



COMMUNITY SAFETY ENGAGEMENT

EARLY INTERVENTION

Fire Safety Support and Education

Statistical Report

April 2025 – March 2026

Contents

1.	FSSE Background	3
2.	Summary	3
3.	Introduction	4
4.	Cases and Advisors	5
5.	Nature and Location of Fires	6
6.	Delivering FSSE	7
7.	Young People	7
8.	Engagements	9
9.	Update from 24-25 Report	10
10.	External Evaluation of FSSE	11
11.	Recommendations	11

1. FSSE Background

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 important prevention tool, enabling SFRS to effectively contribute towards making our communities safer.

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 is delivered in line with the principles of GIRFEC (Getting it Right For Every Child) and supports national legislation including the [Antisocial Behaviour etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) and contributes to many of the outcomes of the SFRS Strategy 2025-2028.

This report summarises the data collected from FSSE quarterly returns provided by Local Senior Officer (LSO) Area from the 01 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. This is the third full year of data using this data set, however at least 5 years data will be required before we can start to identify reliable trends.

NOTE: The data in this report only includes those young people that are engaged through the FSSE programme.

2. Summary

This report presents the third full year of FSSE activity delivered by the SFRS between April 2025 and March 2026. While it remains too early to identify long-term trends, several findings align with national research, particularly in relation to the age and gender of young people engaged.

During the reporting period, the number of FSSE cases fell from 179 in the previous year to 119, this is a significant drop of almost 33%. This coincided with a drop in the estimated hours spent on intervention work from 431 to 360 (16%). As this is a

smaller percentage drop, it indicates that the average time spent of cases has increased from 2.5 hours to 3.1 hours.

Delivery varied widely across Local Senior Officer Areas, with no clear correlation between case numbers, advisor availability, time spent, or levels of secondary fires. This suggests that workload is more influenced by case complexity than incident volume.

The number of trained FSSE Advisors has dropped from 64 to 62 with 8 new staff being trained to maintain this level. Requests for support with FSSE were predominantly from external partners, especially Education and Youth Justice, with very few received from SFRS and none from Clinical Services.

Most young people engaged were aged 11–16, with males significantly overrepresented, reflecting UK-wide findings. A considerable number had care experienced or had additional support needs. Engagements mainly took place in homes and schools, with most cases resolved following a single intervention, supporting the programme's role in early intervention and community safety.

3. Introduction

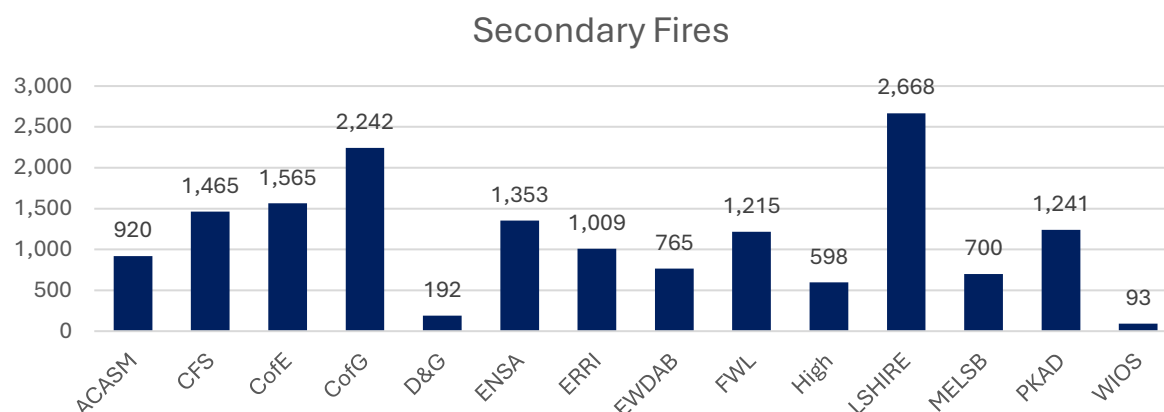
The compliment of advisors per Local Senior Officer Area is not based on any established process and would appear to be a mix of legacy provision, availability of appropriate staff to conduct the role and those willing to do so.

Secondary fires data is broken down by LSO Area to compare secondary fires and Fire Safety Support and Education (FSSE) cases delivered. In 2025-26 the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) attended 16,027 secondary fires, excluding chimney fires.

