SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Annual Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Assurance Performance Report 2025-26



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1. Introduction

Chief Officer and Board Chair; Head of Safety and Assurance; Key Focuses; and Key Highlights

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Introduction

The Annual Safety, Health, Wellbeing and Assurance Performance Report for 2025–26 sets out the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) continued commitment to protecting its workforce. It outlines organisational performance, governance and improvement activity, showing how safety and assurance remain embedded across the Service.

During the year, the Service strengthened a positive health, safety, wellbeing and assurance culture across operational and our corporate services. Activity at all levels from strategic oversight to frontline delivery has been informed by robust risk management practices, data-led insight and a clear emphasis on safeguarding personnel and the communities they serve.

During 2025–26, significant progress has been made in advancing occupational health measures, including the further development and implementation of arrangements to manage risks associated with fire contaminants. Developed in partnership with representative bodies and subject matter experts, this work reflects the Service's ongoing commitment to applying evidence-based approaches and industry best practice to emerging risks.

Looking ahead, SFRS will continue to build on these foundations through enhanced assurance processes, strengthened organisational learning and a clear focus on improving health, safety, wellbeing and assurance outcomes.

This report highlights key achievements and areas for development but also outlines the direction of travel for continued improvement across the Service.

The SFRS Board and Strategic Leadership Team formally recognise the dedication, professionalism and resilience demonstrated by all personnel throughout the year. Their collective efforts in maintaining high standards and supporting one another remain fundamental to the Service's ongoing success.



Stuart Stevens
SFRS Chief Officer



Mhairi Whylie
Chair of SFRS Board

Overview



Jim Holden
Head of Safety and Assurance

As I reflect on the 2025–26 reporting year, it is important to acknowledge the collective efforts of all SFRS personnel.

The consistent focus on maintaining health, safety, wellbeing and assurance has been fundamental to the progress made throughout the year. Across all areas of the Service from incident response to operational support and leadership the high standards of professionalism and resilience demonstrated have played a crucial role in fostering a safer and more effective working environment.

Over the course of 2025-26, the function has delivered meaningful improvements across several key areas. These include the Premises Compliance Process, the Procurement of a new electronic Safety and Assurance Management System (e-SAMS), and the integration of Health and Wellbeing within Safety and Assurance, creating a cohesive approach to safety, health, wellbeing and assurance.

A range of structured learning approaches, including significant event investigations, formal debriefs, thematic audits and case study reviews, have strengthened the Service's ability to capture and embed organisational learning, reinforcing a culture of continuous improvement. Governance frameworks remain robust and fully aligned with statutory requirements, supported by a culture that encourages personal accountability for safety. Improvements to reporting arrangements have enhanced both accessibility and clarity, while the Health and Safety Improvement Plans achieved full delivery against all objectives, demonstrating a sustained organisational focus on safety advancement and learning.

Priority continues to be placed on enhancing the Service's integrated approach to health, safety, wellbeing and assurance. The ongoing development of our systems is strengthening consistency and effectiveness, with further progress made towards alignment with ISO 45001 standards. Key improvements have been introduced in areas such as work equipment management and risk assessment processes, supporting safer operational practice. A comprehensive programme of safety and wellbeing training, delivered through both dedicated courses and embedded within operational competence frameworks, ensures that personnel are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to perform their roles safely and effectively.

Recognition is also due to partner UK Fire and Rescue Services for their contribution of data, which has supported the Service's benchmarking activity. Continued collaboration with the National Fire Chiefs Council will be strengthened to identify shared learning and drive improvement initiatives aimed at enhancing safety across the sector.

I would like to thanks all personnel for their continued commitment and contribution. Through collective effort, the Service continues to embed a culture that prioritises health, safety, wellbeing and assurance, strengthening resilience while ensuring the ongoing protection of our people and the communities we serve.

HSWA Objectives

SAFER COMMUNITIES THROUGH PREVENTION

Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Assurance Risk Management:

Develop and maintain compliant and effective Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Assurance Management Systems, including the Cority and HSWA Management Systems. Assess and mitigate risk proportionately to improve staff safety and wellbeing.

Manage risk. Protect people. Prevent harm.

INNOVATION & INVESTMENT

Improvement & Organisational Learning:

Drive continuous improvement through our Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Assurance Improvement Plans, embedding assurance and learning across the organisation.

Innovate. Invest. Improve.

INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

Safe and Well Workplace Culture:

Promote a positive culture that recognises safe behaviour, supports wellbeing, embeds learning and empowers staff to lead by example.

Positive culture. Empowered people. Better together.

SAFE & EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

Safety Training & Assurance:

Increase safety awareness and understanding to ensure our staff are competent and capable.

Prepared people. Confident teams. Effective response.

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Assurance Communications & Engagement:

Strengthen communication and engagement across Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Assurance to support compliant, effective and efficient ways of working.

Engage. Communicate. Improve performance.

Safety Key Highlights



Planning

Facilitated the collation, review and distribution of Contaminant zoning plans for all SFRS operational and training premises.



Operations

A consistent, national approach to premises risk management was embedded across all operational locations, ensuring compliance through Generic Risk Assessments or Specific Risk Assessments.



Directorates

RAs, SSOW and Technical Assessments were progressed quality-assured and formally implemented across SFRS, enhancing compliance and safety assurance. This includes a GRA, supporting SSOWs and a PPE assessment for Communications and Engagement Media activities.



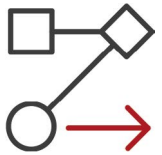
Training

Strengthened the Risk Assessment and SSOW review programme for Training-specific health and safety documentation, enhancing the accuracy and validity of the Training Handbook.



Event and Investigation

There were 672 events reported and investigated, with recommendations made where identified for organisational learning. With SA leading on 4 significant Investigations.



Business Support

Established a quality assurance process for the Directorate Gantt charts and in support of Risk register and action at SAIG Meetings.

Assurance, Health and Wellbeing Key Highlights



Safety Assurance

Continued progress has been made in implementing the ISO45001 action plan, with key elements of the management system now established. Action tracking, performance reporting and organisational learning mechanisms are in place and increasingly embedded, supporting improved oversight and continual improvement. Further work is focused on strengthening audit, assurance and management review arrangements to fully evidence effectiveness.



Operational Assurance (OA)

OA has received 10 Information and Action Notes from NFCC this year, which have been reviewed against current SFRS policies and procedures. This has informed recommendations to improve firefighter safety and operational performance. OA strengthened its relationship with NFCC, working collaboratively with UK fire and rescue services to share approaches and good practice, supporting the development of organisational learning within SFRS.



Training Assurance (TA)

TA workstreams began this year by defining the purpose and scope of TA. TA engaged with key stakeholders before commencing a series of engagement sessions and audits of training centres. This information informed Current State Analysis and highlighted further analysis data is required from on station training, Operations Control and FDO cadres. Audit and engagement session preparation was undertaken to capture learning from these areas.



Fitness

The Operational Fitness Policy and Procedure, and all supporting protocols were reviewed. This informed staff training and development to ensure the delivery of fitness assessments meets the required quality standards. This supported a continued increase in fitness assessment compliance throughout 2025-26, reaching 97% by the end of March 2026.



Wellbeing

The Health & Wellbeing structure was strengthened through the permanent inclusion of wellbeing development.



Occupational Health

Occupational Health reviewed and updated all protocols to ensure continued compliance with legislation and national clinical guidance. Worked collaboratively with fitness colleagues to deliver staff training to ensure delivery of safety critical medicals meets required standards. By the end of March 2026 safety critical medical assessment compliance reached 97%.



2. Performance

Key Performance Indicators; H&W Statistics;
Benchmarking UK FRS; and SA Indicators 2025/26

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Key Performance Indicators

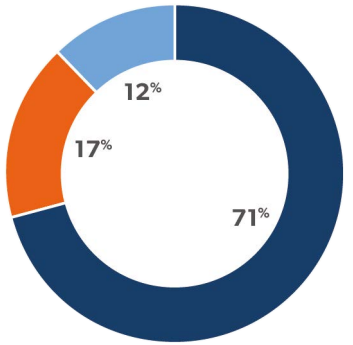
RIDDOR Reportable Events

In 2025/26 a total of 24 events were reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under RIDDOR Regulations. When compared to the previous reporting year, there has been a 140% increase (10 to 24).

The most common cause of over 7-day injuries was slips, trips, and falls, accounting for 38% (9 of 24).

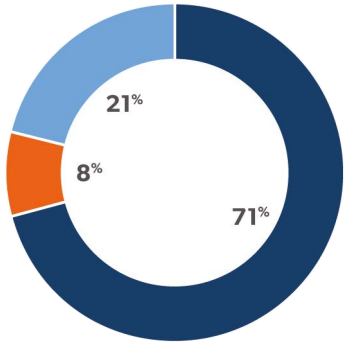
An example of a RIDDOR reportable events include:

- **Over 7 Day:** When responding to a dwelling fire, a firefighter driver was assisting exiting crews to carry a casualty down a flight of stairs and tripped and injured their knee. Outcome: The driver was not wearing full PPE. A local awareness brief was distributed highlighting the requirement of all staff, including drivers, to wear full PPE at all incidents.
- **Dangerous Occurrence:** At an operational incident, one BA set showed that a fault occurred before being committed to risk area during entry checks. Outcome: Confirmed that there was an intermittent issue with DSU display which was sent to the manufacture for inspection following the Impound Inspection.



Activity Type

- Operational
- Non-Operational
- Training

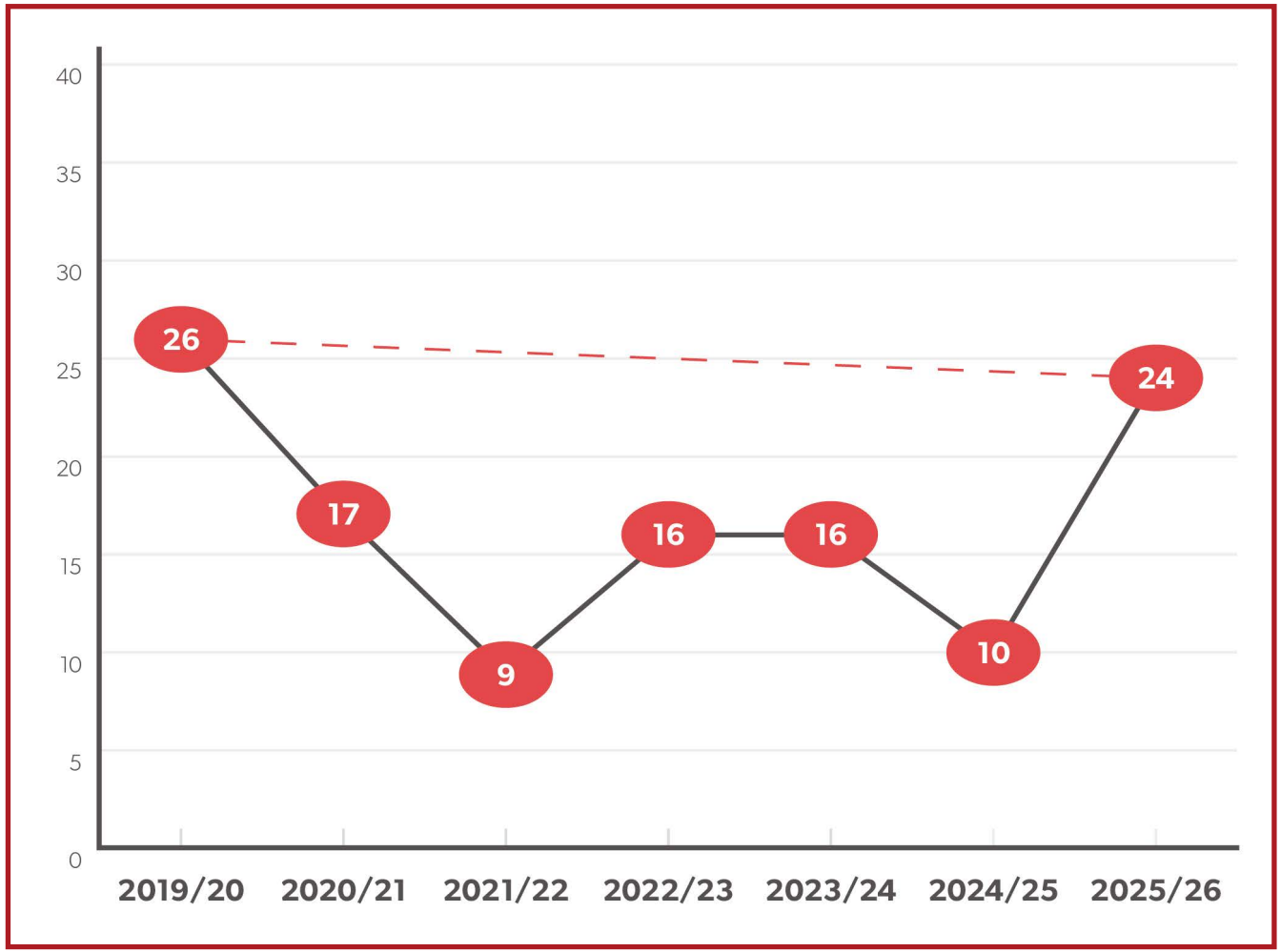


Type of RIDDOR

- Over 7 Day Injuries
- Dangerous Occurrence
- Specified Injuries

Key Performance Indicators

RIDDOR Reportable Events



KPI 52: RIDDOR Reportable Events

Purpose:

Demonstrates how many notifications there has been to the HSE which may include death, specified injury, over 7 day injury, non-worker taken to hospital for treatment, dangerous occurrence or an occupational disease.

Please note COVID-19 RIDDORs are excluded to provide a true trend.

