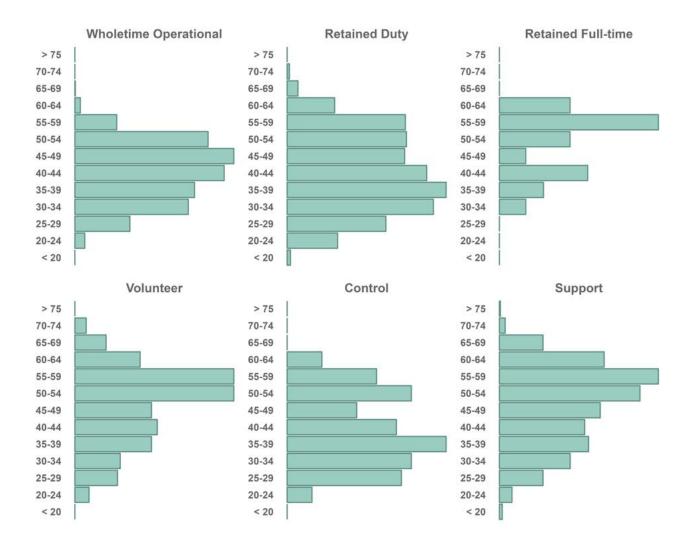
Staff Headcount by Age

In 2023-24, 30.4% of staff were over 50 years. This is similar to what was recorded last year, with 30.5% recorded in 2022-23.

In 2023-24, 61.4% of staff were over 40 years. This is similar to what was recorded last year, with 61.3% of staff over 40 years in 2022-23.

There were 787 Wholetime Operational staff aged over 50 years in 2023-24. This is up 6 from 781 in 2022-23 (0.8% increase).

There were 2,127 Wholetime Operational staff aged over 40 years in 2023-24. This is down 5 from 2,132 in 2022-23 (0.2% decrease).



Years of Service

In Wholetime Operational staff, 812 had a service length of 15-19 years. This makes up 23.7% of Wholetime Operational staff. 692 had a service length of 20-24 years. This makes up 20.2% of this staff group.

In Retained Duty System staff, 716 had a service length of less than 5 years. This makes up 26.4% of this staff group. There were 604 staff with a service length of 5-9 years, making up 22.3% of Retained Duty System staff. Most Retained Full-time staff had a service length of between 15 and 24 years, with 12 staff in the 15-19 years group and 10 in the 20-24 years group, making up 21.8% and 18.2% respectively of this staff group.

The largest group for service length for Control and Volunteer staff was 5-9 years, with 26.9% of Control staff and 24.9% of Volunteer staff falling into this category.

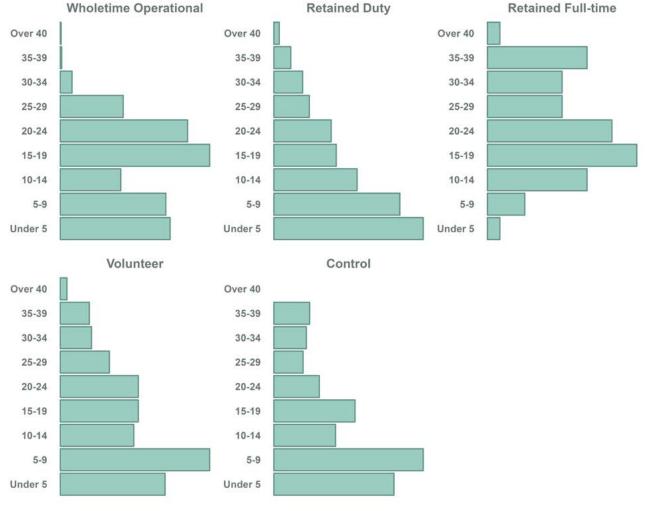


Figure 8: Service length by staff type, 2023-24.

Leavers

In total, 508 people left SFRS in 2023-24. This is turnover of 6.7%, down from 9.2% last year.

There were 158 Wholetime Operational leavers in 2023-24. This is a turnover of 4.6%, down from 9.6% last year.