When comparing secondary fires, we need to take cognisance of the following:

- Not all FSSE requests are a result of a fire that has been recorded on our system;

- Not all secondary fires are started by young people, although anecdotal evidence suggests that they are responsible for the majority;
- Those setting fires may be responsible for setting more than one fire.



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.

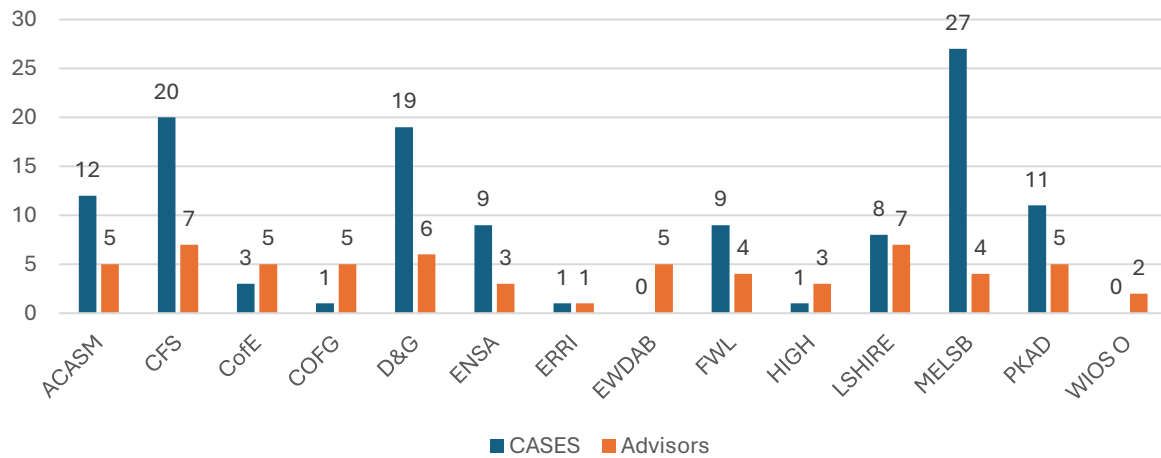
There is no correlation between the time spent with some areas having less cases but spending more time, this may be related to the complexity of each case.

4. Cases and Advisors

In 2025-26 there were 119 cases, this ranged from 2 areas with no cases to 27 cases in Mid and East Lothian and Scottish Borders (MELSB) and resulted in an estimated 360 hours spent on FSSE work.

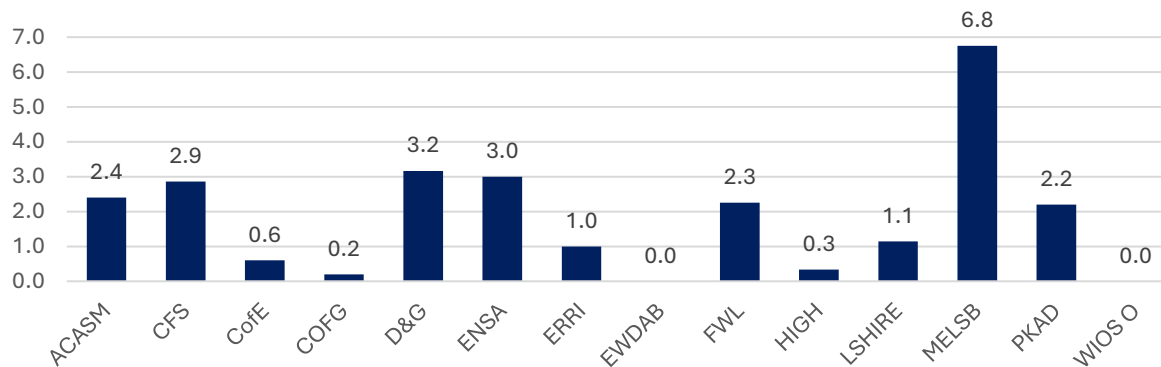
SFRS currently have 62 FSSE Advisors across the Service, this was a reduction of 2 from 64 in April 2025. The drop in Advisors has been due to people leaving the service or the department and improved record keeping. Most areas have 4 or more advisors, however there is no recommended complement of advisors per area as this would depend on demand and geography. However, it is recognised that areas with 2 or less Advisors are at risk of not being able to provide this service due to leave and capacity. FSSE training was provided to 8 staff, over 1 course, this included those new to FSSE and existing Advisors seeking to update and refresh their skills.