Key Performance Indicators

Accident and Injuries (excluding RIDDOR)

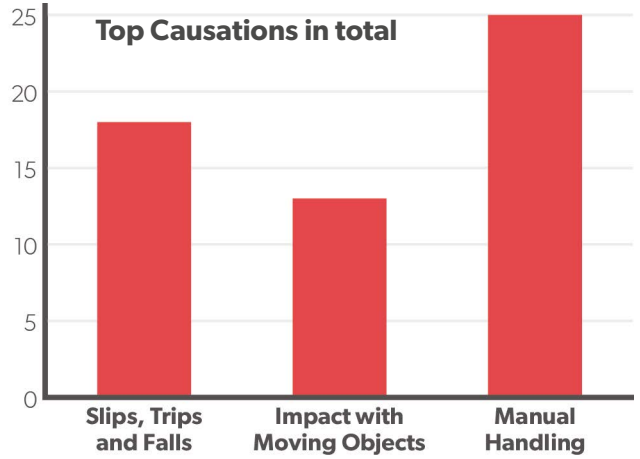
In 2025/26 there was a total of 156 accident injuries recorded. When compared to the previous reporting year, there has been a 10% (173 to 156) decrease, of these:

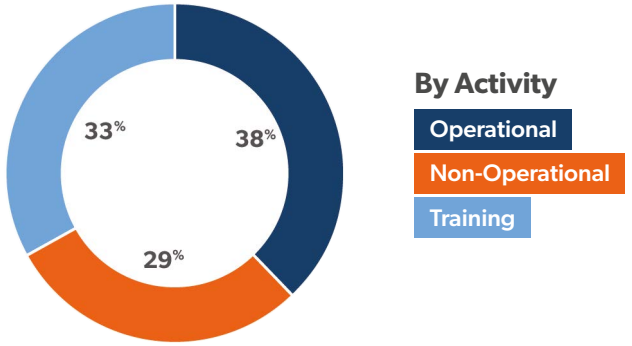
Examples of Accident/Injuries include:

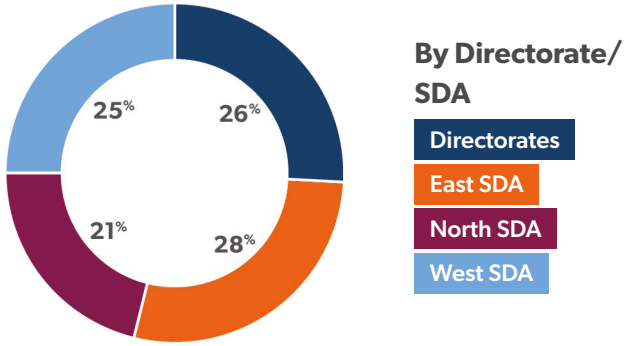
- Firefighter suffered suspected heat exhaustion while at an incident, resulting in familiarisation with SFRS Hydration guidance; and
- Following attendance at an open incident, a Firefighter found a tick on return to Station, as a result tick removal tools were delivered to station for use.

Local Safety and Assurance Improvement Groups will monitor emerging trends, identify local learning, and implement required actions. Learning with wider significance will be escalated to the Organisational Learning Group and the National Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Assurance Board for corporate review.

Areas identified for future focus included improving safety performance and learning, with particular emphasis on situational awareness and decision-making. This included human factors impact and the improvement of hazard recognition and risk assessment.

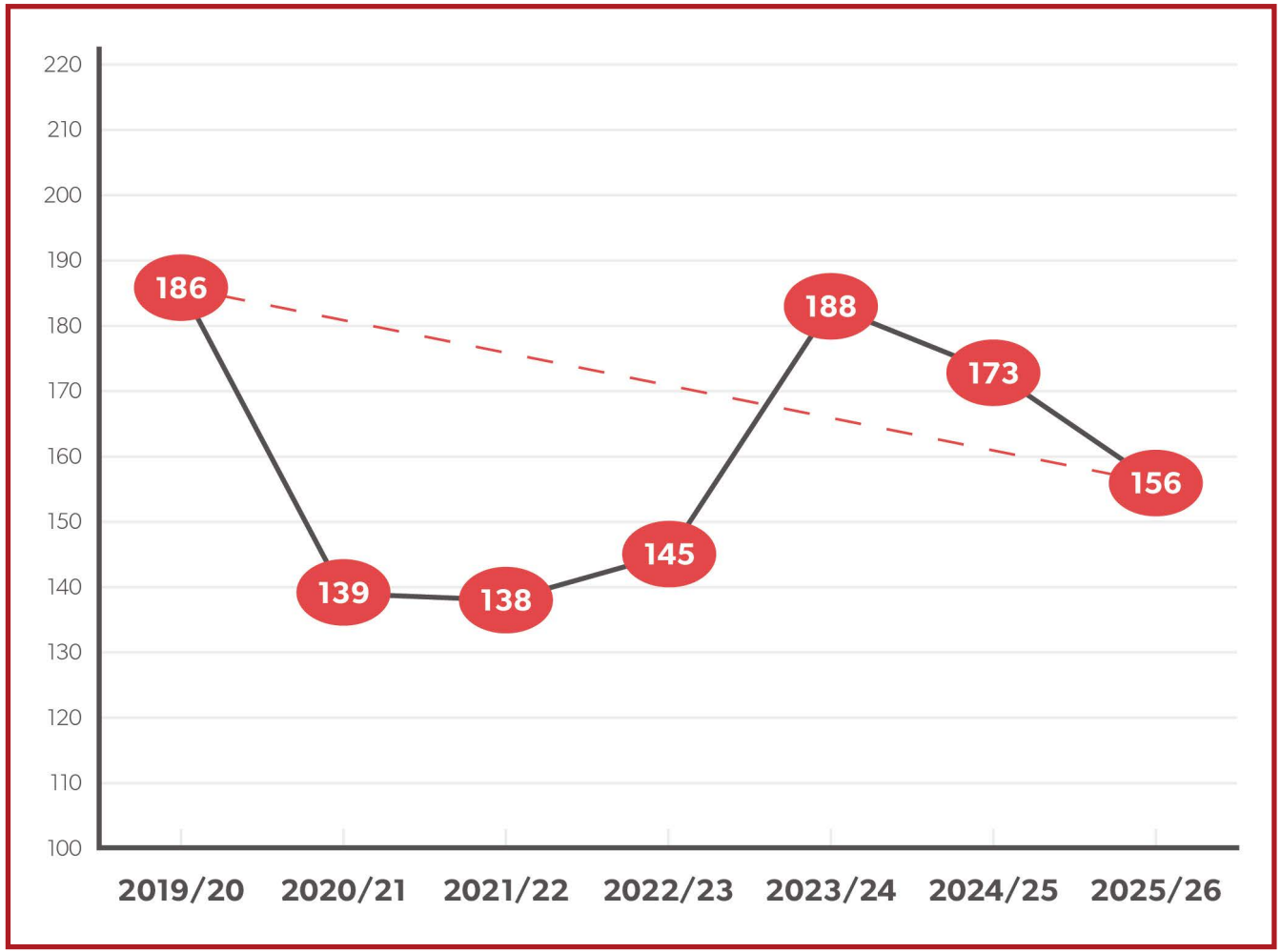






Key Performance Indicators

Accident and Injuries (excluding RIDDOR)



KPI 53: Accident and Injuries (excluding RIDDOR)

Purpose:

Demonstrates the total number of workplace accidents and injuries reported across the Service.

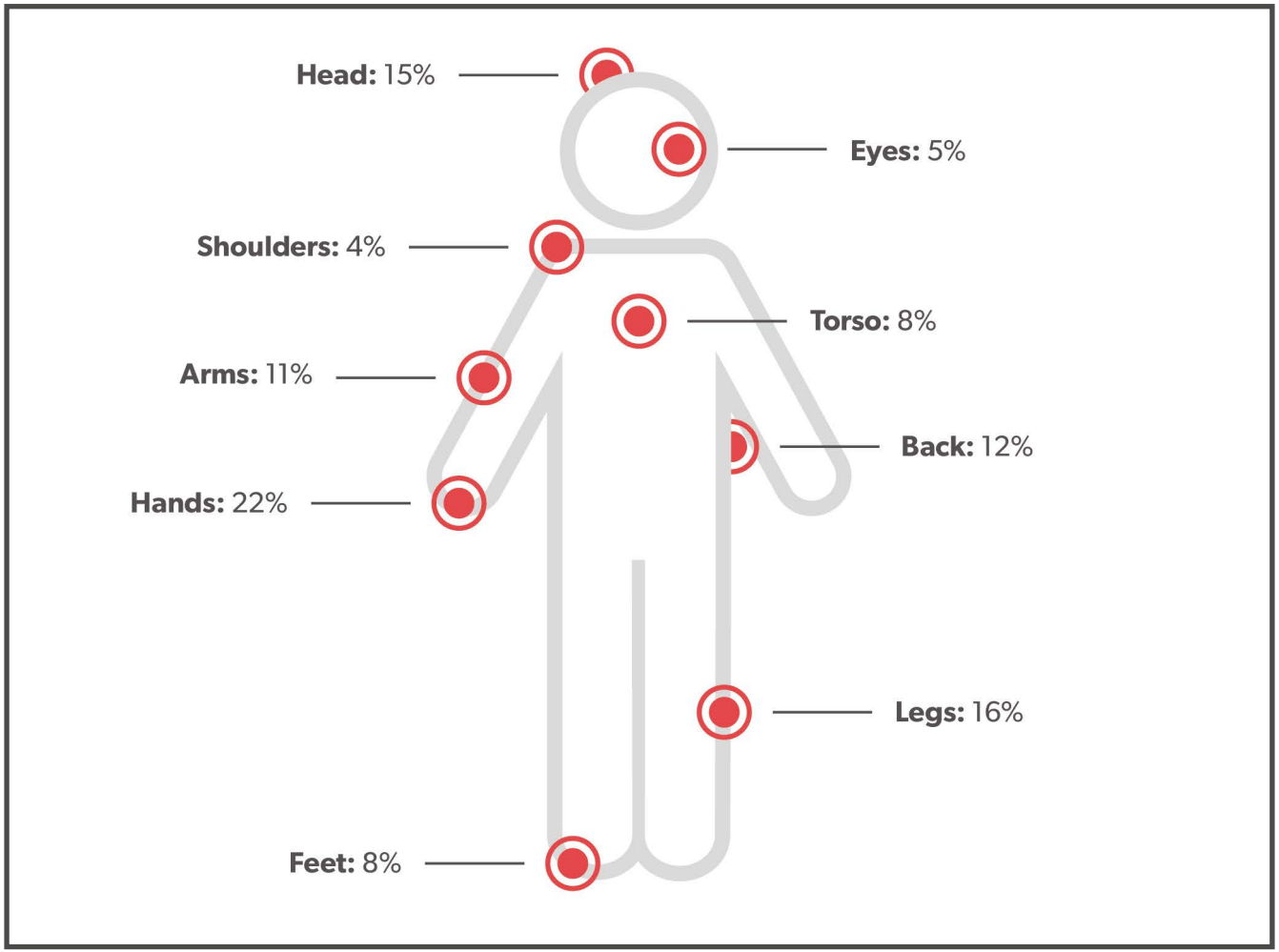
Despite some fluctuations, the overall trend shows a reduction in reported incidents, with numbers falling for the second consecutive year in 2025/26. This reflects positive progress in reducing workplace accidents and injuries, while highlighting the importance of continued focus on prevention and staff safety.

We will:

invest in training content to improve event investigation, causation and corrective actions, for example, consider the enhancement of training safe systems of work content.

Key Performance Indicators

Accident and Injuries (excluding RIDDOR)



Body Map

Musculoskeletal (MSK) injuries remained a key area of focus, with the highest prevalence in hands (22%), legs (16%) and back (12%). Compared to 2024/25, there has been a reduction in back and shoulder injuries, highlighting the positive impact of targeted interventions.

The MSK Injury Reduction Group continued to support personnel through early intervention, rehabilitation and ongoing wellbeing support to reduce injury impact and recurrence.

Percentages for Accident/Injuries.
Please note there may be multiple injuries per accident.

Key Performance Indicators

Verbal Attacks on SFRS Staff

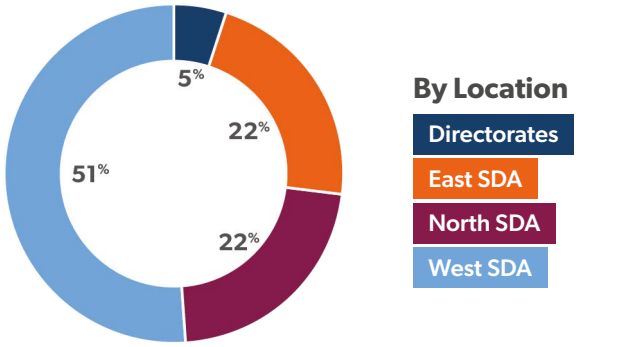
In 2025-26 there was a total of 41 verbal attacks to SFRS personnel reported. When compared to the previous reporting year, there has been a 116% increase

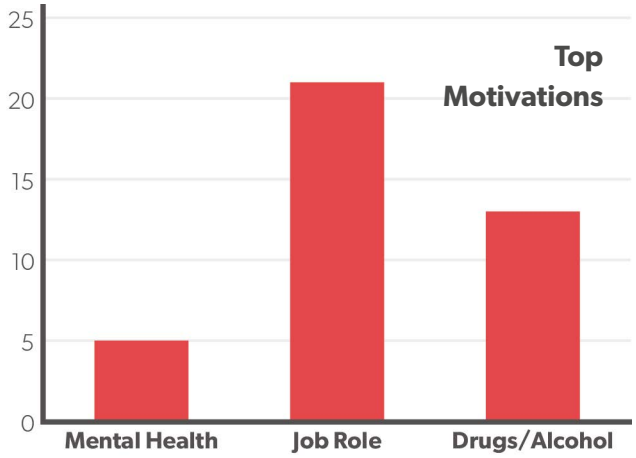
68% (28 of 41) events were reported during operational activities, 30% (12 of 41) during non-operational activities and 2% (1 of 41) during training activities. 35 verbal attacks were from individual persons towards staff, the remaining 6 were group acts.

Police were requested for 25 of the 41 verbal assaults of which 4 were considered as reportable under the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005.