There were 243 Retained Duty System leavers in 2023-24. This is a turnover of 8.9%, up from 7.9% last year.

The most common reason for leaving within Wholetime Operational roles was retirement due to age, with 117 staff leaving for this reason (74.1% of all Wholetime Operational leavers). The most common reason for leaving within Retained Duty System roles was resignation, with 175 staff leaving for this reason (72.0% of all Retained Duty System leavers).

Overall, the largest reason for leaving was resignation, with 53.0% of leavers falling into this category. The second largest reason was retirement due to age, with 38.8% of leavers falling into this category.

5. Attacks on Fire and Rescue Personnel

In 2023-24, there were 60 attacks on fire and rescue personnel within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), down from 80 last year. The most common type of attack was objects thrown at firefighters/ appliances, with 35 of these attacks occurring this year. This is the same as was recorded in 2022-23. This is followed by verbal attacks, of which there were 20 incidents. This is down from 41 in 2022-23 (51.2% decrease). 3 attacks were categorised as physical abuse, which is the same as was recorded last year, and 2 attacks were recorded as other acts of aggression, up from 1 in 2022-23.

There were 51 attacks at operational incidents in 2023-24, down from 66 last year (22.7% decrease). Of these, 33 were objects thrown at firefighters/ appliances, down from 34 last year (2.9% decrease). 16 were verbal abuse, down from 29 last year (44.8% decrease). There was 1 attack categorised as physical abuse, down from 3 last year (66.7% decrease), and there was 1 attack categorised as other acts of aggression. No attacks of this category were recorded last year.

There were 9 attacks recorded at nonoperational incidents in 2023-24, down from 14 last year (35.7% decrease). There were 4 verbal abuse attacks, down from 12 last



year (66.7% decrease). 2 were objects thrown at firefighters/appliances, 2 were physical abuse and 1 was categorised as other acts of aggression.

In total, there were 2 incidents where injuries occurred in 2023-24, up from 0 recorded last year. One of these was verbal abuse at an operational incident, and the other was physical abuse at a nonoperational incident.

The number of attacks related to operational incidents vary across local authority areas. Since 2019-20, 17.4% of incidents have occurred in Glasgow City local authority area, 12.7% in City of Edinburgh, 10.7% in North Lanarkshire and 8.4% in Dundee City.

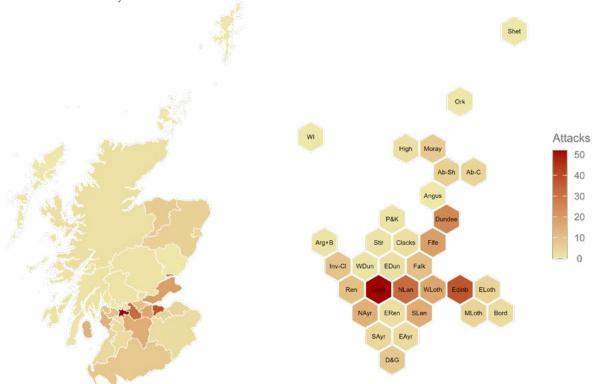


Figure 9: Attacks on SFRS staff 2019-20 to 2023-24, choropleth and area normalised cartogram.

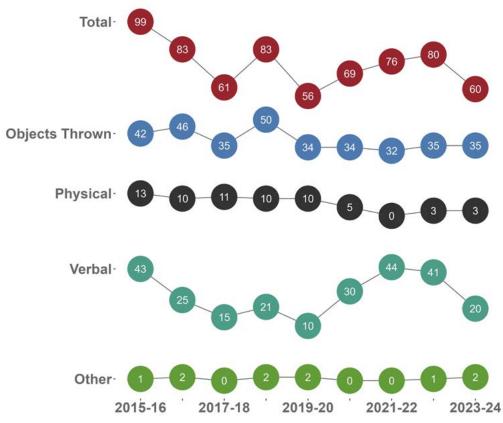


Figure 10: Incidents of attacks on SFRS staff by type of attack.