CASES & ADVISORS PER LSO AREA



There was an average of 1.9 cases per advisor, only 1 area had more than 4 cases per Advisor, Advisors having less than 3 cases per year run the risk of becoming deskilled.

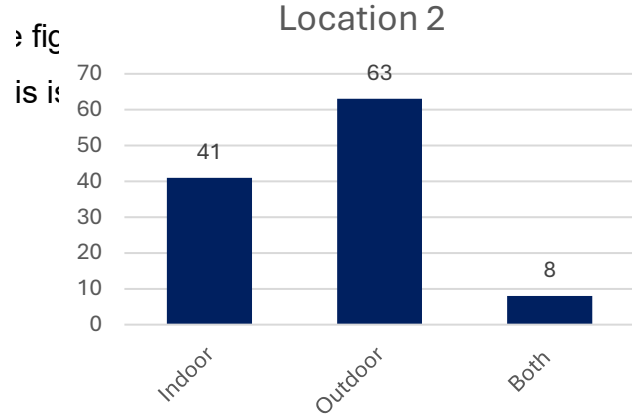
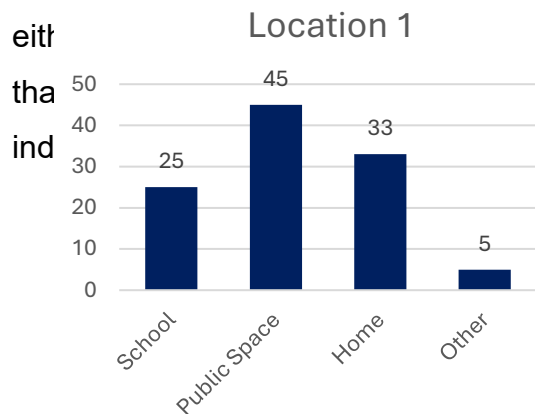
CASE PER ADVISOR



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, 5 young people were referred to internal provision such as FireSkills and a further five young people were signposted to services provided by other agencies.

5. Nature and Location of Fires

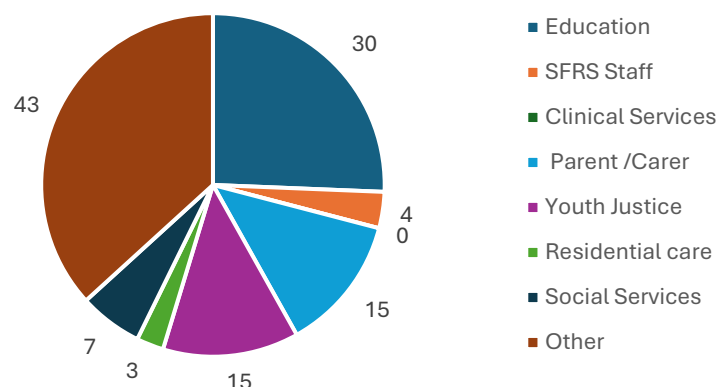
Public spaces were the most common location



6. Delivering FSSE

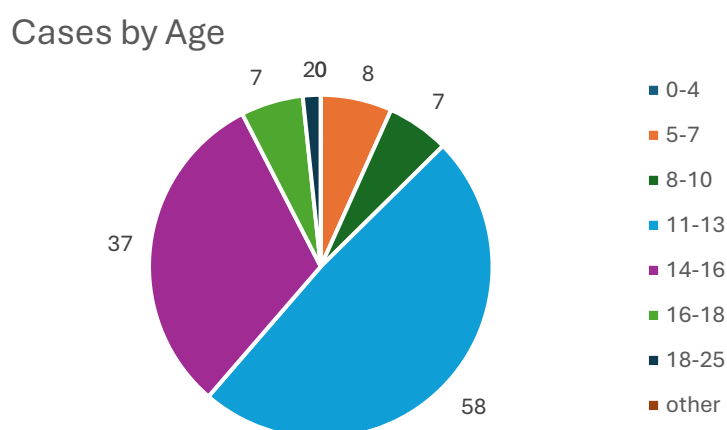
Requests for support with FSSE predominately from external sources with only four received from SFRS personnel. The highest requests for support were from 'other' with 43, these came mainly from Police Scotland followed by Education with 30. There were no requests for support from Clinical Services.

