



PREVENTION

EARLY INTERVENTION

Summary of Fire Safety Support and Education Programme

April 2023 – March 2024

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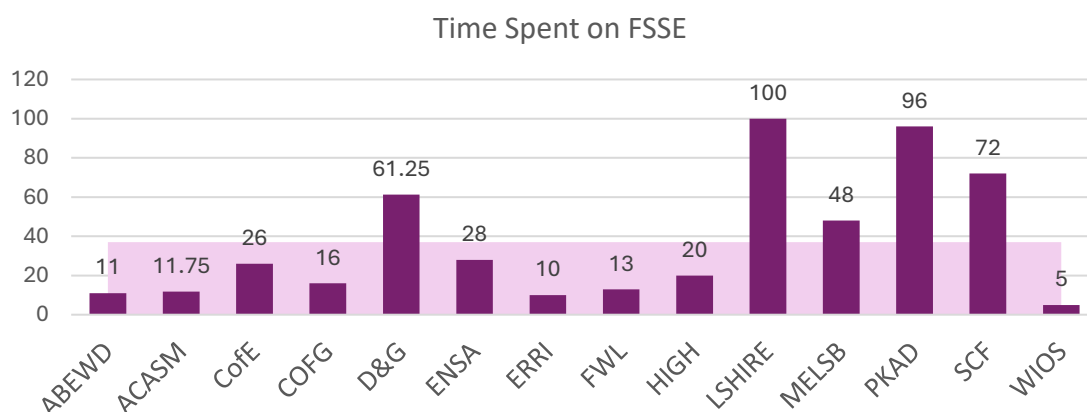
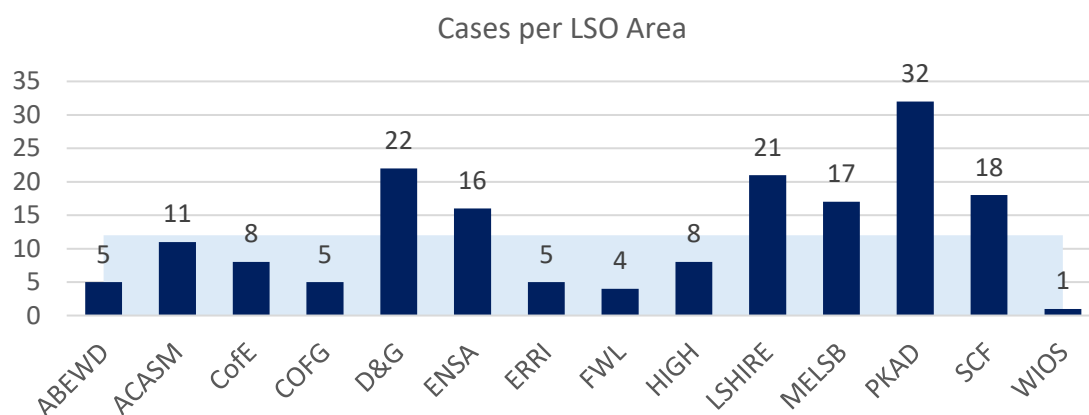
1. **Background**

- 1.1. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Fire Safety Support and Education (FSSE) programme seeks to enable specially trained staff to engage with children and young people who demonstrate an unsafe or concerning interest in fire. Through a programme of targeted interventions, FSSE offers a flexible approach to assist in the education of those 18 and under. It is an import prevention tool, enabling SFRS to effectively contribute towards making our communities safer.
- 1.2. Working with children and young people, many of whom have had challenging life journeys, the FSSE programme makes a significant contribution to making our communities safer. This supports national legislation including the [Antisocial Behaviour etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) and contributes to all seven outcomes of the [SFRS Strategic Plan](#).
- 1.3. To ensure the future development of FSSE continues to meet the needs of those it targets, and the staff that deliver it, a core group of experienced Advisors has been established to support the Early Intervention (EI) Team to develop the programme.
- 1.4. Training and support for FSSE Advisors falls into the following categories:
 - Initial training, including the following: Adult and Child Safeguarding, Enhanced Safeguarding, Youth Engagement Coreskills and a bespoke FSSE training course.
 - Refresher training of any of the above.
 - Additional training provided either locally by the Local Senior Officer (LSO) Area, often in conjunction with local partners, or by the EI Team.
- 1.5. This report summarises the data collected from two data gathering exercises:
 - FSSE Quarterly returns provided by LSO Area from the 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This is the first full year of data using this data set.
 - Research into the current experiences of FSSE Advisors and the level of training and support provided.

NOTE: Not all Fire Related Anti-Social Behaviour (FRASB) has been reported formally, through emergency services, therefore, the data evidenced within this report is a representation of the only data and information we have gathered via the referral form or conversation with the child or young person (CYP).