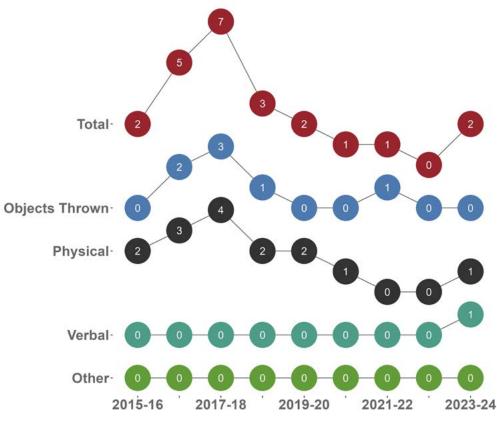


Figure 11: Incidents of attacks with injuries by type of attack.

6. Home Fire Safety Visits

In 2023-24, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) carried out 36,738 Home Fire Safety Visits, down from 38,699 visits in 2022-23 (5.1% decrease). Over the last five years, the number of Home Fire Safety Visits carried out has reduced by 46.9%, with 69,202 visits carried out in 2018-19.

In 2023-24, there were 35,000 distinct properties visited. In the last three years, there has been 100,834 distinct properties visited. In the last five years, there has been 168,447 distinct properties visited. This is 6.6% of all Scottish households.



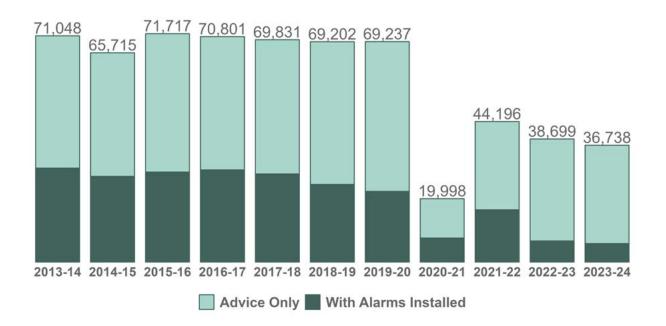


Figure 12: Home Fire Safety Visits by outcome. Please note that figures for 2021-22 and 2022-23 are potentially an underestimate of the true figures for HFSV with alarm installations. Please see Guidance Notes for more details.

Alarms Installed

In February 2022, the law on alarms changed in Scotland, meaning that all Scottish homes are required to have linked alarms. SFRS now only fit interlinked alarms, if appropriate, into owneroccupied homes where the individual/household is assessed as "high-risk". This means that more alarms are installed during a Home Fire Safety Visit than would have been installed in previous years.

There were 5,922 Home Fire Safety Visits carried out where alarms were installed, making up 16.1%

of all visits. There were 15,749 alarms installed at Home Fire Safety Visits in 2023-24, up from 15,690 in 2022-23 (0.4% increase). This is an average rate of 2.66 alarms per Home Fire Safety Visit where alarms were installed. Prior to the new legislation introduced in 2022, this rate had consistently been below two alarms per Home Fire Safety Visit where alarms were installed. Of total alarms fitted, 11,441 were new and 4,308 were replaced.

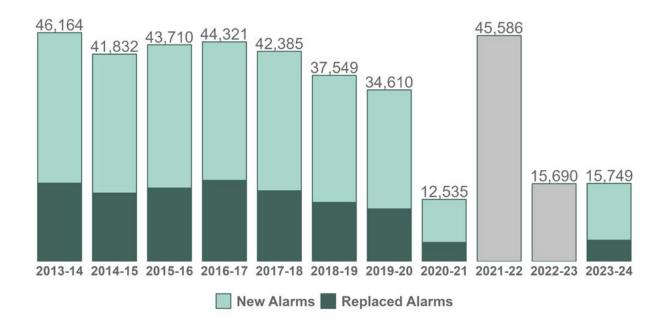


Figure 13: Alarms installed during Home Fire Safety Visits. Please note that a breakdown of new and replaced alarms was not published in 2021-22 and 2022-23 due to quality concerns with the data. Please see Guidance Notes for further information.