Origin of Requests for Support

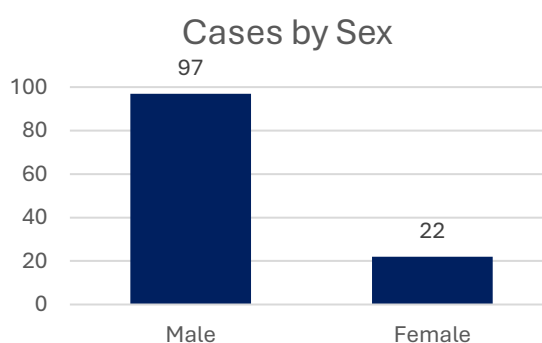


7. Young People

Most of the engagements conducted were with young people between the ages of 11 to 13 closely followed by 14- to 16-year-olds with significantly lower numbers either side of this.

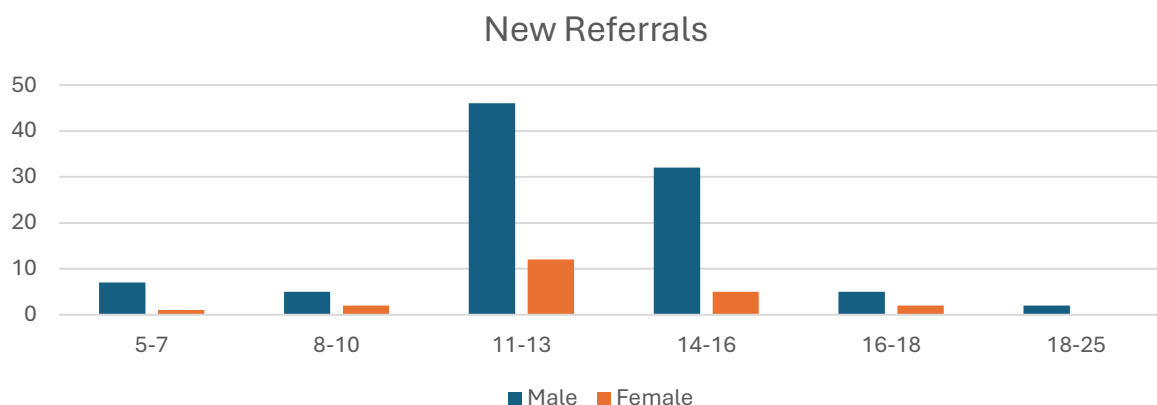


There was a greater number of males than females with 97 males, 22 females. Proportionally, these figures are similar to last year and are in line with the findings of the [National Fire Chiefs Council, Fire Safety Intervention research](#).



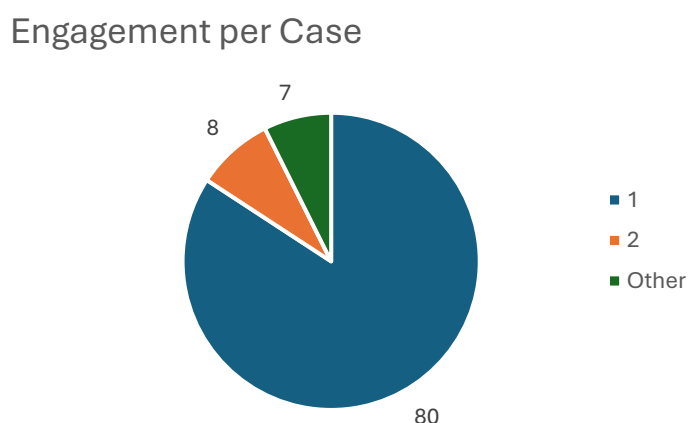
In each age group, the number of males was higher than the number of females. The age and gender figures are in line with the findings of services across the UK.

There were 44 young people who were Care Experienced and 40 known to have Additional Support Needs with one young person requiring an interpreter.