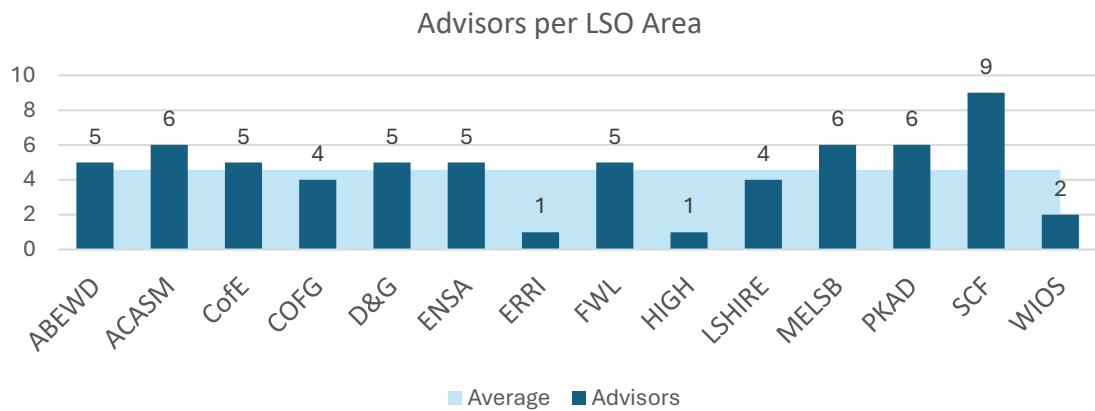
2. Cases and Advisors

- 2.1. In 2023-2024 there were 173 cases which resulted in an estimated 518 hours spent on FSSE work.

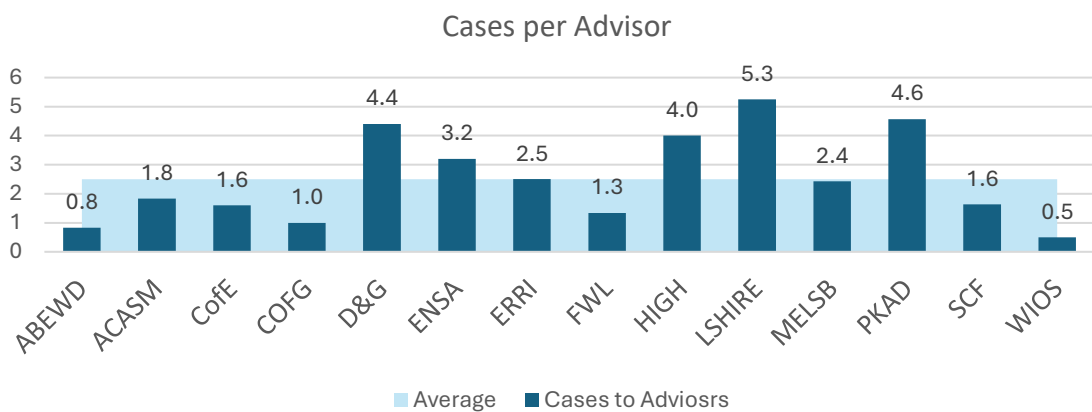


- 2.2. This is an average of 12 cases and 37 hours respectively per LSO Area.
- 2.3. At the end of each case there is the potential to signpost people to either SFRS initiatives or other available services. Of the cases that were concluded during the year, eight young people were referred to internal provision such as FireSkills and a further five young people were signposted to services provided by other agencies.

- 2.4. SFRS currently have 64 FSSE Advisors across the Service this was a drop of **18** from 82 in April 2023. SFRS don't hold any data to support why there has been a decline in Advisors.

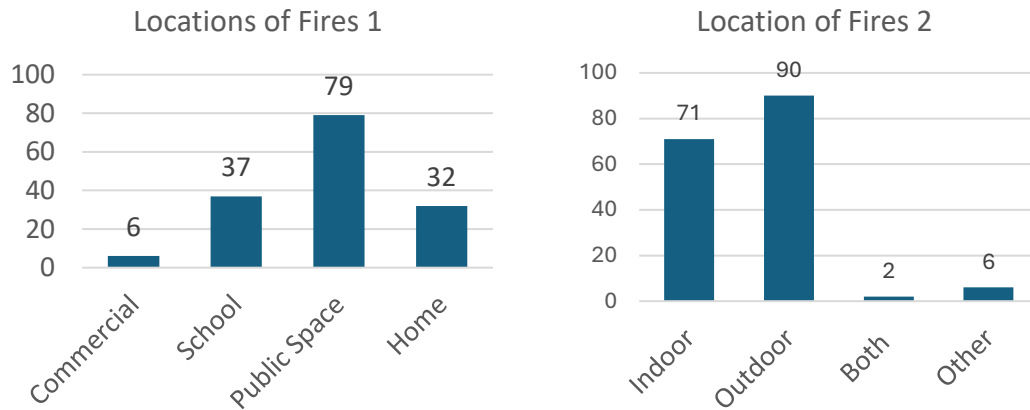


- 2.5. There was an average of 2.5 cases per Advisor, however this differed across the country and some Advisors reported having no cases in the last year, whilst four Areas had an average of four or more visits.