Residents

There were 60,730 residents in households where Home Fire Safety Visit were conducted in 2023-24. This is down from 62,624 in 2022-23 (3.0% decrease). Of these, 2,410 residents were under 5 years old and 28,177 were over 60 years old. Historically, there was a higher proportion of visits to households with children under 5 years and to households with adults over 60 years. However, in recent years, there has been a higher proportion of visits to households with adults over 60 years when compared to any other age category. This is consistent with the pattern in 2023-24, shown in Figure 14. This is likely due to policy changes which have resulted in Home Fire Safety Visits focusing on those at the highest risk, which includes risk factors associated with older age.

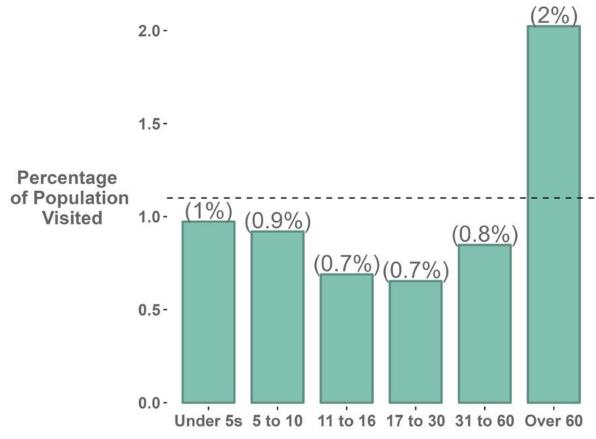


Figure 14: Percentage of population visited in Home Fire Safety Visits by age bracket.

Deprivation

There was a higher rate of Home Fire Safety Visits in the most deprived areas of Scotland, as shown in Figure 15. This is the same pattern as has been seen in previous years. In the most deprived areas, there were 9,744 visits (down 6.6% from last year). In the least deprived areas, there were 4,572 visits (down 4.1% from last year).

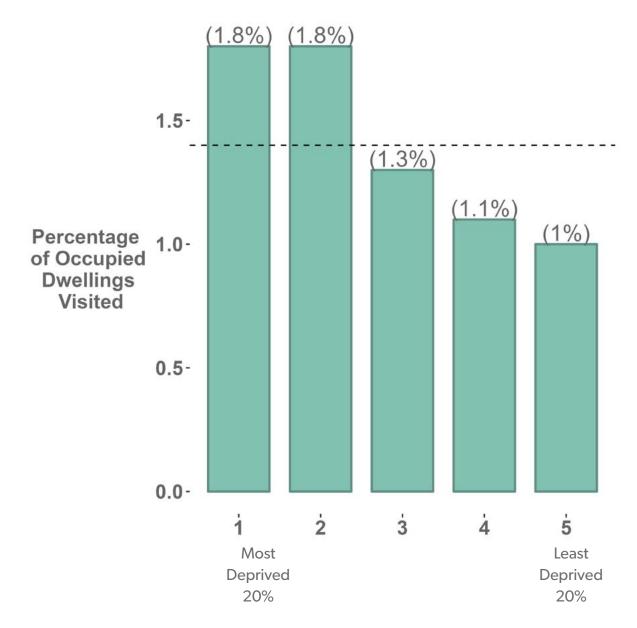


Figure 15: Percentage of occupied dwellings visited, by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles. The Scotland average is 1.4%.

A large proportion of Home Fire Safety Visits in the most deprived areas have a focus on providing fire safety advice and have a lower rate of alarm installations, as shown in Figure 16.