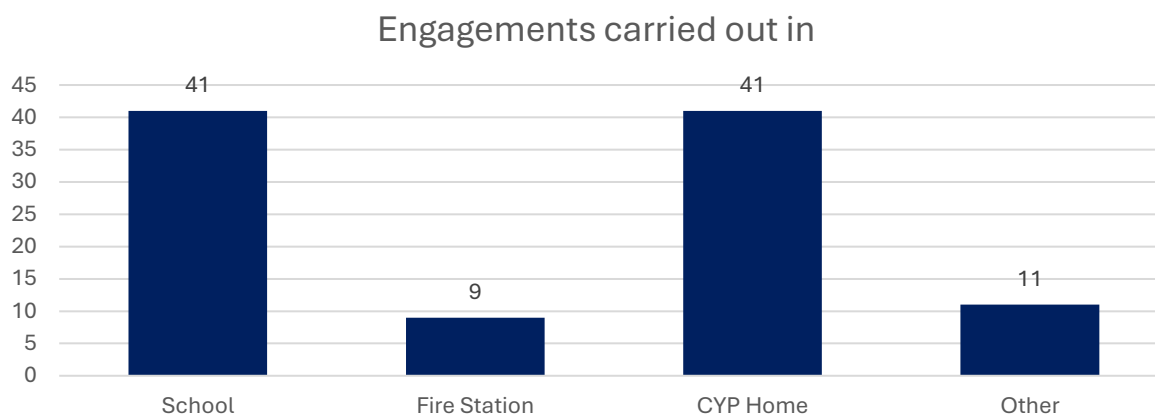


8. Engagements

Most cases required only one meeting, those included in the 'other' category were mainly cases where the young person refused to engage in the programme. No cases require the maximum of 3 visits.



Home and schools were the most popular locations for engagement to take place, other included partner premises and other community facilities.



9. Update from 24-25 Report

The [FSSE report in 2024-25](#) consisted of quantitative data and produced a series of recommendations to improve the support the development of the programme.

Completed actions from the recommendations in 2024-25 report include:

- Updated the FSSE information on the SFRS website to ensure that agencies and members of the public have clear information on how to access FSSE support;
- Improved links with the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) and work is ongoing to improve access to information and support for the Youth Justice Sector;
- Referral for FSSE support can now be taken over the telephone, removing the need, in most cases, for partners to complete and send the referral form via secure email;
- We also continue to support Advisors through:
 - Maintained links with the NFCC Fire Safety Intervention workstream;
 - Local line management and Team meetings, this is backed up by support from Youth Engagement Officer and the National Lead for FSSE;
 - Ongoing CPD through directorate quarterly events and digitally sourced from external agencies such as YouthLink or 'TURUS' the NHS training and Learning portal.

10. External Evaluation of FSSE

Research students from Liverpool University are carrying out research into our FSSE work. The research will seek to establish what mechanisms are working well in the way we deliver the intervention and why and explore the barriers and areas for improvement. Accordingly, this project will focus on conducting a process evaluation and the development of a Logic model framework to understand what an outcome framework would look like.

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted following a process evaluation approach with members of the team that deliver FSSE interventions and potentially with partner agencies who make referrals. Questions would focus on understanding perspective and experiences regarding what works well and why, barriers or challenges to delivery and how they are or could be overcome.

Questions will also be asked that follow a Logic model approach to map out inputs (resources needed for delivery), activities (actions taken by the team to achieve goals), outputs (direct products of activities), outcomes (short- and medium-term effects), and impacts (long-term broader changes). Moving forward, this can be used to develop an outcome framework that highlights how success could be measured and the data that would be needed to achieve this.

11. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to support the maintenance and development of FSSE provision:

1. Evaluation and Monitoring

- Support the research work being carried out by Liverpool University to establish a framework to support the understanding and development of the SFRS FSSE programme.
2. Strengthen Referral Pathways and Partnerships
 - Formalise links with key partners to improve early identification and referrals;
 - Continue to explore ways to simplifying access to FSSE and promote referral routes across partner agencies.
 3. Investigate the Reduction in Cases
 - Work with LSO Areas and partners to understand the 33% decrease in cases, including referral patterns, awareness, and local capacity;
 - Identify whether unmet need exists or referrals are being diverted elsewhere.
 4. Improve Internal Awareness within SFRS
 - Increase awareness of FSSE among operational crews to boost internal referrals;
 - Embed FSSE into training, briefings, and post-incident considerations.
 5. Review Advisor Capacity and Capability
 - Assess advisor distribution across LSO Areas to ensure adequate coverage and resilience;
 - Mitigate deskilling risks by increasing training, joint working, and CPD opportunities.