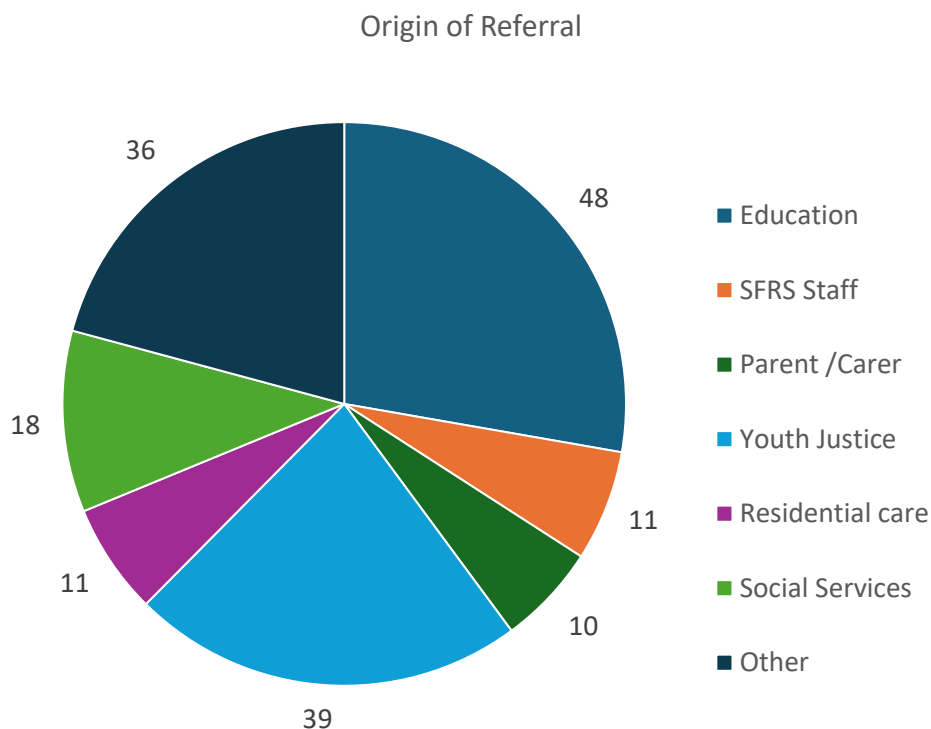
3. Nature and Location of Fires

- 3.1. There were four key areas recognised as the locations that the young people set fires; Public Spaces show as the most common of these. Over a third of fires were either in the home or in a school. Slightly less than half, 71 fires were set indoors, which may carry a higher risk of harm and damage to property.

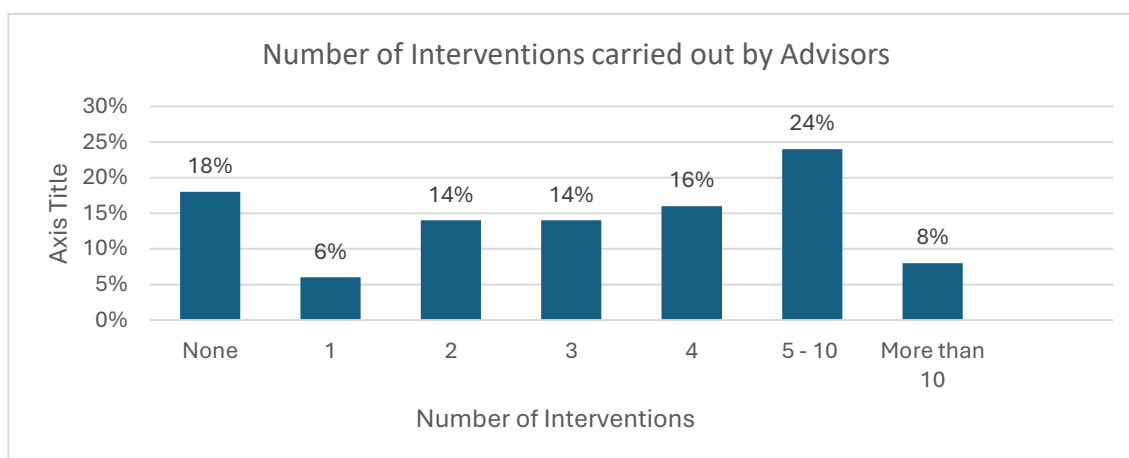


4. Delivering FSSE

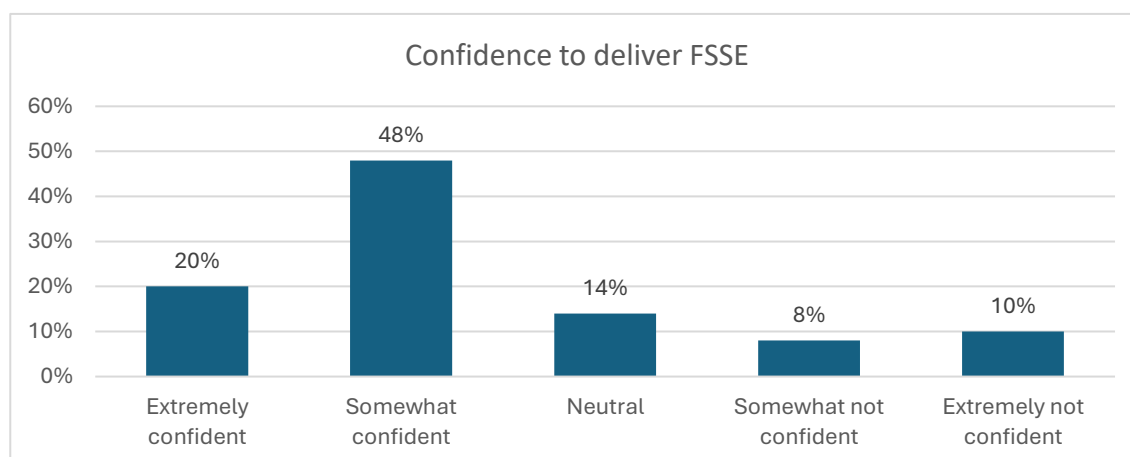
- 4.1. Referrals for FSSE predominately come from external sources with only 11 received from SFRS personnel. The highest referral was from Education with 48, followed by Youth Justice with 39. There were no referrals from Clinical Services.