Outcomes taken from SFRS investigations included:

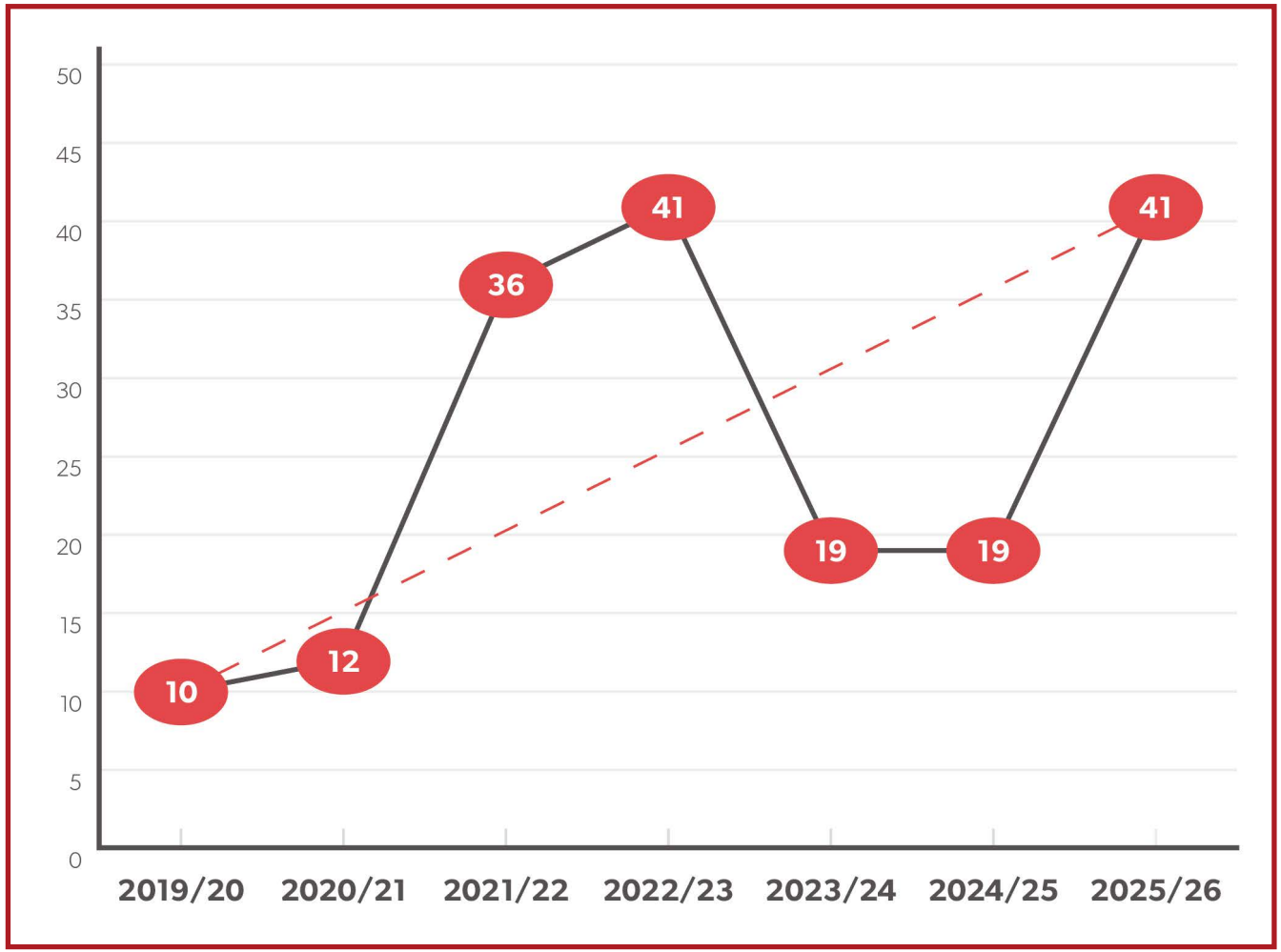
- Local awareness briefs circulated detailing local risk of verbal attacks and awareness of current control measures.
- Guidance has been shared with Community Safety Advocates (CSA) staff re' SSOW to be implemented for all visits they have concerns about.
- SFRS continue to report instances where applicable to Police Scotland and where required, request the support of PS.
- SFRS continue to provide enhanced Welfare checks of crew following all AOV.





Key Performance Indicators

Verbal Attacks on SFRS Staff



KPI 50: Verbal Attacks

Purpose:

Demonstrates how many verbal attacks have occurred to SFRS personnel by members of the public.

We will:

treat everyone with professionalism, dignity and respect and request that we be treated in the same way in return.

Key Performance Indicators

Physical Attacks on SFRS Staff

In 2025/26 there was a total of 36 physical attacks to SFRS personnel reported, when compared to the previous reporting year, a 10% decrease is noted (40 to 36).

There was an increase in Physical Acts of Violence (AOV) in the West Severy Delivery Area (SDA) by 4% (23 to 24), a decrease is shown in the East SDA by 8% (14 to 8) and the North SDA has remained numerically consistent (3).

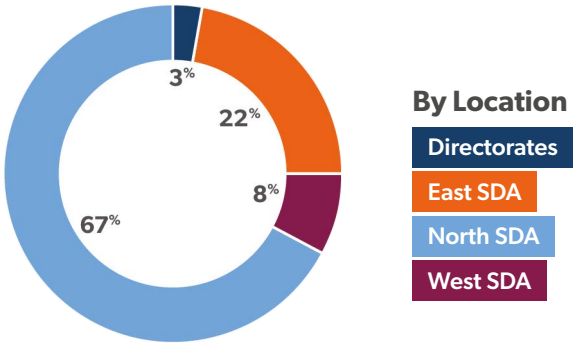
64% (23 of 36) events were reported during operational activities and 36% (13 of 36) occurred during non-operational activities.

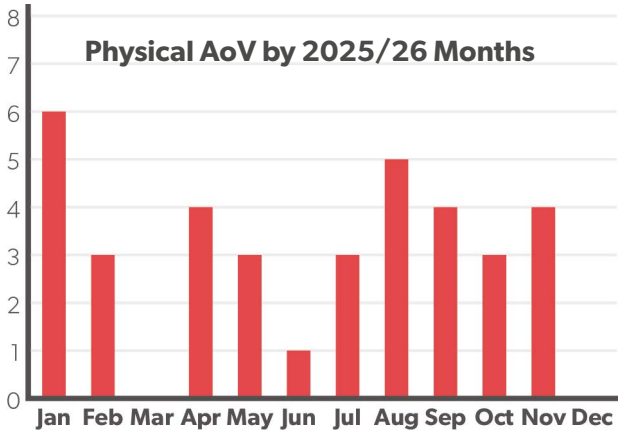
21 physical attacks were through group acts, the remaining 15 were from individual persons.

Police were requested for 25 of the 36 physical assaults, 6 of which was considered as reportable under the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005.

Outcomes from SFRS Investigations include:

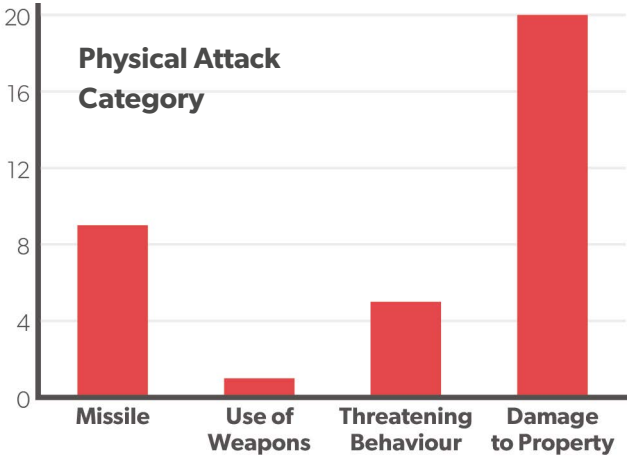
- Breach of SFRS property form completed, and local personnel reminded of station security and issuing of awareness briefing.
- Community Action Teams (CAT) continue to carry out engagement at local schools where pockets of violence have occurred.
- Crews reminded of procedures to be followed aligned with Public Disorder Operational Procedure, Frontline Update 05.18 Incidents involving civil disturbance and National Event Operational Plan (NEOP) for Bonfire Period.
- Police automatically requested for mobilisation in areas where violence was higher.

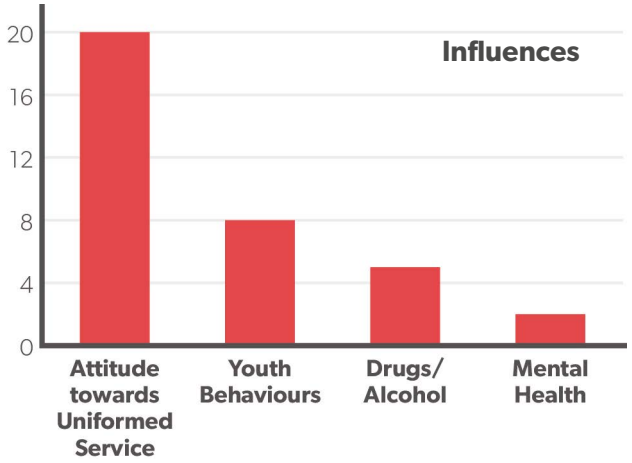




Key Performance Indicators

Physical Attacks on SFRS Staff







Key Performance Indicators

Physical Attacks on SFRS Staff

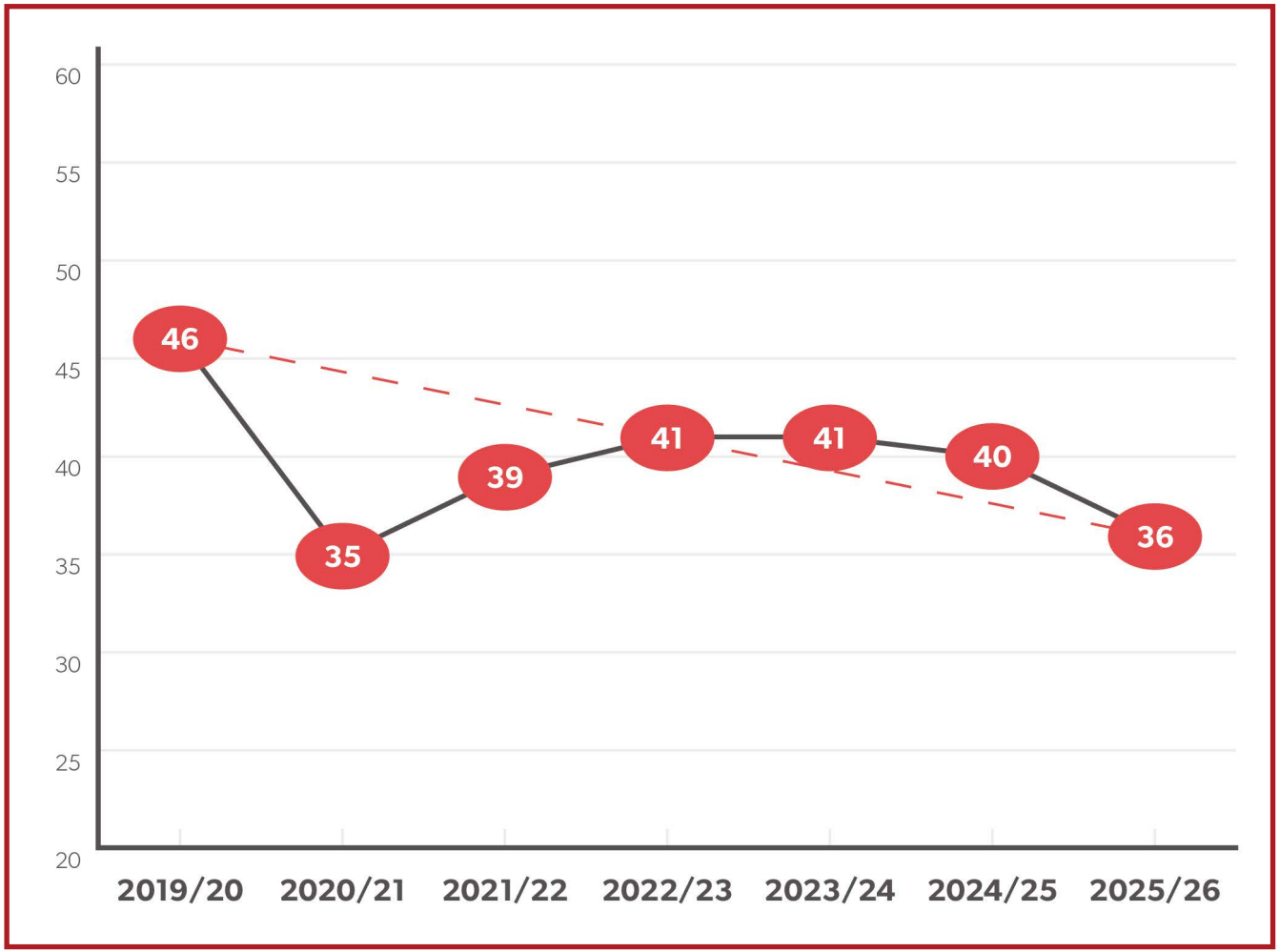
KPI 51: Physical Attacks

Purpose:

Demonstrates how many physical attacks have occurred to SFRS personnel by members of the public.

We will:

continue to work collaboratively with external agencies to raise public awareness towards firefighter safety and apply a zero-tolerance approach toward acts of violence reporting.



Key Performance Indicators

Near Miss (NM)

In 2025/26 there was a total of 184 Near Misses (NM) reported. When compared to the previous reporting year, there has been a 5% increase (176 to 184).

The 3 most common causes of near misses reported were;

- Appliance and pumps 25% (46 of 183)
- Breathing Apparatus (BA) 21% (38 of 183); and
- Other 30% (56 of 184).



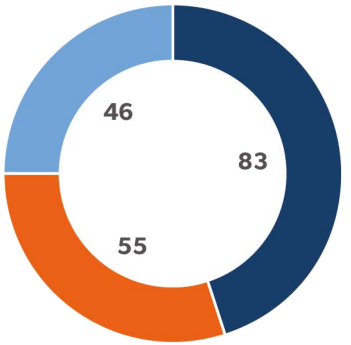
When considering the number of NM in relation to the number of Accidents/Injuries , including Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) events, we saw a ratio of 1:1.02, which is a decline (1.05) when compared to the previous reporting year.

NM reporting remained a key area of focus and continues to be actively promoted as a proactive safety behaviour. To reinforce this message, SA published an awareness poster highlighting the differences of NM and hazards to enhance staff awareness.

During 2025/26 a total of 72 hazards were reported through the newly implemented hazard reporting system.

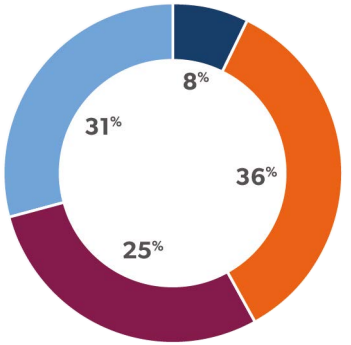
Examples include pest control, wear and tear of equipment and building fabric and not following SFRS procedures.

The Safety and Assurance Improvement Groups (SAIGs) continued to promote the reporting of near misses and hazards among staff groups.