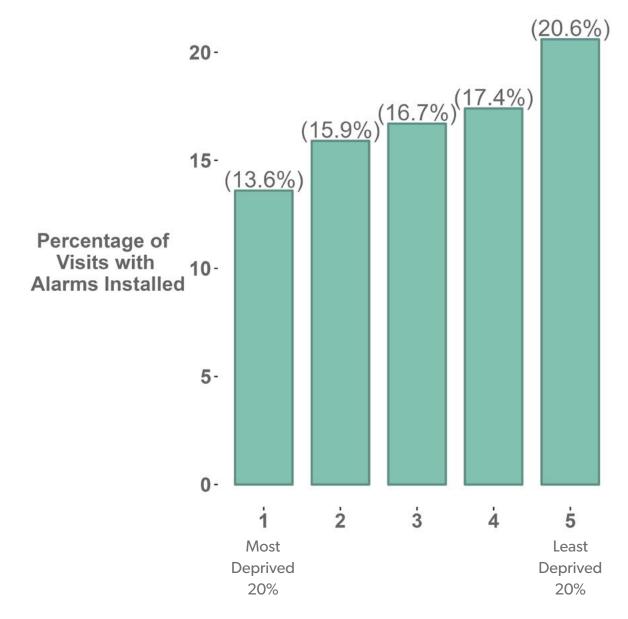


Figure 16: Percentage visited with alarms, by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles.

There is a more balanced outlook when looking at the overall rate of alarms installed in occupied dwellings, as shown in Figure 17. However, the most deprived areas have a rate of visits with alarms installed higher than those in the least deprived areas.

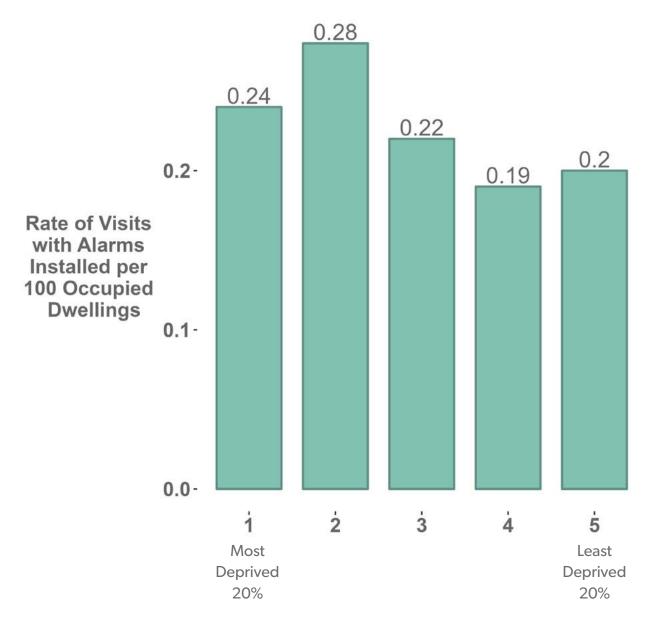
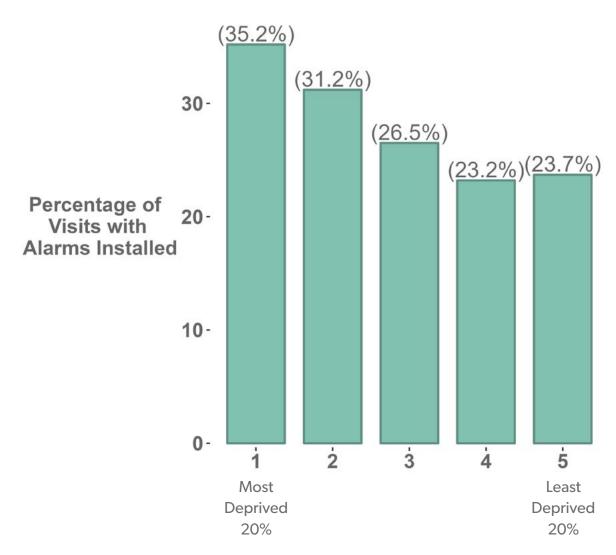


Figure 17: Rate of alarms installed per 100 Occupied Dwellings, by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles.

In 2023-24, 48.5% of Home Fire Safety Visits occurred in Owner Occupied properties. In previous years, the percentage of visits where alarms were installed in owner occupied properties were similar across different areas of deprivation. In contrast, this year there is a higher percentage of alarms fitted in the most deprived areas, with 35.2% of visits having alarms fitted in the most deprived area, compared to 23.7% in the least deprived area.



Percentage of Visits with Alarms Installed in Owner Occupied Properties

Figure 18: Percentage of visits with alarms installed in owner occupied properties, by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles.