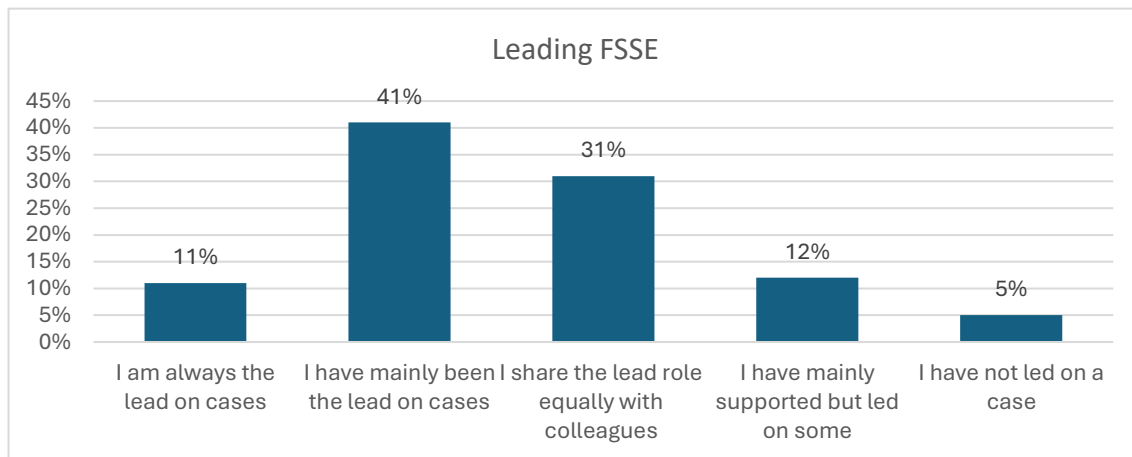
- 4.2. The number of interventions carried out by Advisors varied significantly across the Service. From the table below, 32% were involved in five or more, however almost 20% were not involved in any interventions.



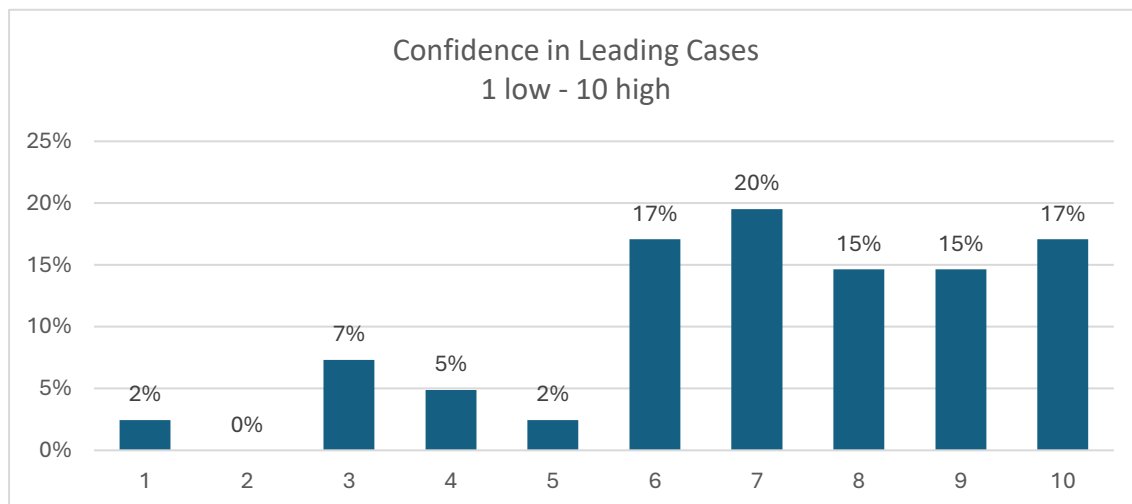
- 4.3. Reasons for the varied number range include:
- A lack of young people who are deliberately setting Fires. This is particularly the situation in rural areas.
 - A lack of referrals being received by the Area. Reasons for this require further investigation.
- 4.4. It is advised that Advisors require a minimum of three cases per year to maintain their skill level. In Scotland, 62% were involved in three or more cases, however 38% were below this figure and may require additional support such as refresher FSSE training, CPD events or peer support sessions.
- 4.5. Confidence to deliver the programme was high among staff with 60% expressing that they were confident when carrying out interventions. This may reflect the number of cases figures above. Anecdotally though, confidence levels are directly linked to the complexity of cases, with staff that have identified themselves as being extremely confident having concerns about their abilities to effectively support young people with complex needs.