By Activity

- Operational
- Non-Operational
- Training

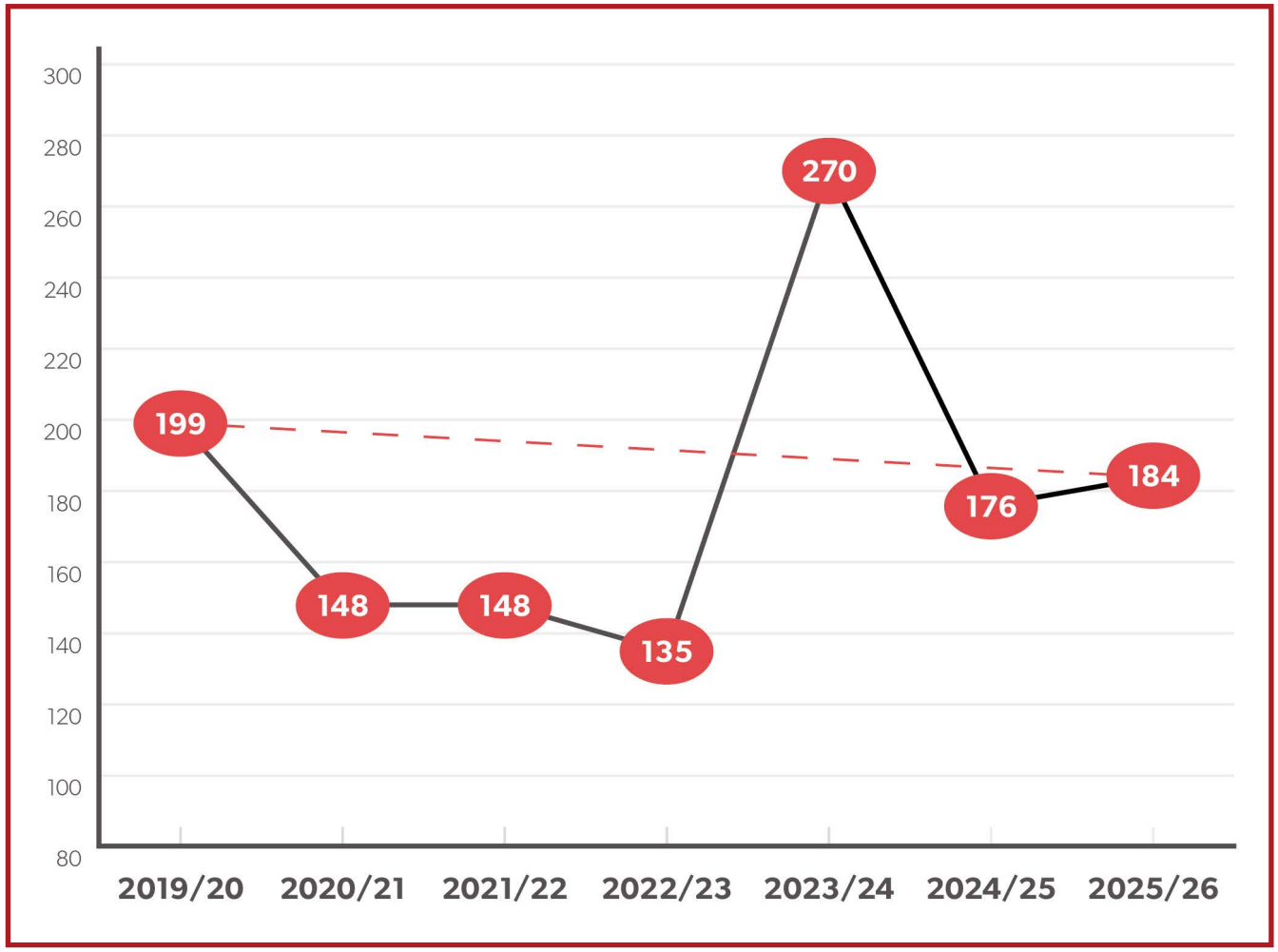


By Location

- Directorates
- East SDA
- North SDA
- West SDA

Key Performance Indicators

Near Miss (NM)



KPI 54: Near Miss

Purpose:

Total recorded number of NM events that had the potential to lead to an accident or ill health.

We will:

communicate the findings of near-miss and hazard reporting, including progress and actions taken.

Key Performance Indicators

Near Miss (NM)

These examples of reported near miss events highlight the importance of recording events, to learn and prevent the risk of recurrence.

Airbag Malfunction During Training

"While training with airbag regulator pressure has become too high – the airbag regulator cross-valve failed, and pressure remains trapped within regulator."

Outcome: Refresher training and awareness communications will remind personnel of the correct operation and stowage of airbag regulators, supported by inspection and maintenance to prevent recurrence.

Gas Ignition

"During proceedings at an incident there was an ignition of gas in a neighbouring property."

Outcome: Proactive engagement with partner agencies was strengthened to ensure timely and effective sharing of risk information, alongside continued multi-agency coordination to support operational decision-making. Operational learning will emphasise early hazard identification and the effective deployment of specialist resources, including UHPL, to reduce fire spread and mitigate risks associated with gas ignition.

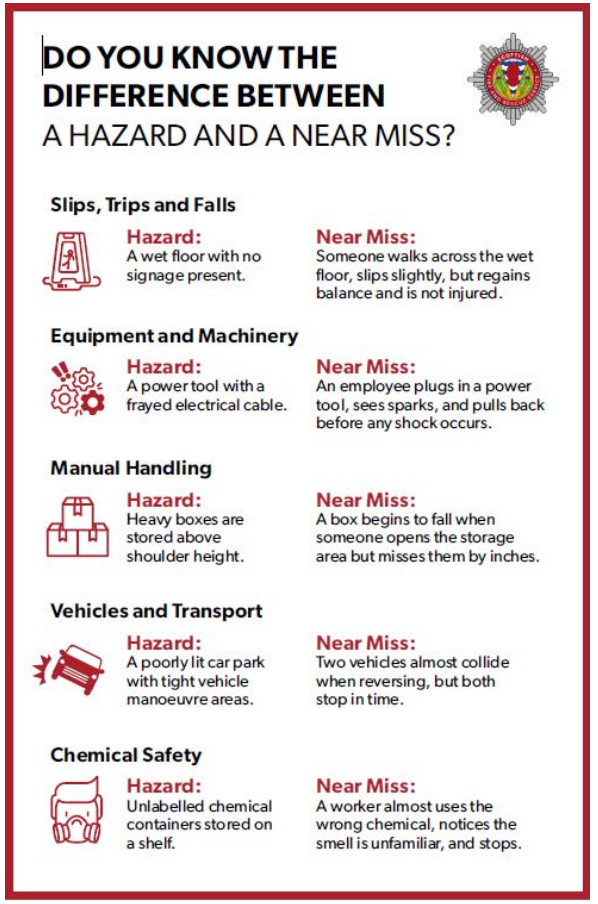
BA Torch Equipment

"During station assurance activities, multiple BA sets were identified as having missing or defective torches due to equipment failure and shortcomings in defect reporting and replacement processes."

Outcome: Reminders of defect reporting expectations and staff behaviours for routine equipment checks will be implemented, alongside improved stock management and assurance of BA equipment availability, to ensure defects are promptly identified, escalated and rectified, reducing the risk of recurrence.

Building Debris Damage

"During high winds, debris from a station roof was dislodged and fell into the yard area, creating a risk of injury to personnel."



Outcome: Implementation of severe weather control measures will restrict access to risk areas and ensure relocation of vehicles during weather warnings, supported by staff awareness of dynamic risk and equipment checks. In parallel, structural inspection and remedial action will be progressed to address roof vulnerabilities and prevent recurrence.

Key Performance Indicators

Vehicle Accidents

In 2025-26 there was a total of 231 Vehicle Accidents (VA). When compared to the previous reporting year, there has been a 13% increase (204 to 231), of these;

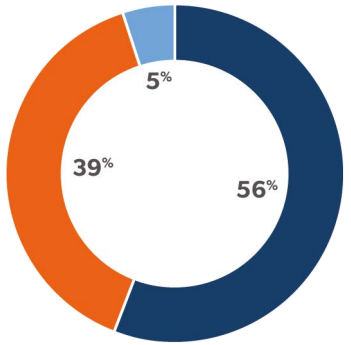
The most common cause of VAs continued to "hit something fixed or stationary", accounting for 52% (119 of 231).

Of the Low-Speed Manoeuvres, 29% (38 of 133) of VAs involved the use of Driving Assistants.

Example of VA events includes:

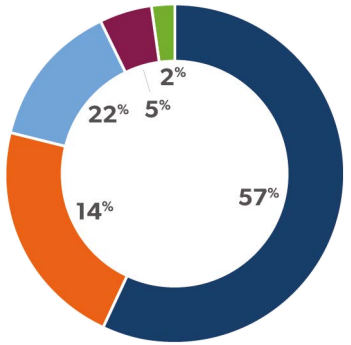
- While responding to an incident, an appliance turned off a carriageway between two stone gate posts. Two banks-persons were deployed, however, contact occurred between the appliance and a post, damaging the appliance. A professional discussion was held with the crew to remind them of the requirement to maintain situational awareness when carrying out low speed manoeuvres.
- While exiting station grounds, an FDO vehicle made contact with a grit bin, resulting in vehicle damage. As a result, the driver completed a Low-Speed Manoeuvre LCMS package. Drivers were informed that further similar incidents would result in referral to Driver Training for a three-day refresher Driving course.
- During a driving assessment, a fire appliance stalled while positioned on an incline at a junction. This resulted in the appliance rolling backwards and making contact with a private vehicle. An additional driver training requirement was identified and was addressed at the time through further instruction on the course.

The Driver Safety Group continued to monitor trends and implement further controls and support to reduce the risk of vehicle accidents. LSO continued to investigate and ensure actions are taken to prevent risk of reoccurrence.



Activity Type

- Operational
- Non-Operational
- Training

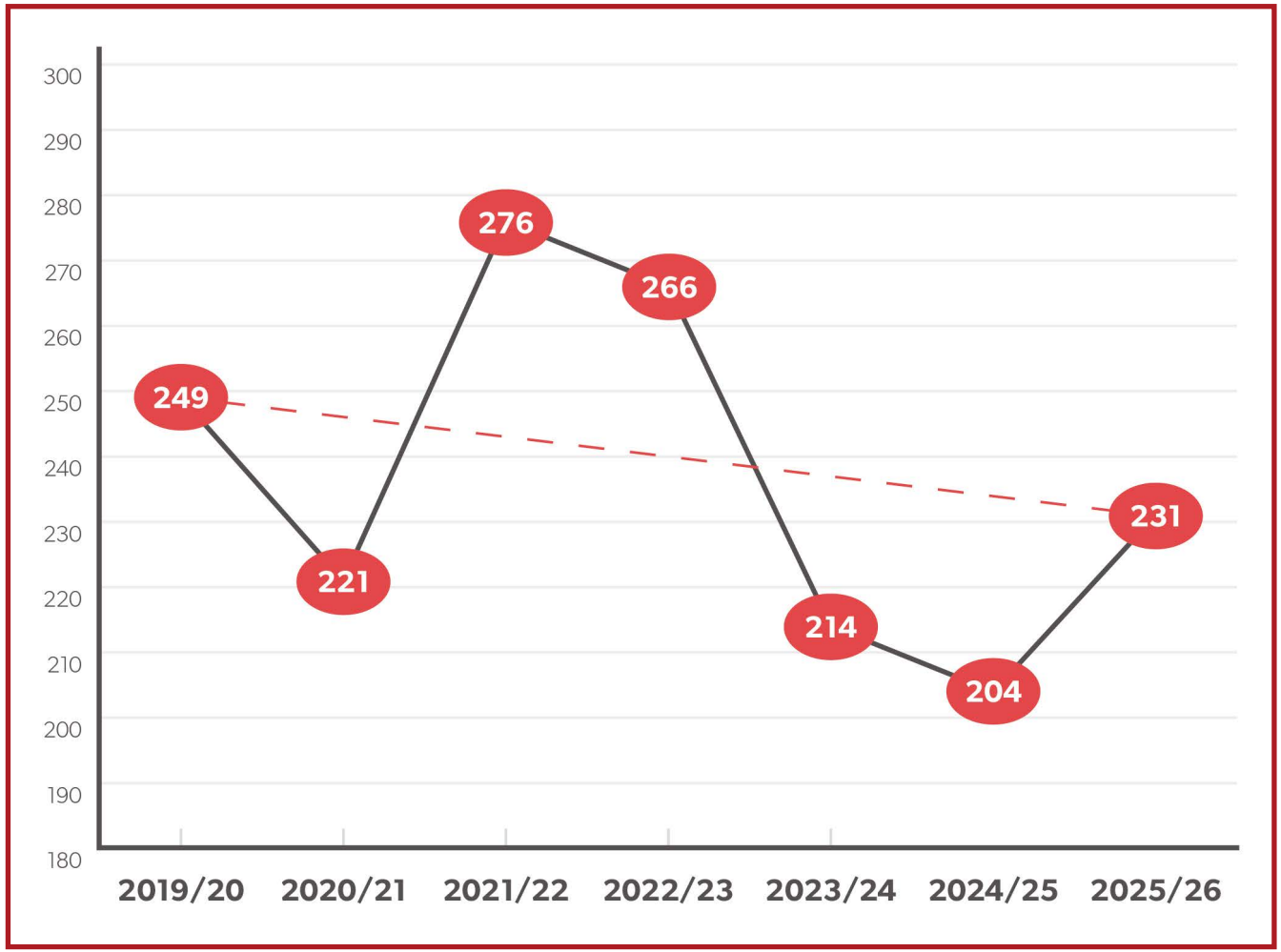


Vehicle Speeds

- Slow Speed
- Emergency Response Driving
- Normal Road Speed
- Other
- Stationary

Key Performance Indicators

Vehicle Accidents



KPI 55: Vehicle Accidents

Purpose:

Total number of events that involved vehicle accidents.

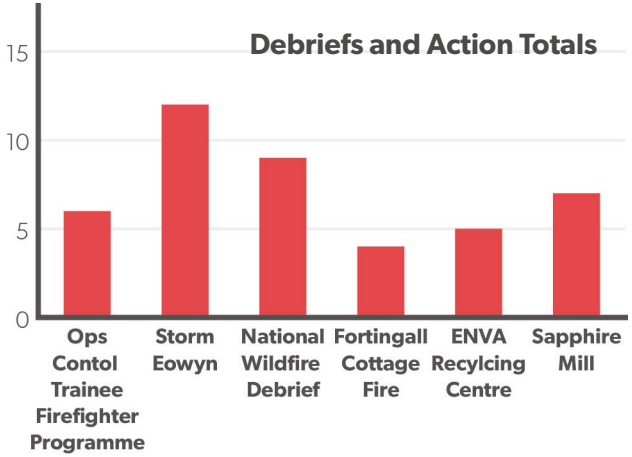
Key Performance Indicators

Operational Assurance Audit Actions

In 2025–26, the Operational Assurance team completed 6 structured debriefs, with a further 4 debriefs completed and currently progressing through governance for scrutiny. Debriefs are used to systematically capture and analyse incident information, identify good practice, and make recommendations that support continuous learning and improvement.

These debriefs provided a structured forum to review incidents, recognise effective practice, and identify areas for improvement. They captured insight from those directly involved, enabling informed decisions that strengthen future performance and reduce risk. A key outcome was ensuring that operational documentation, including Operating Procedures (OPs), training materials, and response protocols, remained current and aligned with actual practice.