Historically, there had been a reduction in the proportion of visits with alarms installed for each deprivation group up until 2019-20. In 2020-21, this increased for all deprivation groups due to the prioritisation of the most at risk households during the Covid-19 pandemic. When compared to 2020-21 figures, in 2023-24 there has been a substantial proportional reduction for all deprivation groups. Please note that figures for 2021-22 and 2022-23 were not reported due to quality concerns with the data. Please see Guidance Notes for further details.

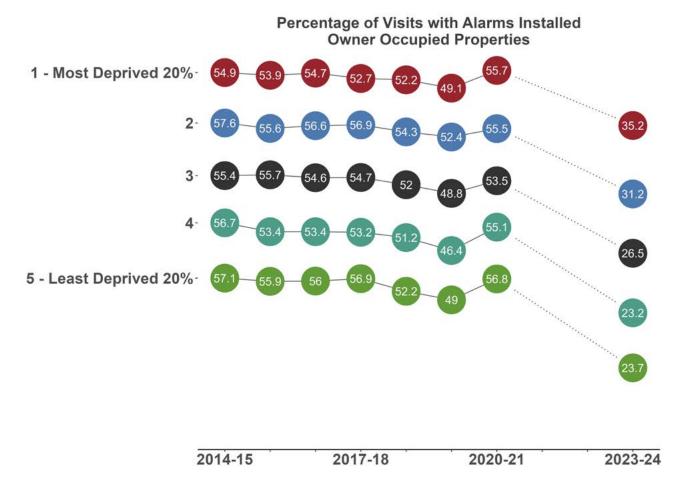


Figure 19: Percentage of visits with alarms installed in owner occupied properties, by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles. Please note that figures for 2021-22 and 2022-23 were not reported due to quality concerns with the data. Please see Guidance Notes for further details.

Urban-Rural

The percentage of occupied dwellings visited in Other Urban Areas and in Remote Small Towns is above the Scottish average. The percentage of occupied dwellings visited in Large Urban Areas is the same as the Scottish Average (1.4%). The percentage of occupied dwellings visited in Accessible Small Towns, Accessible Rural and Remote Rural is below the Scottish Average. This pattern is similar to what has been seen in recent years.

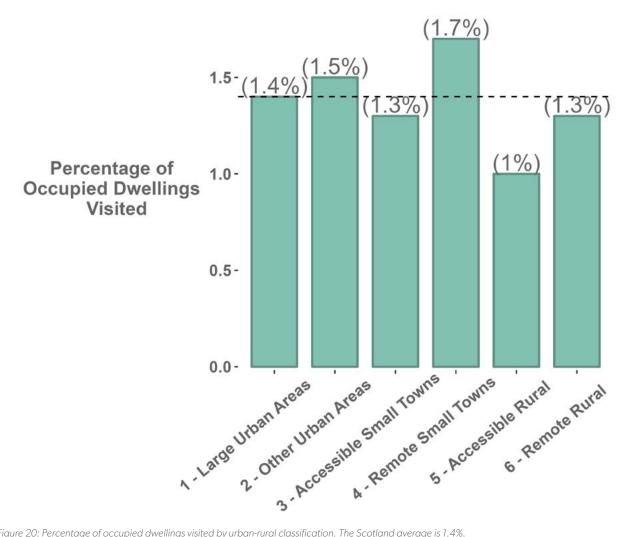


Figure 20: Percentage of occupied dwellings visited by urban-rural classification. The Scotland average is 1.4%.

Geography

In 2023-24, Glasgow City had the most Home Fire Safety Visits completed, with 4,113 visits. Na h-Eileanan Siar had the least, with 102 visits completed this year. West Dunbartonshire and East Dunbartonshire had the highest percentage of households visited, both at 2.2%. 35.2% of visits in Invercive had alarms installed at visits, compared to 7.0% of households in Highlands.