4.6. Of those Advisors that have been involved in delivering FSSE there is a good spread of leading cases, with only 5% reporting that they have not led on a case.

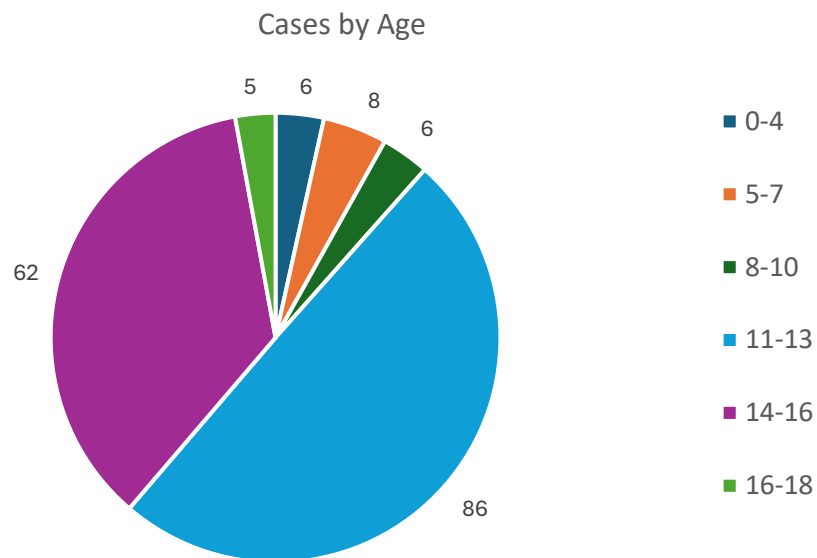


4.7. There is also a high level of confidence when leading cases with advisors scoring themselves an average of 7.5 out of 10.

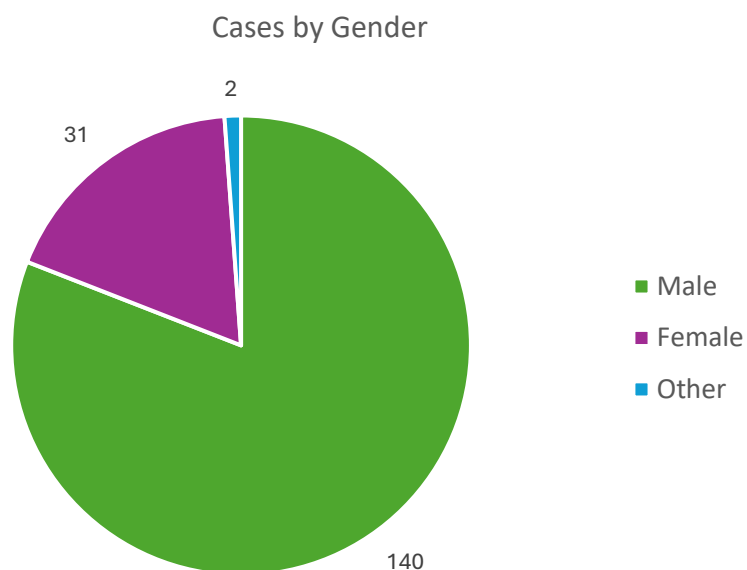


5. Young People

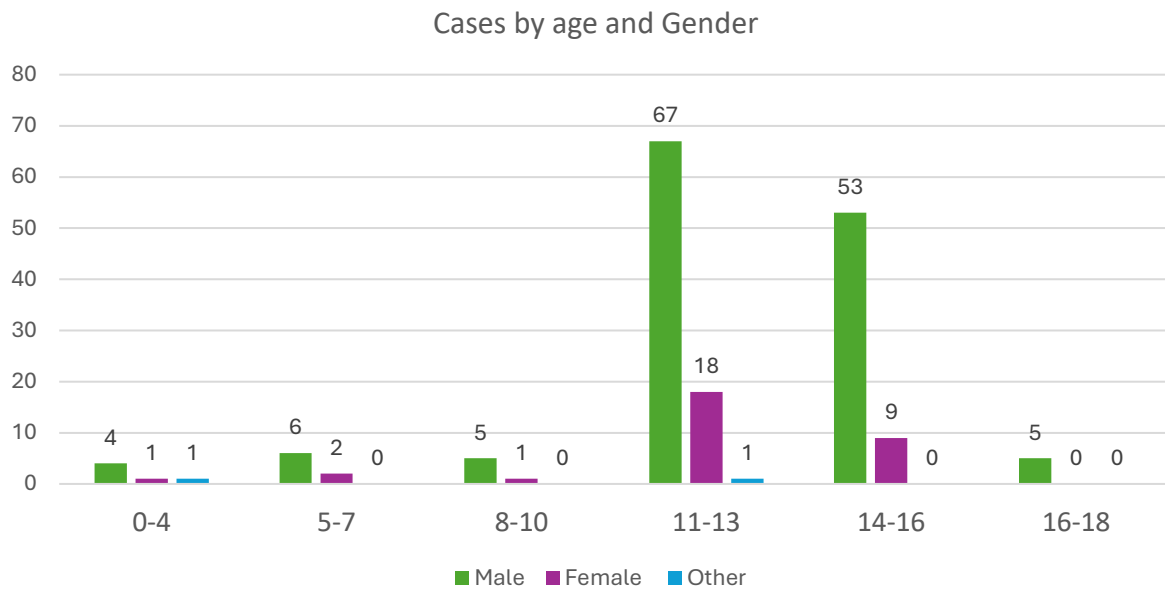
- 5.1. Most of the engagements carried out were with young people between the ages of 11 and 16