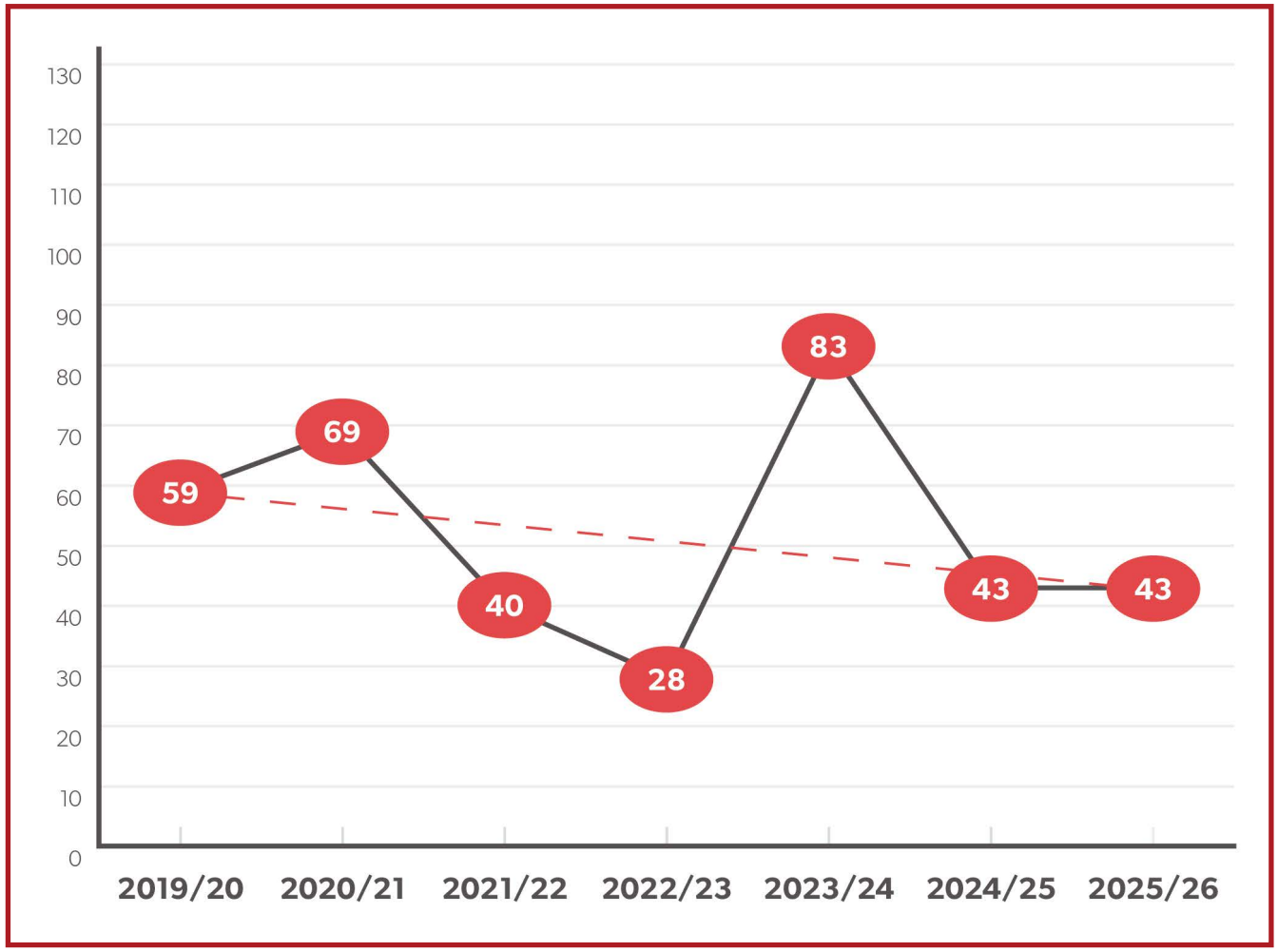
All recommendations arising from debriefs and thematic audits were managed through governance processes and recorded within the Organisational Learning Group (OLG) tracker. Each recommendation was assigned to a nominated risk owner and progressed to completion with supporting evidence.





Key Performance Indicators

Operational Assurance Audit Actions



KPI 19: Operational Assurance Audit Actions

Purpose:

The KPI demonstrates the number of Significant recommendations identified through OA Debrief Processes.

Key Performance Indicators

Health and Safety Improvement Plans

Overall completion of the 2025-26 Health and Safety Improvement Plans (HSIP) is 100% (30 of 30) representing a 2% increase when compared to the previous reporting year.

Our 2026-27 Improvement Plans reaffirm our commitment to strengthening health and safety by focusing on people, processes, and systems to enhance staff wellbeing. These plans are guided by SA and SAIG meetings, ensuring all functions are supported in delivering their actions and driving continuous improvement across the service.

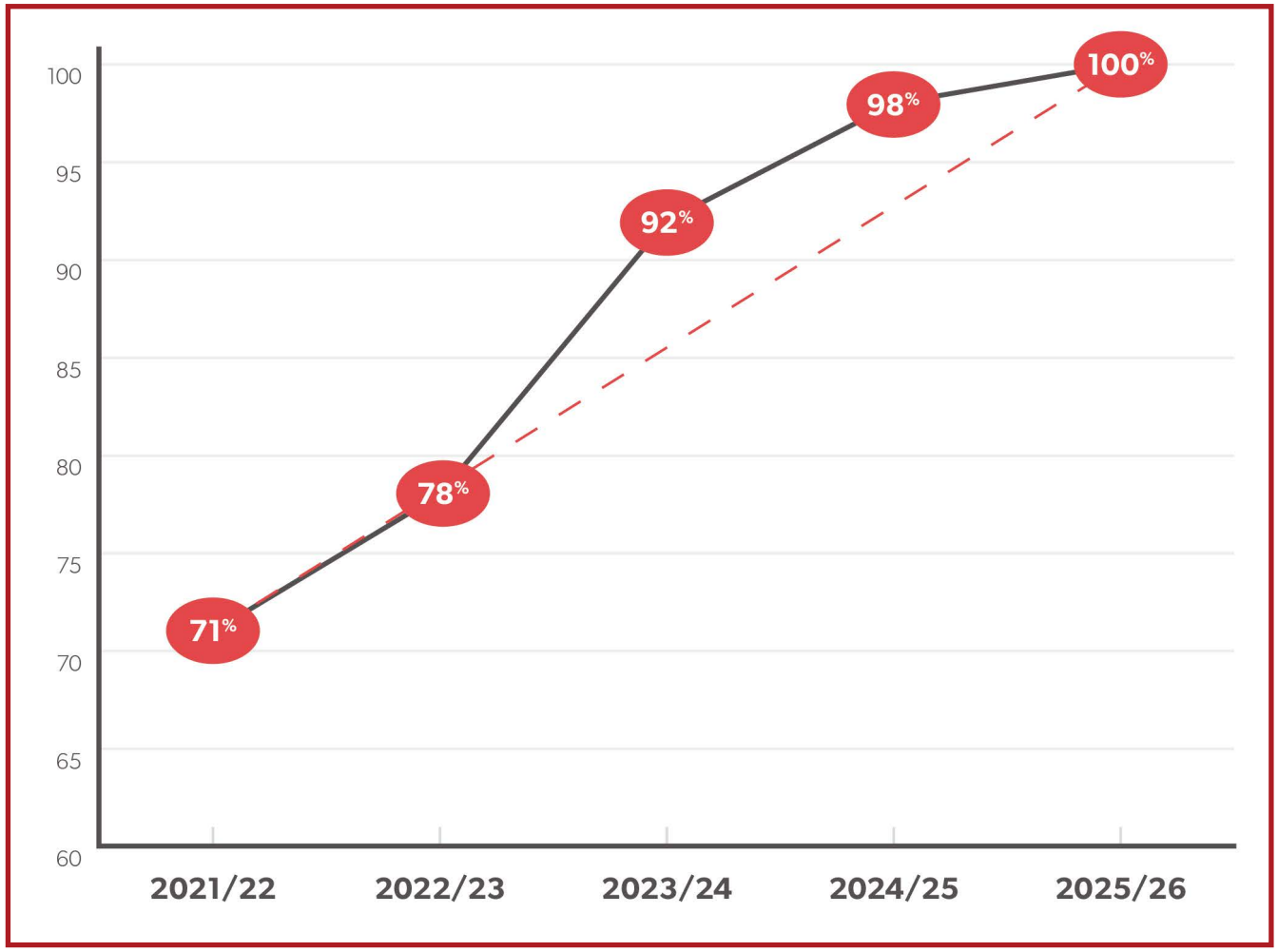
Key achievements from the HSIPs include:

- Strengthened risk assessment and SSOW governance arrangements.
- Enhanced contaminant management controls.
- Completion of Methods of Entry training rollout.
- Ongoing development of TASS and progression of E-SAMS procurement and implementation.
- Support for ISO 45001 compliance and assurance reviews.
- Improved welfare, wellbeing and food safety arrangements across the organisation.



Key Performance Indicators

Health and Safety Improvement Plans



KPI 56: % YTD Health and Safety Actions Completed

Purpose:

Demonstrates the completion of improvement plans to drive safety performance.

Key Performance Indicators

Health and Safety Improvement Plans

	Total Number of Actions	Number of Actions Complete	% Progress Towards Completion
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	30	30	100%
North SDA (NSDA)	16	16	100%
East SDA (ESDA)	16	16	100%
West SDA (WSDA)	16	16	100%
Finance and Contractual Services (FCS)	18	18	100%
People Directorate	12	12	100%
Prevention Directorate	10	10	100%
Operations (OP)	11	11	100%
Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications (SPPC)	10	10	100%
Training, Safety and Assurance (TSA)	28	28	100%
Portfolio Office	13	13	100%

Health and Safety Improvement Plan Annual Breakdown 2025-26

Health and Wellbeing Statistics

Year	Months	Sum of In Date	Sum of % In Date	Sum of Overdue	Sum of % Overdue
2024	December	4,182	71.05%	1,704	28.95%
2025	January	4,201	71.82%	1,648	28.18%
	February	4,282	72.45%	1,628	27.55%
	March	4,495	76.06%	1,415	23.94%
	April	4,647	78.56%	1,268	21.44%
	May	4,716	80.34%	1,154	19.66%
	June	4,919	84.33%	914	15.67%
	July	5,038	86.80%	766	13.20%
	August	5,092	87.25%	744	12.75%
	September	5,156	88.68%	658	11.32%
	October	5,312	91.21%	512	8.79%
	November	5,399	93.09%	401	6.91%
	December	5,474	94.07%	345	5.93%
2026	January	5,445	93.60%	372	6.40%
	February	5,449	93.85%	357	6.15%
	March	5,531	95.10%	285	4.90%

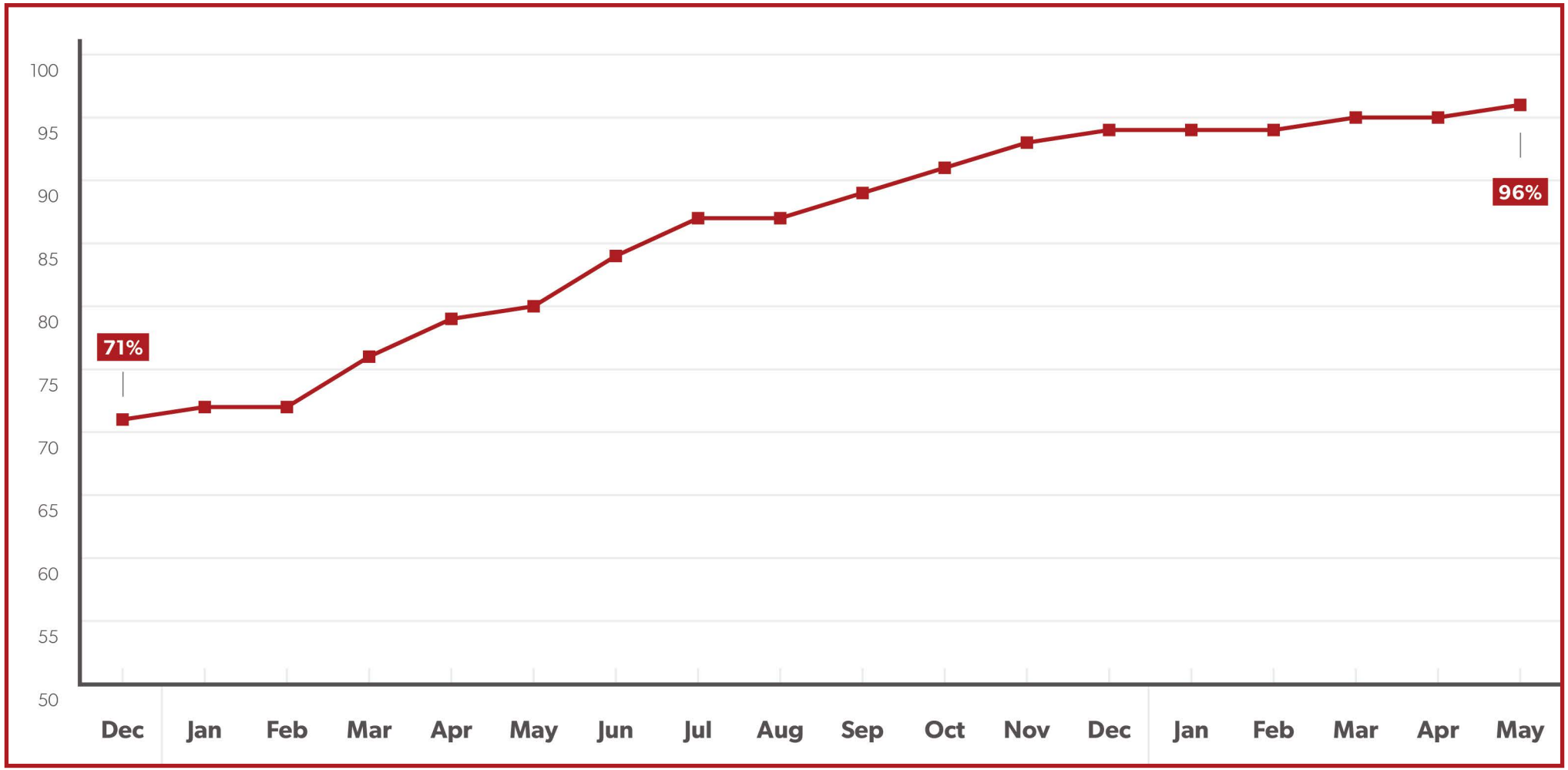
Throughout this period, HW undertook a comprehensive review of internal protocols, implemented staff refresher training, and completed recruitment to address all vacant roles.

Asbestos medicals are conducted every 3 years. An initial roll out started on the 21st of January 2026 with a paper developed on a plan for the whole service to commence within 2026/27.

HW continued to offer Vaccinations to Water Rescue Stations and supported Pre-placement Medical and Fitness assessments during recruitment processes.

