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SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

Fires in purpose-built flats, Scotland, April 2009 to March 2017

**An ad hoc statistical release
July 2017**

1. Introduction

In support of the recent Home Office statistical release (*Fires in purpose-built flats, England, April 2009 to March 2017 – 27 June 2017*), following the tragic events of the Grenfell Tower fire, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has produced this report providing statistics on fires, fire-related fatalities and non-fatal casualties in dwelling properties across Scotland. Particular focus has been given to properties categorised as 'purpose-built flats'. Detailed data on fires in properties of this nature are not routinely published as they exist as a subset of the overall 'dwelling' category. We will consider including this as a sub-category in future data publications.

Our routine figures on number of fires attended, fire-related fatalities and non-fatal casualties for 2016/17 are due to be released by SFRS on the 26th October 2017. However in support of colleagues in England and Wales and in the public interest it has been decided to include relevant figures in this ad hoc report. We will update these provisional 2016/17 figures within the October release.

To ensure comparison with the Home Office statistical release (*Fires in purpose-built flats, England, April 2009 to March 2017 – 27 June 2017*) and to maintain a consistent presentation, all data in this report mirrors the format used within the Home Office release. It should be noted that existing practices of SFRS would present some of the data in this report differently. For example technically a High Rise property is defined as a building that is over 18M in height. However to ensure comparison with the data made available by colleagues reporting on the situation in England and Wales we have translated those technical definitions into the number of storeys in purpose built flats.

One area that we would normally report differently to colleagues in England and Wales is data on non-fatal casualties where SFRS statistics are reported in line with Scottish Government guidance. In Scotland non-fatal casualties are reported as 'including precautionary checks' and 'excluding precautionary checks'. This differentiates between individuals following a fire who receive some form of treatment either as a hospital admission, treatment by emergency service staff at the scene, and individuals who were only advised to see a doctor as a precaution having no obvious injury at the incident scene. Below we report the actual hospitalisations following fires and also casualties which include precautionary checks so that again the data is comparable to that recently published by the Home Office.

Data sources

It should be further noted, that this ad hoc report provides factual information on the number of fires, fire-related fatalities and non-fatal casualties by dwelling type and does not relate them to the number of dwellings (including purpose-built flats) or the number of people living in them, and any changes in population over the time period.

Each time SFRS attend an incident in Scotland, details of that incident are uploaded to the Home Office's Incident Recording System (IRS) by the Service. More information on the IRS can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/incident-recording-system-for-fire-and-rescue-authorities

The IRS is a continually updated database with incidents added on a daily basis. The figures in this release refer to records of incidents that occurred up to 31st March 2017 that had reached the IRS by 28th June 2017 when a snapshot was taken for the purposes of analysis.

Throughout the report we make reference to numbers that fluctuate year-on-year due to the relatively low numbers. This can be particularly apparent for statistics such as non-fatal casualties, fire-related fatalities¹, or when considering incidents within the subsets of a particular property type.

Definition of purpose-built flats

It is possible to break down the IRS data from 2009/10 to show the number of fires in purpose built flats based on the number of storeys. As previously stated in this ad hoc report we are reporting the data in a manner consistent with the information published by the Home Office. The IRS includes a field for property type, with categories for purpose-built flats as follows:

Purpose-built flat/maisonette:

- Up to 3 storeys
- 4 to 9 storeys
- 10 storeys or more

As a result we are publishing this data using these fields to help with further interpretation of fire statistics.

2. Dwelling fires in purpose-built flats

Number of fires

Of the 5,542 dwelling fires attended by SFRS in 2016/17 around two-thirds (65%) were in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other² properties and around a third (35%) were in purpose-built flats. This equated to, 21 per cent were in 1 to 3 storey purpose built flats; 10 per cent in 4 to 9 storey purpose built flats and 4 per cent in purpose built flats 10 storeys or more.

¹ For more detailed technical definitions of fire-related fatalities, see the Fire Statistics Definitions document. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610453/fire-statistics-definitions.pdf

² Other – includes sheltered accommodation, caravan/mobile home, HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) etc.

SFRS attended 238 fires in purpose built flats 10 storeys or more in Scotland in 2016/17 compared with 499 in 2009/10. This is a decrease of 52per cent.

Over the period covered the number of fires each year in other types of dwelling remained relatively unchanged. While there have been fluctuations in year-end figures over the last eight years, comparing 2009/10 against 2016/17 reflects a half percent increase from 3,579 (2009/10) to 3,598 (2016/17).