- 5.2. There was a greater number of males than females with 140 males, 31 females and two who identified as other. This is in line with the findings of the [National Fire Chiefs Council, Fire Safety Intervention research](#).



5.3. The peak ages for all genders were the same.

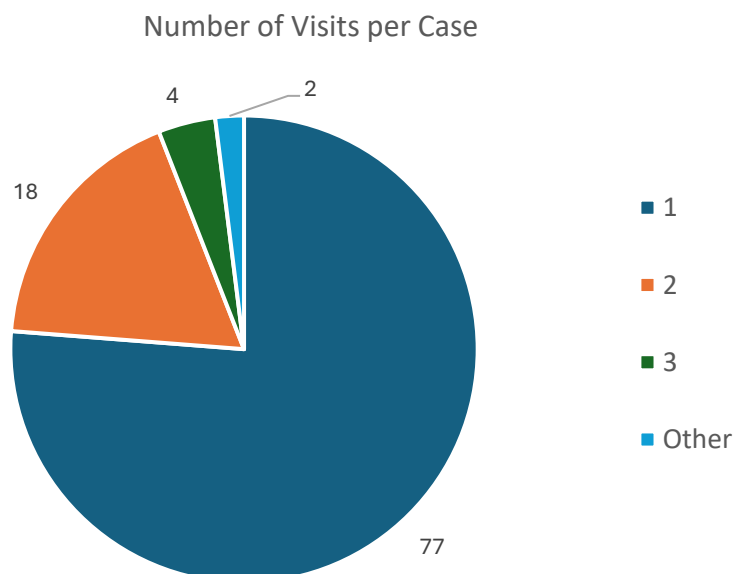


5.4. There were 20 young people who were Care Experienced and 41 known to have Additional Support Needs.

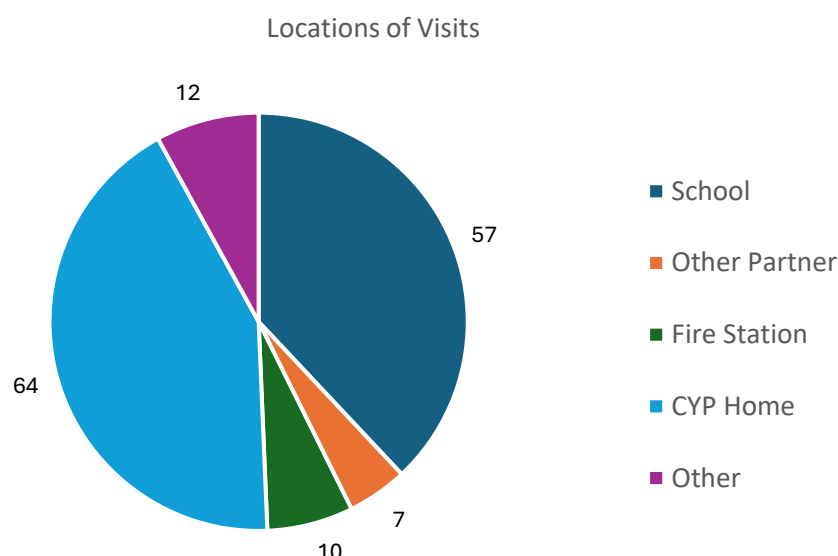
5.5. The age and gender figures are in line with the findings of services across the UK.