Health and Wellbeing Statistics

Employees with in Date Medical and Fitness Assessments



Benchmarking UK FRS

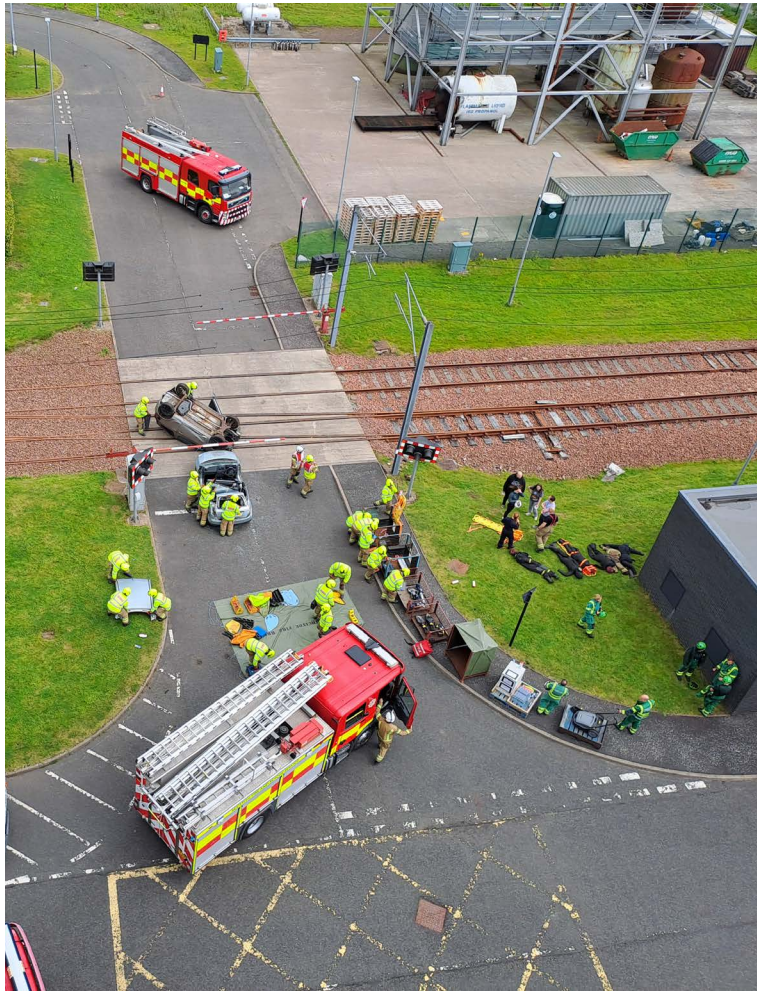
1st of April 2025 – 31st of March 2026

While reporting arrangements and metrics vary across UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs), analysis of the information received continues to provide valuable insight into areas of both strong performance and potential development within SFRS.

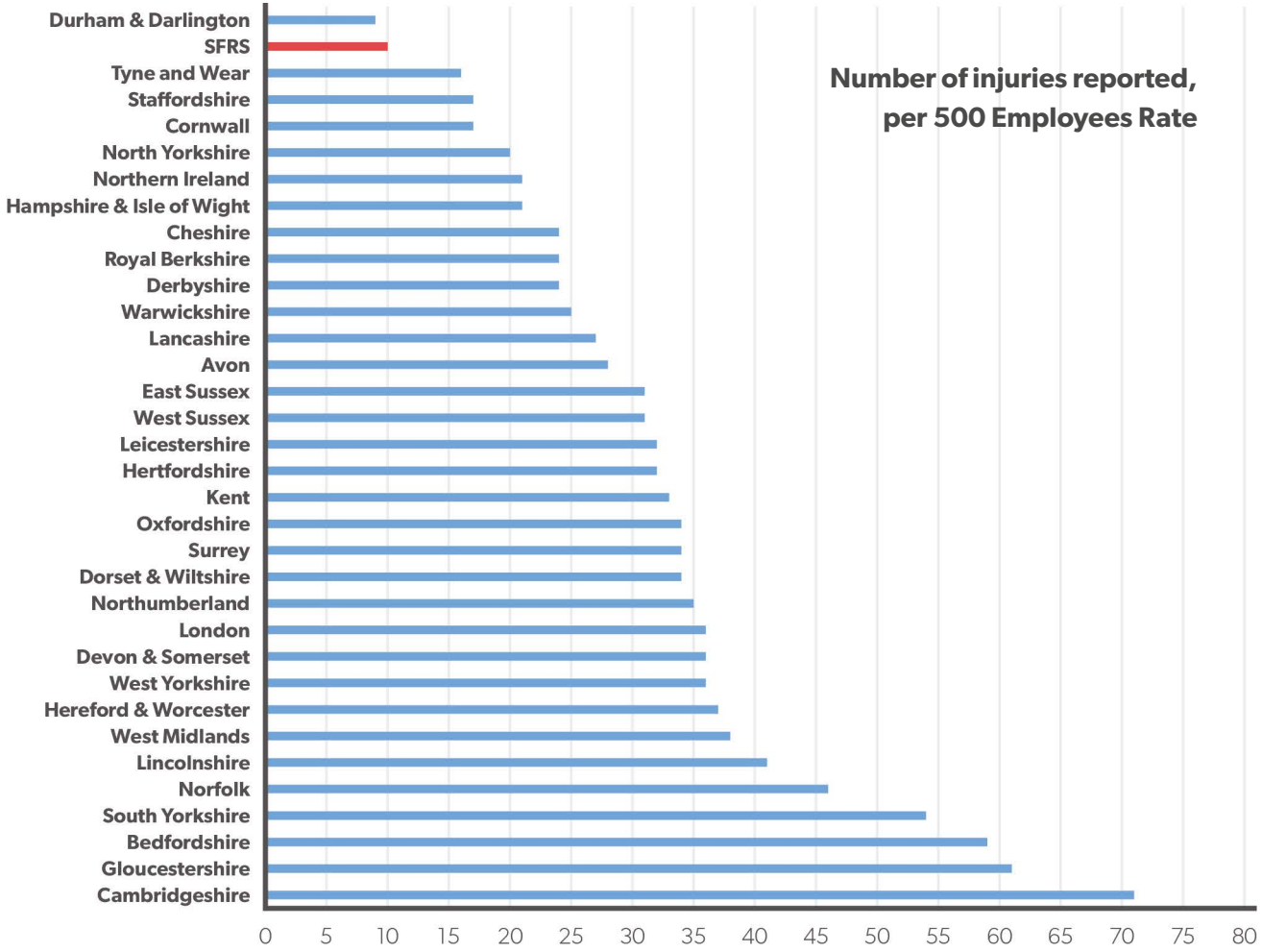
To support meaningful comparison, SFRS has benchmarked performance using rates per 500 employees, allowing for greater consistency across participating UK FRSs regardless of organisational size. The benchmarking results show that SFRS continues to maintain comparatively low rates of Accidents/Injuries and RIDDOR-reportable incidents per 500 employees when measured against a number of UK services. This positive position is consistent with trends reported in previous years.

The analysis highlights opportunities to strengthen Near Miss (NM) reporting. SFRS reporting rates remained lower than those recorded by many comparator FRSs on a per-500-employee basis. The Safety and Assurance (SA) function continued to encourage the reporting of near misses and hazards, reinforcing the importance of a proactive reporting culture that supports learning, prevention and continual improvement.

During 2026/27, SA intends to engage with other UK FRSs to better understand the approaches and initiatives they have adopted to increase Near Miss reporting and identify good practice that may be applicable within SFRS. Employees affected by incidents involving violence, aggression or workplace injury are reminded that a range of support resources is available through the SFRS Wellbeing Hub.



Benchmarking UK FRS

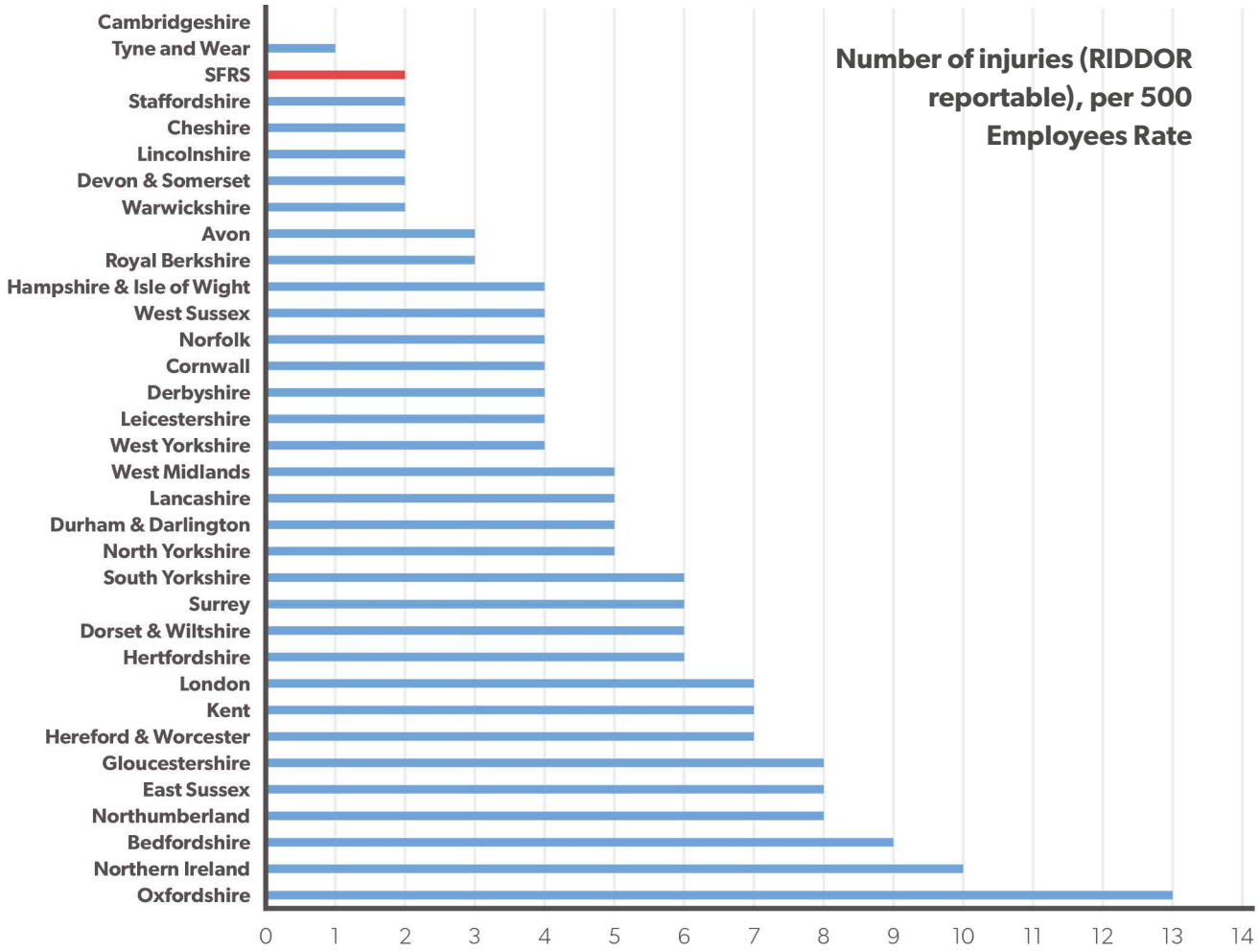


Injury and RIDDOR

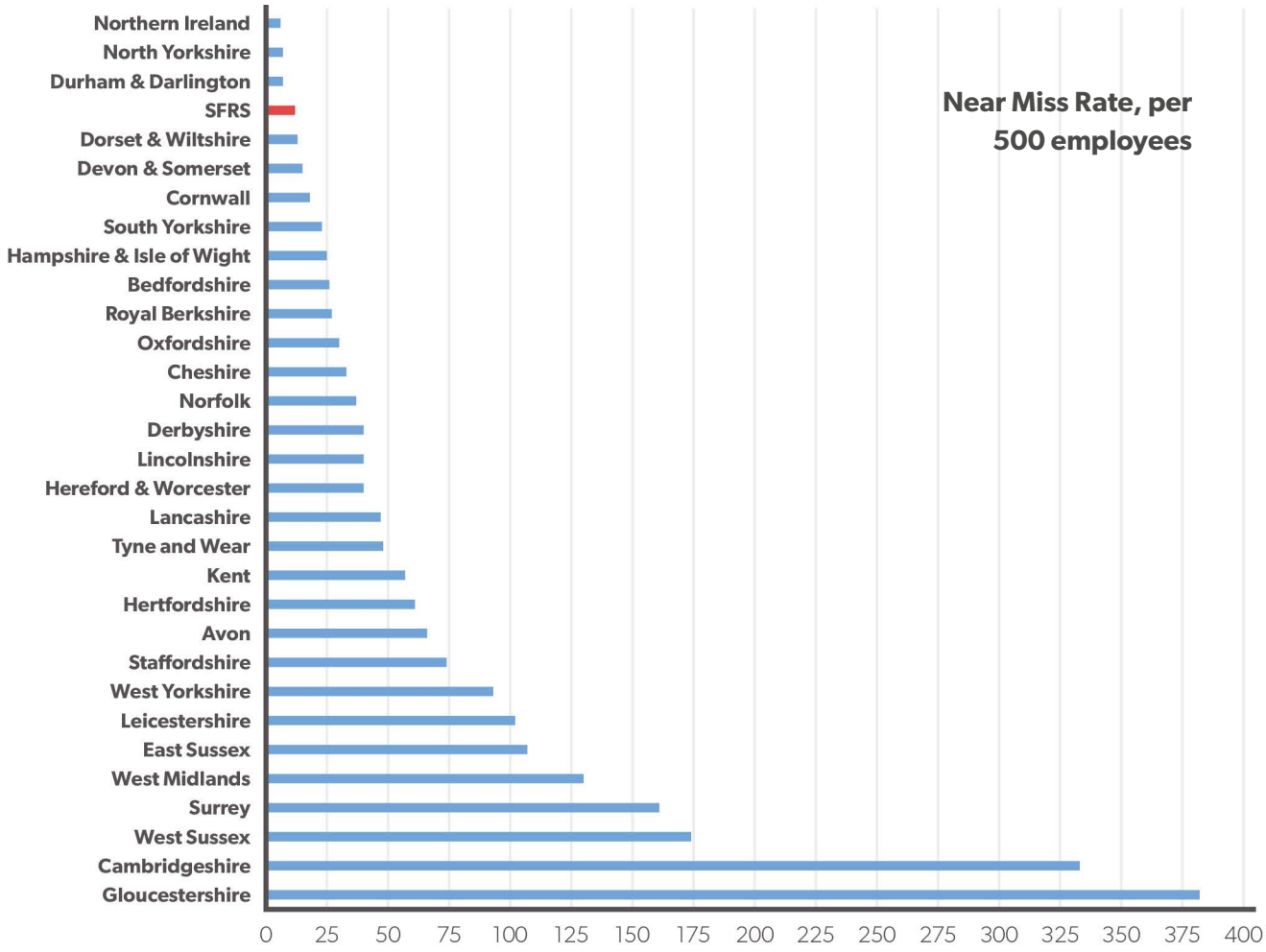
SFRS continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to health and safety, maintaining a notably low injury rate of 10 incidents per 500 employees. At 2 per 500 employees, the Service demonstrates comparatively low RIDDOR reportable incident rates.