Over this same period fires in 4 to 9 storey purpose built flats fell by 25 per cent (from 738 fires in 2009/10 to 555 fires in 2016/17), and those in 1-3 storeys fell by 34 per cent (from 1744 in 2009/10 to 1151 in 2016/17).

Table 1 - Number of dwelling fires attended by SFRS by dwelling type, Scotland, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of dwelling fires	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	3,579	3,541	3,470	3,575	3,370	3,550	3,643	3,598
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	1,744	1,616	1,552	1,262	1,061	1,165	1,202	1,151
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	738	703	662	623	558	592	518	555
Purpose Built Flat - 10 or more storeys	499	433	475	376	345	275	314	238

3. Non-fatal casualties and fire-related fatalities

Non-fatal casualties

There were 45 non-fatal casualties in fires in purpose built flats of 10 storeys or more in Scotland in 2016/17, compared with 65 in 2009/10 (a decrease of 31%). As noted above a casualty includes people not requiring hospital treatment (e.g. given first aid at scene or precautionary checks were recommended).

Table 2 - Number of non-fatal casualties in dwelling fires attended by SFRS by dwelling type, Scotland, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of non-fatal casualties	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	506	629	664	694	693	560	635	600
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	348	305	350	282	244	232	254	264
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	113	144	133	118	143	114	110	152
Purpose Built Flat - 10 or more storeys	65	64	72	72	60	43	64	45

Non-fatal casualties (Hospitalised)

In 2016/17 there were 14 non-fatal casualties requiring hospital treatment from fires in purpose built flats of 10 or more storeys. This figure is down from 30 in 2009/10 (a reduction of 53 %). Casualties from houses, bungalows, converted flats and other properties reduced from 234 in 2009/10 to 209 in 2016/17 (a reduction of 11 %).

Table 3 - Number of non-fatal casualties needing hospital treatment from fires in dwellings attended by SFRS, by dwelling type, Scotland, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of hospitalised casualties	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	234	298	273	248	280	227	213	209
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	130	146	140	102	72	90	96	89
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	33	73	56	43	47	38	41	53
Purpose Built Flat - 10 or more storeys	30	26	28	24	22	23	28	14

Table 4 below, shows that casualties requiring hospital treatment ranged from 4.6 per cent to 6.5 per cent of all property category incidents. As stated previously fluctuations occur year-on-year with such low numbers.

We can provide further context on the incidents in 2016/17 that occurred in purpose built flats of 10 or more storeys. It should be noted that only 3 of the 13 hospitalisations were treated as 'serious' and the remaining 10 as 'slight'. 9 of the 10 'slight' admissions were as a result of slight smoke inhalation. Of the relevant fire incidents themselves, firefighting action occurred on only three occasions.

Table 4 - Percentage of dwelling fires attended by SFRS with a casualty requiring hospital treatment, by dwelling type, Scotland, 2016/17

	House, bungalow, converted flat, other	Purpose-built flat - 1 to 3 storeys	Purpose-built flat - 4 to 9 storeys	Purpose-built flat - 10 or more storeys
Number of dwelling fires	3,598	1,151	555	238
Number of dwelling fires with hospitalised casualties	165	71	36	13
Percentage of dwelling fires with casualties requiring hospitalisation	4.6%	6.2%	6.5%	5.5%

Fire-related fatalities

There have been no reported fire-related fatalities in purpose built flats of 10 storeys or more in Scotland since 2013/14. During 2013/14 there were four reported fire-related fatalities from four separate fires. Of those incidents only one fire spread beyond the room of origin and it remained limited to only two floors of the building. A similar pattern occurred in purpose built flats of 4 – 9 storeys.

Table 5 - Number of fire-related fatalities in dwelling fires attended by SFRS, by dwelling type, Scotland, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of fire-related fatalities	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	27	24	27	28	18	23	27	26
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	16	9	20	6	5	7	8	9
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	6	7	4	4	2	2	4	1
Purpose Built Flat - 10 or more storeys	4	5	-	2	4	-	-	-

In 2016/17, 10 of the 1,944 fires in purpose-built flats had fire-related fatalities (0.5 %) compared with 26 from 3,598 fires (0.7 %) in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other dwellings. Of the 10 fire-related fatalities in purpose-built flats, nine were in 1 to 3 storey accommodation.



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