6. Engagements

6.1. Most cases required only one meeting, with only two requiring more than the recommended maximum of three meetings.



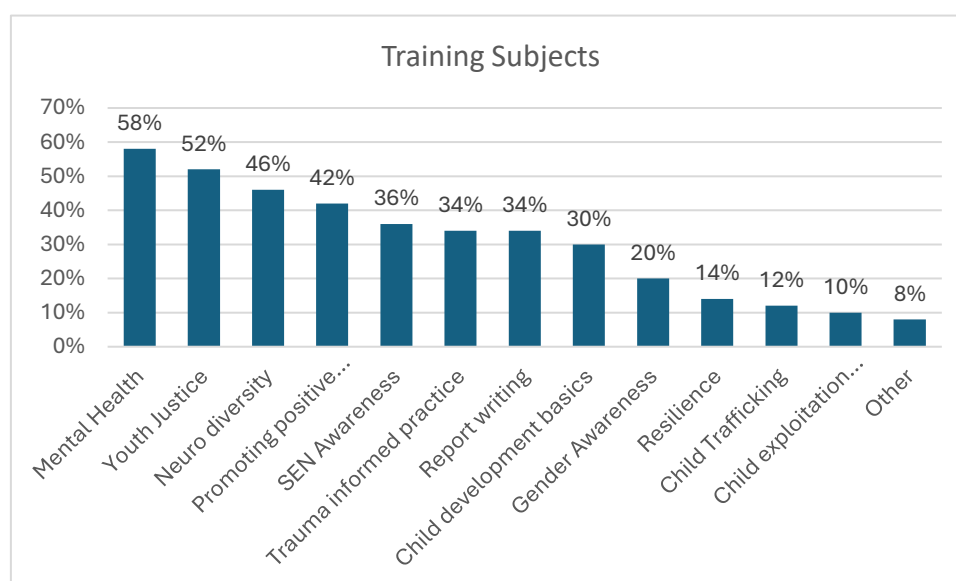
- 6.2. Home was the most popular destination for the location of visits, closely followed by schools.



7. Training for Advisors

- 7.1. In the last three years, 60% of Advisors have either completed their first FSSE training course or a refresher course. However, this left 40% who hadn't received any refresher training, with one Advisor having completed their initial training in 2010 and had not participated in any refresher or additional training. The initial training course is based on the Course developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and although it is not mandatory to complete a refresher course, it is seen as good practice to ensure that knowledge is up to current.
- 7.2. Additional training had been received by 36% of Advisors, 12% had received this training from external agencies. The training that had been received included:
- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| • Ripple Effect | • Introduction to Trauma Informed Practice |
| • Domestic Abuse | • PTSD and Complex PTSD |
| • Autism Awareness | • Caring for Vulnerable Children |
| • Solihull | • Alcohol Brief Intervention |
| • ACEs | • CYP Exploitation Awareness |
| • Human Trafficking | • Violence Against Women and Girls |
| • Child exploitation | • Psychological Trauma |
| • FSSE train the trainer course | • Introduction to Youth Suicide Prevention |
| • Lifelines Scotland | • Let's Chat Online Safely |
- 7.3. Despite the high confidence levels expressed in Section 3 above, 68% of Advisors stated that they would benefit for FSSE refreshers training.

- 7.4. Advisors were asked to choose the top five training subjects that they believed would support them to deliver FSSE. These are ranked in the following table.



- 7.5. Advisors were also asked to suggest courses that they were aware of that they felt would be of benefit to colleges. The following suggestions were received:

- ADHD
- Tourette's,
- Human Trafficking,
- Sign language
- Solihull Training
- Autism awareness
- Child trafficking and Exploitation.
- Makaton
- Child protection etc

- 7.6. Advisors were asked to suggest partner agencies that they felt could offer training. The following suggestions were received:

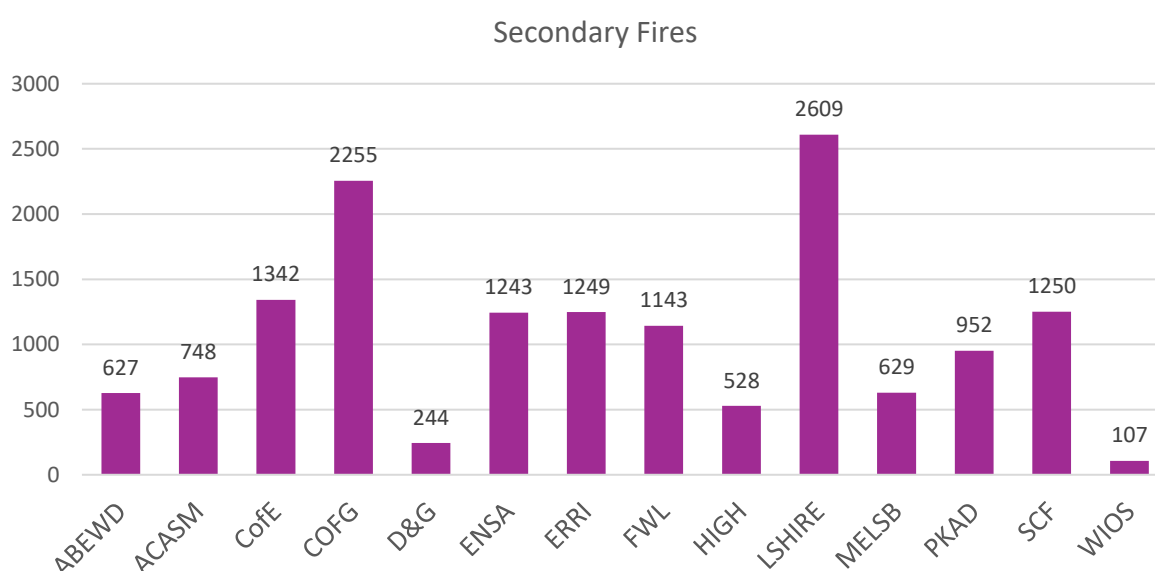
- Police Scotland
- Youth Justice
- Nil by Mouth
- Landed
- Child psychology team
- Police Scotland,
- Psychological services
- Tourette Scotland
- Children's panel.
- NHS Forth Valley Mental Awareness
- Scottish Association for Mental Health
- Neuro diversity
- National Autistic Society.
- British Sign Language