These results highlight the effectiveness of SFRS's proactive approach to risk management, the strength of its safety culture, and the ongoing commitment of employees across the organisation to maintaining a safe working environment.

Benchmarking UK FRS



Benchmarking UK FRS

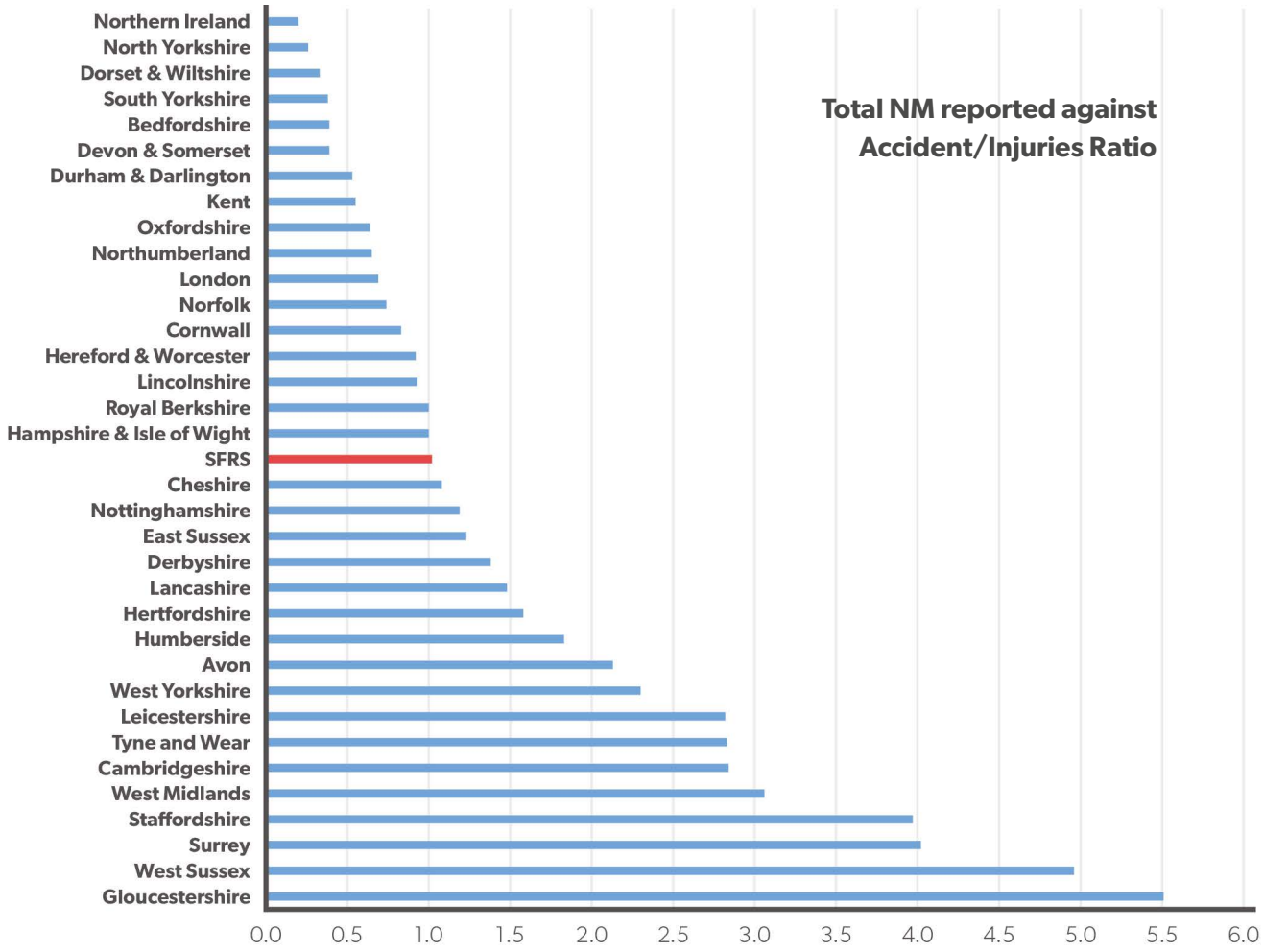


Near Miss

SFRS report a rate of 12 near misses reported per 500 employees, placing it in the lower half of the comparison across UK FRS. The low number of reported near misses may indicate that such events are not being consistently identified or reported. By comparison, other FRSs record significantly higher levels of near miss reporting, which may reflect greater awareness of reporting expectations and stronger engagement with reporting systems.

This presented an opportunity for SFRS to further develop its reporting culture, promote the value of near miss reporting, and make better use of the information gathered to support learning, risk reduction, and future safety improvements.

Benchmarking UK FRS



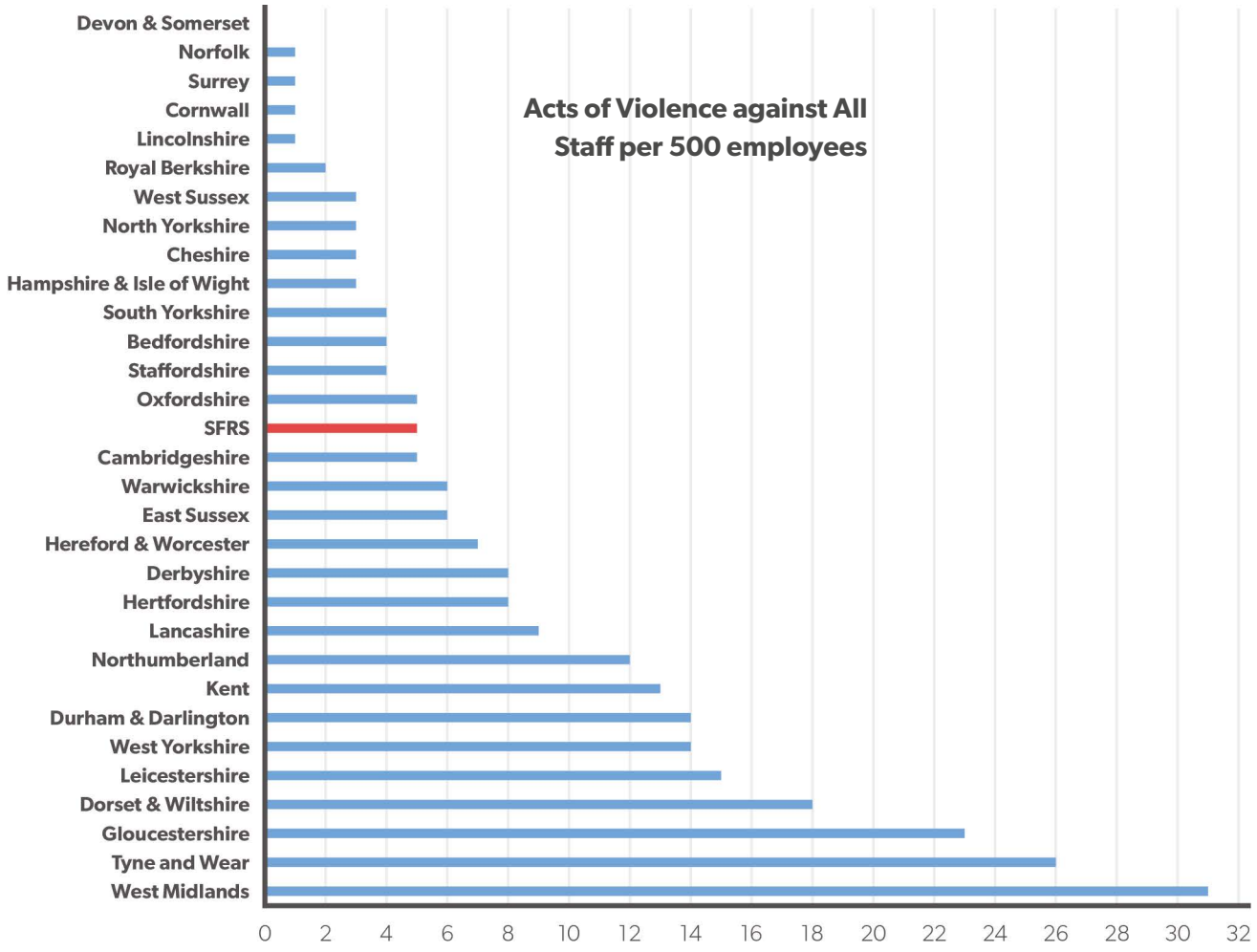
Near Miss against Accident/ Injury Ratios

The Near Miss to Accident/Injury ratio is calculated by comparing the number of reported Near Miss events against recorded accidents and injuries.

For the reporting period, SFRS achieved a ratio of 1.02, indicating that, on average, just over one Near Miss is reported for every accident or injury recorded. This represents a marginal improvement from the previous reporting period (0.96), demonstrating continued progress in Near Miss reporting and a strengthening reporting culture. While this indicates that reporting is aligned with incident occurrence, benchmarking against top performing UK FRSs highlights further opportunity to enhance reporting levels.

Increasing Near Miss reporting remained essential to enhance preventative controls, support early intervention and maximise organisational learning. SFRS continued to promote Near Miss reporting and engaged with exemplar FRS to identify and implement improvements to reporting practices and overall safety culture.

Benchmarking UK FRS



Acts of Violence

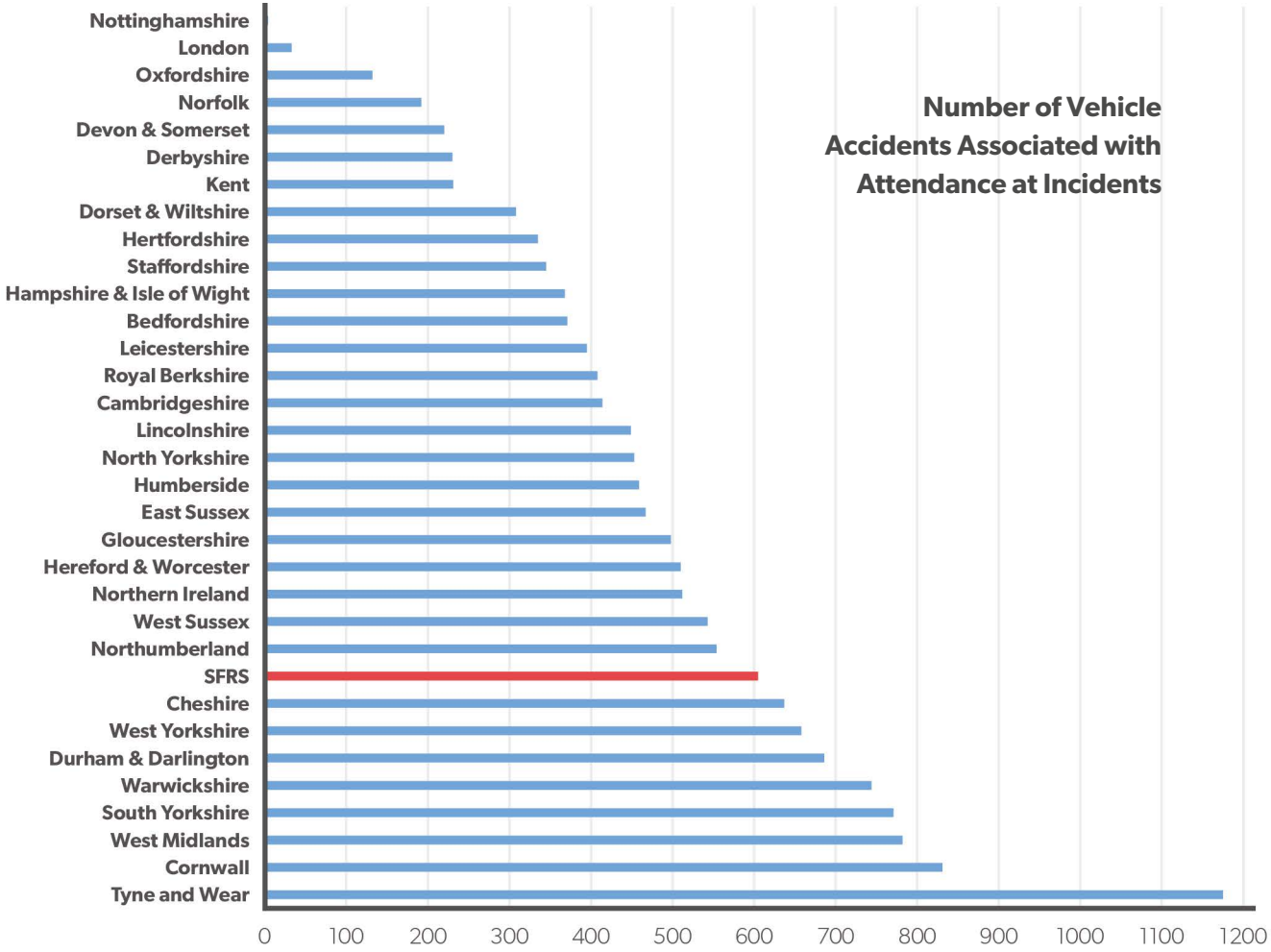
SFRS reports 5 acts of violence (AOV) per 500 employees, placing the Service within the mid-range when benchmarked against UK FRSs. While this rate remains significantly lower than that recorded in higher-risk regions, it confirms that exposure to violence continues to present an operational risk to staff.

The rate remained stable over the reporting period, indicating consistent reporting and ongoing exposure levels. This position highlights the importance of maintaining robust preventative and protective measures, alongside continued monitoring to identify emerging trends or hotspots.

The Service remained committed to protecting its workforce through targeted prevention initiatives, effective risk assessment, and partnership working. Continued emphasis on reporting, organisational learning, and proactive interventions will be essential to further reduce the likelihood of violence-related incidents and ensure a safe working environment for all staff.

These figures include all reports of AOV to staff including both Verbal and Physical.