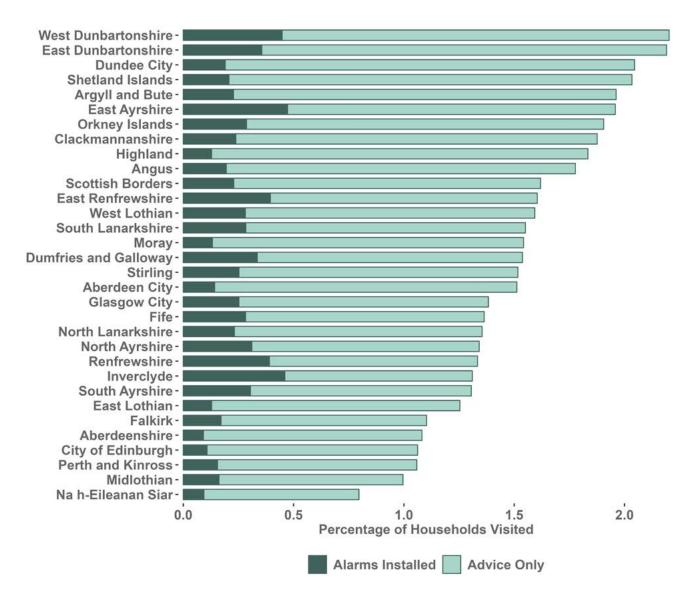


Figure 21: Percentage of households visited in Home Fire Safety Visits by local authority area.

Rate of Home Fire Safety Visits

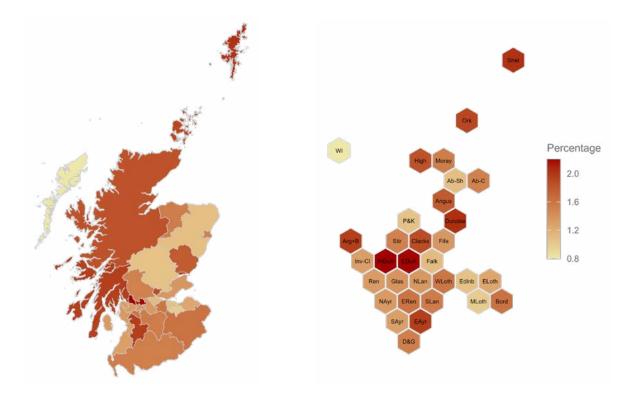
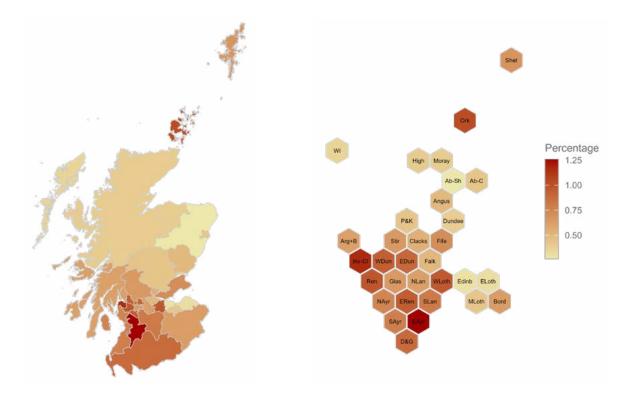


Figure 22: Rate of Home Fire Safety Visits per 100 Households, choropleth and area normalised cartogram.



Rate of Alarms Installed

Figure 23: Rate of Home Fire Safety Visits with Alarms Installed per 100 Households, chloropleth and area normalised cartogram.

7. Non-domestic Fire Safety

There were 7,654 audits completed in 2023-24, up from 6,712 in 2022-23 (14.0% increase). Completed audits decreased during the Covid-19 pandemic but have been steadily increasing again to return to pre-pandemic levels.

There were 3,466 Consultations completed in 2023-24, up from 1,829 in 2022-23 (89.5% increase). There were 1,218 Site Visits completed in 2023-24, down from 1,389 last year (12.3% decrease).

Short Post Fire Audits and Fire Engineering Consultations were initiated in 2019-20. Short Post Fire Audits occur where there has been a fire in a premise which has already received a full audit recently. There were 208 Short Post Fire Audits completed this year, up from 203 in 2022-23 (2.5% increase). Fire Engineering Consultations are where a specialist team provides advice for new buildings. There were 816 in 2023-24, up from 812 last year (0.5% increase).