7.7. In a free text box Advisors were asked '*Is there anything else we could do to help you develop as an FSSE Advisor?*' The following are a summary of their responses, capturing the key points:

- A short online refresher on the paperwork would be handy, or even a short video to refer to would be of benefit.
- Regular contact with other FSSE Advisors to discuss their experiences and approaches.
- Get all FSSE together to discuss difficult cases/experiences like we used to do before COVID as I feel this was beneficial for development.
- Trim the paperwork required - it takes longer than the intervention
- Feel not suitably qualified for the extremely high-risk cases when criminal justice also involved.
- I feel a refresher course would be useful - going over the paperwork required, and the main resources available
- I feel we need to be able to hand off the more complex cases with serious Mental Health issues to the professionals. I have conducted FSSEs to young people with serious MH issues, learning difficulties, ASN, and felt woefully unequipped to do so.
- I think training days will make a big impact on the development of all advisors.
- I work with a team of very experienced FSSE staff and are happy to take lead and support myself if required.
- If you could possibly search around charities, companies, etc that offer training
- It would be going back to the start of every element
- Maybe some input from certain partners like Justice System
- More available resources would be helpful, particularly visual/practical resources if possible.
- More practical training
- Recruit more advisors, currently only CAT involved and not mandatory for role

8. Points for consideration

- 8.1. This is the first full year of data in this comprehensive format, there are therefore no previous years to compare it to.
- 8.2. The compliment of Advisors per LSO Area is not based on any established process and would appear to be a mix of legacy provision, availability of appropriate staff to carry out the role and those willing to do so.
- 8.3. When drawing a comparison to secondary fires, we know through FSSE data a number of secondary fires were deliberately set by young people and that those young people may set more than one fire. We also know that not all fires set by young people, with whom our FSSE programme engages, are reported.
- 8.4. Our secondary fires data is broken down by LSO Area to enable a simple comparison between secondary fires and FSSE cases carried out. In 2023-24 the SFRS attended 14,926 malicious calls and secondary fires, excluding chimney fires.



- 8.5. It was expected that those areas with higher secondary fires and/or more Advisors would have more cases neither of these expectations proved to be correct and further exploration is required to identify the reasons for the disparity in cases. One rationale may be crews were not called to respond to as many FSSE incidents, this is data we do not currently ask for.
- 8.6. The number of cases that each LSO had, did not correlate to the time spent with some areas having less cases but spending more time, this is likely to be related to the complexity of each case.
- 8.7. Some Advisors may not be getting enough cases to maintain their skill levels.

- 8.8. The current information gathering is mainly quantitative, to better understand FSSE provision and make informed recommendations, further qualitative research is required with a focus on the various ways that LSO areas are delivering the service and working collaboratively.
- 8.9. The ongoing support for Advisors, post the initial training course, could be improved to ensure that all Advisors are given access to ongoing training and development opportunities.
- 8.10. Consideration is required to ensure that those advisors who do not get sufficient cases are able to maintain their FSSE skills.

9. Recommendations

To ensure that FSSE effectively supports the Advisors and provides the best service to young people it is recommended that:

- 9.1. The core group is recognised as an important support to ensure that the experience of those delivering the service is taken into account when considering changes, developments, and peer support.
- 9.2. The core group develop an action plan that will align with the Prevention priorities and will provide a mechanism to record and monitor the development of FSSE.
- 9.3. Create an FSSE forum for Advisors and their line managers to enable the sharing of learning and experiences to enable Advisors to develop their skills. It is proposed that the forum would meet every two months and would include subjects such as:
 - Briefings on new developments
 - Sharing of case studies from experienced advisors
 - Information sessions for external partners on key topics
 - Opportunities to share experiences and ask questions of peers
- 9.4. Create a new resource library by reviewing the existing resources and explore and share new ways to engage with young people, especially those within the peak age.
- 9.5. Carryout further research on areas of good practice and disseminate this information as appropriate.
- 9.6. Review the existing administration process for FSSE to identify barriers to referring young people for the SFRS and provide recommendations on its future development.
- 9.7. Create a framework to support Advisors to maintain their competency when they are getting less than three cases per year, this is particularly important for Advisors in rural areas.
- 9.8. Maintain links with the NFCC Fire Safety Intervention workstream to network and share practice with those working in a similar field across the UK.

- 9.9. LSO areas are encouraged to hold support meetings for their Advisors where they can meet as a group to discuss individual experiences, issues/learning from particular cases, challenges within the area, possible opportunities to develop the service within the LSO and any other relevant subjects.
- 9.10. Various mediums should be considered to facilitate the future development of advisors and address the topics within this report:
- E-learning either provided in house, by partners or by topic specific organisations such as Autism Scotland.
 - Face to face learning opportunities made available service wide at a National Level or at LSO level by local partners.