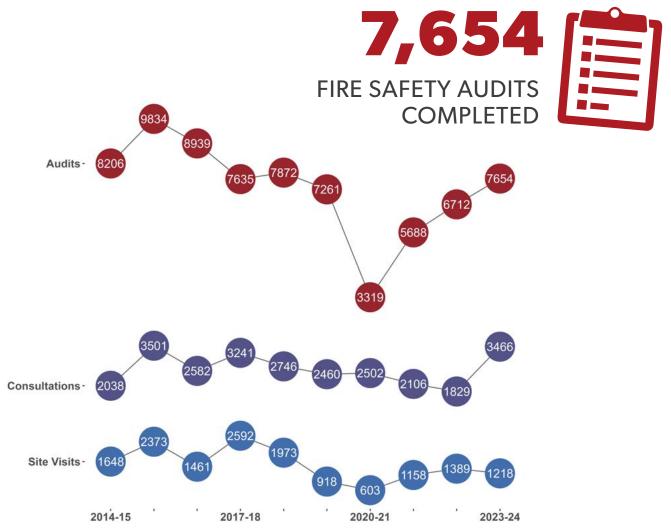


Figure 24: Non-domestic fire safety activity by type. Note that Fire Engineering Consultations and Short Post Fire Audits initiated in 2019-20 are not included.

Similar to previous years, most audits completed in 2023-24 were carried out in houses of multiple occupation (HMOs). There were 1,827 audits completed in HMOs this year, down from 1,958 in 2022-23 (6.7% decrease). This makes up 23.9% of all audits completed this year, down from 29.2% last year.

Care homes were the second largest premises type where audits were completed in 2023-24. There were 1,610 audits completed in care homes this year, up from 1,606 in 2022-23 (0.2% increase). This makes up 21.0% of all audits completed in 2023-24, down from 23.9% last year.

Enforcement Notices are the most severe outcomes of audits. They are only issued following a very poor audit rating. There were 15 Enforcement Notices issued in 2023-24, up from 6 last year. Prohibition Notices involve or follow a visit to a site where the use of the property is conflicting with fire safety rules. These prevent the use of part or all of a property. There were 13 Prohibition Notices issued in 2023-24, up from 9 last year.

Alterations Notices prevent changing the use of a property in a way which is known to be unsafe. There were 2 Alterations Notices issued in 2023-24, up from 0 last year.

In total, there were 30 Notices issued in 2023-24, up from 15 last year.

Less than 1% of properties audited resulted in a 'Very high risk' using the SFRS risk heuristic. This is similar to what has been seen in recent years. Figure 25 shows a more detailed breakdown of risk ratings for audits completed in 2023-24.

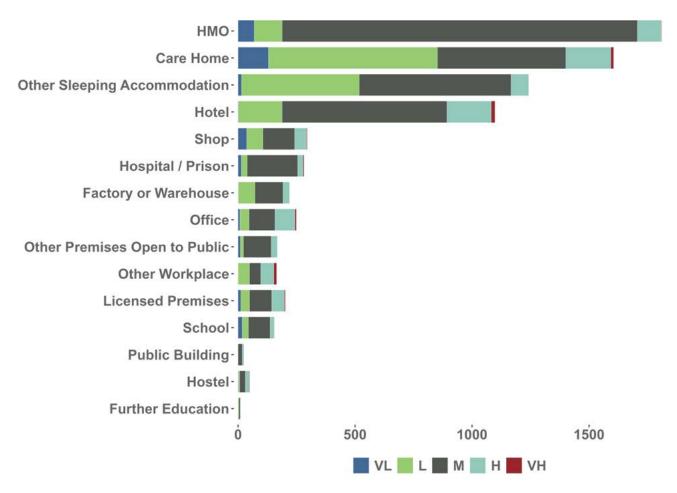


Figure 25: Number of non-domestic premises audited by premises type and risk heuristic rating.

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