Benchmarking UK FRS

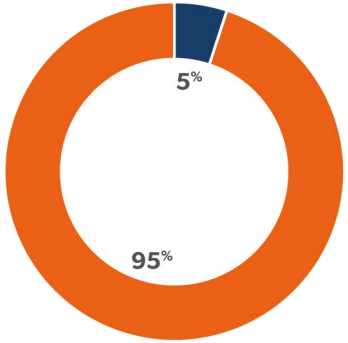


Vehicle Accidents associated with Attendance at Incidents

SFRS reports 1 vehicle accident in every 605 operational incidents, placing SFRS in the lower end of the incident rate.

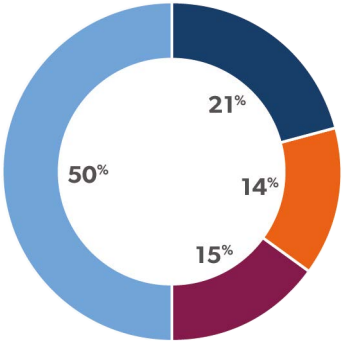
SFRS continued to promote safe driving through the work of the Driver Safety Group and Business Partner engagement.

Safety and Assurance Indicators 2025/26



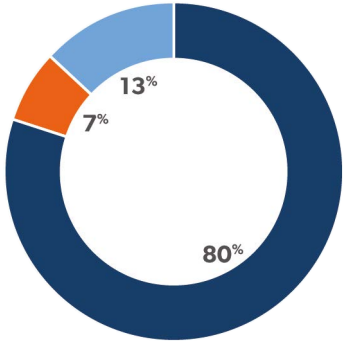
Total Event Investigation
672 Events in Total-TASS

- Ongoing
- Live



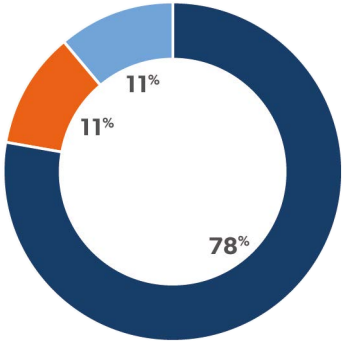
Scheduled Management Arrangement Updates: 14 in Total

- In Governance
- Re-prioritised
- In Development
- Complete



Safe System of Work by Percentage

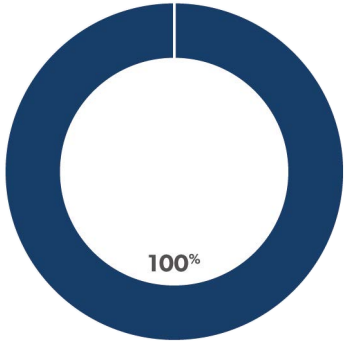
- Published
- Expired
- In Development



GRA Register Status

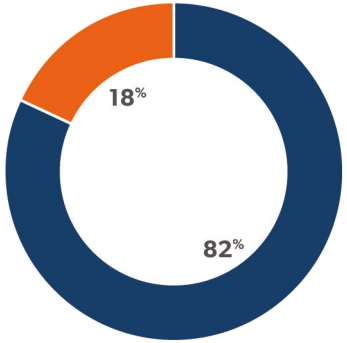
- Live
- Under Review
- In Development

Safety and Assurance Indicators 2025/26



Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Assessments by Percentage

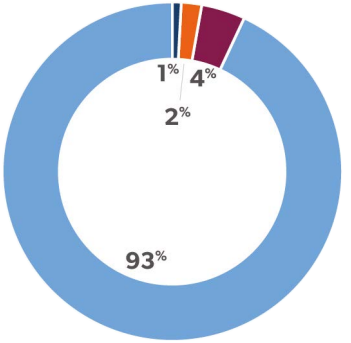
Live



Manual Handling by Percentage

Live

In Development



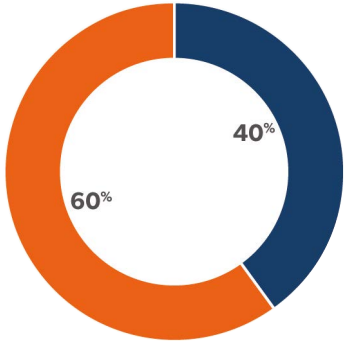
DSE Assessments

Rejected/No LCMS

With Manager

With User

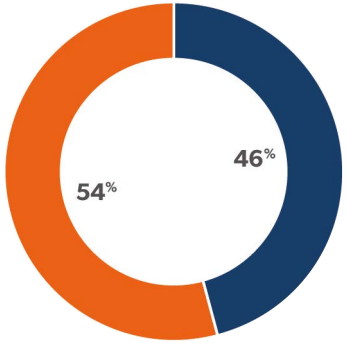
Complete



PUWER Equipment

Live

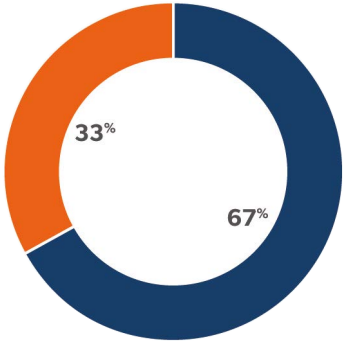
In Development



PUWER Vehicles

Live

In Development



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Assessment by Percentage

Live

In Development



3. Compliance

SFRS Publications; Legislative Compliance; Contaminants; Driver Safety Group; Fire Contaminants; and CivTech

Read on

Skip to next section

SFRS Publications

SFRS Three Year Delivery Plan

Reference: SC3

Action:

By enhancing our Organisational Learning and Assurance processes, we will cultivate a culture of continuous improvement, mitigate risks proactively, and ensure consistent delivery of learning outcomes with a focus on firefighter safety.

Update:

Approval has been secured for a revised Training Assurance structure, ensuring appropriate resourcing. Defined roles within our Organisational Learning Management Arrangement provide a consistent framework for capturing and acting on learning, supporting continuous improvement and safer outcomes.

Reference: SC4

Action:

By formalising our approach to research, development and innovation we will create a culture that embraces innovation to become more efficient, better serve the public and improve the safety and employees and the communities we serve.

Update:

Approval has been given for commencement of CivTech Challenge 10.2 'How can technology identify and measure firefighter exposure to contaminants across a wide range of incidents? The pre-commercial phase is ongoing.

Reference: SC7

Action:

By reviewing our Health & Wellbeing (HW) approach, we will nurture a safety culture that reflects best practice, ensures compliance and improves the mental and physical wellbeing of our people.

Update:

All HW protocols were reviewed, with a structured approach developed to support a compliant plan. HW was approved as a permanent function within Safety and Assurance, now forming Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Assurance. A recruitment plan has been initiated to fill the new roles required to support the new structure.

SFRS Publications

SA Strategy 2022/26 – Year 4

ACTION: SFRS HSMS meets the full requirements of ISO 45001

UPDATE: Safety and Assurance continued to align its systems and processes with the requirements of ISO 45001. A review of the Safety and Assurance Management System has been completed, demonstrating effective support arrangements alongside the identification of opportunities for further enhancement.

SA remained committed to continuous improvement and actions identified continue to be embedded within the SA Strategy Action Plan. The audit and assurance remit continuec to be enhanced to further strengthen the management system and sustain alignment with ISO 45001 requirements.



Legislative Compliance

Statutory Enforcement

Health and Safety Executive Enforcement / Notices

No actions or improvements reported.

His Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate

1 new action plan remains ongoing.

Other, i.e. Local Authority

No enforcement actions reported to SA.



An HMFSI Inspection was conducted in 2025 into 'Inspection of Operational Assurance in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service'.

Following the publication of the inspection report, Operational Assurance developed an action plan to address the 9 recommendations that were identified 'For Action' and the 'Areas for Consideration'. Significant progress has been made against these actions.

An example of the progress that has been made is the development of the Assurance Audit Management Arrangement which replaces the GIN Station and Thematic Audits and now encompasses Operations Control in addition to improved scoring mechanisms and improved guidance to promote a more consistent approach to station and control room audits.

Operations Control was embedded within the Assurance Team providing greater oversight and understanding of the Operations Control environment and challenges and resulting in a more rounded approach when identifying areas of good practice and for improvement.

The Assurance Team introduced a specific focus on Training Assurance, including reviewing and progressing actions arising from training event debriefs. The Assurance Team continued to work alongside colleagues from NFCC to measure progress against other FRS and identify further areas for improvement.

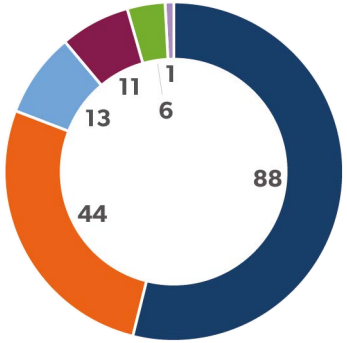
Legislative Compliance

Guidance Review Register

Between 2025–26, 163 guidance updates were reviewed; 69% from HSE and 31% from other sources. 54% of entries needed no further action. There was a 9% rise from the previous year. 7% required policy or training updates. This shows that the policies align with legal requirements and best practices.

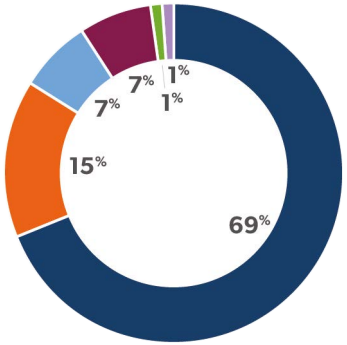
Two new categories were added to the tracker: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Research and Development (R&D). The tracker shows a stronger focus on health, wellbeing, and psychosocial risks. This is reflective of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) priorities. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Group supports through its workstreams.

The Guidance Tracker provided assurance that SFRS met its legal obligations and remained responsive to emerging risks.



Review Outcome

- No Further Action
- BP Informed
- Shared for Info
- Research & Development
- Minor
- Escalation



% Guidance Review by Source

- Health & Safety Executive
- Sector Specific
- IOSH Updates
- SHP/Barbour Updates
- HS Publications
- Legal Services

Driver Safety Group (DSG)

The DSG monitors and analyses reported vehicle accidents to identify trends and, where applicable, to agree and implement additional control measures to prevent recurrence. The group has cross service representation and receives regular updates from all Directorates including Service Delivery Areas (SDA), Driver Training, Operations, and Fleet.

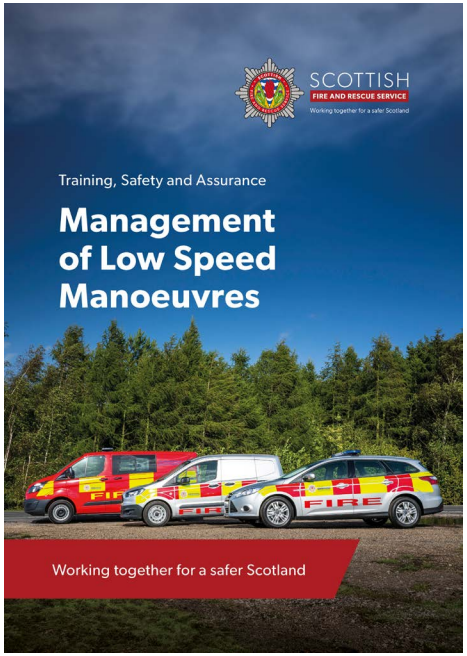
The Fleet department continues to provide updates on new vehicle specifications and legislative changes to ensure that SFRS remains legally compliant.

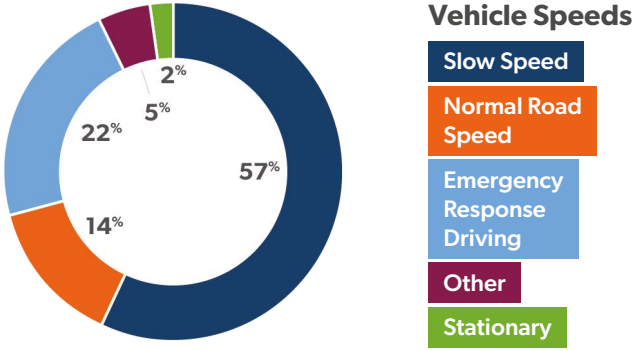
2024/2025 saw the roll out of new all terrain vehicles (ATVs) and the DSG has been kept appraised of the progress of the roll out and related training.

Through consultation with our staff and representative bodies the DSG developed a Low-Speed Manoeuvre (LSM) Booklet which was approved for publishing in Q4 of 2025-26 while the SDA's have sourced and provided equipment for on-station LSM training.

The following Safe Systems of Work have also been published:

- SSOW 239 Mobilising to Incidents and Responding to Pager
- SSOW 265 Entering and Exiting a Vehicle





Types of Low-Speed Manoeuvres

- **Turning:** This includes reversing around a corner, a U-turn, a three-point turn and manoeuvring in tight spaces such as multi-storey car parks.
- **Parking:** This includes angle parking, bay parking and parallel parking.
- **Reversing:** This includes reversing in a straight line and around a corner, plus any reversing you do when parking or repositioning your vehicle.
- **Going Forward:** This includes driving forward and manoeuvring including with driving assistants.

Fire Contaminants

During 2025/26, Safety and Assurance continued to lead the Contaminants Group and its Sub-Group, progressing work to reduce the risk of injury and ill health associated with fire contaminants exposure across SFRS.

Tasks focused on implementing the Fire Contaminants Management Arrangement and associated procedures, guidance and risk controls. This included engaging with operational personnel and stakeholders to share good practice, the monitoring of compliance and the reviewing risk assessments, safe systems of work and station zoning arrangements to ensure they remain effective and aligned with operational learning and emerging best practice.

Significant progress was made in strengthening contamination control and decontamination arrangements. A safe system of work for Breathing Apparatus (BA) washers was developed, and compliance with fire contaminants procedures was formally embedded within the OA07A Operational Assurance Officer Action Checklist.

Investing PPE resilience with 2,200 sets of reserve PPE located across 36 designated reserve stock hubs. A PPE and laundry recording system was implemented for managing cleaning and maintenance of PPE.

Additionally, SFRS purchased PPE airing racks and secure cages and 353 'Contaminated PPE' external storage units, at SFRS premises. The National Training Centres were supplied with a cleaning machine and drying cabinet for SCBA. These are engineered for the cleaning, disinfecting and drying of BA face pieces.

Firefighters may be exposed to combustion products during the course of their duties. 1,000 shampoo and bodywash units were installed in fire station showers.

Station Zoning Plans

Purpose: To reduce the transfer of fire contaminants and secondary contamination in SFRS premises.

Implementation: 374 zoning plans were implemented in SFRS premises.



CivTech

Overview

SFRS continued to work with the Scottish Government's CivTech Programme.

CivTech's challenge-led approach supports organisations to define a problem rather than prescribe a solution, enabling specialist partners to work collaboratively with challenge sponsors to design, test and refine new approaches. The programme provides a structured route from early concept through accelerator support to pre-commercialisation, with the aim of producing solutions that are both operationally effective and commercially viable.

Within CivTech Round 10, SFRS sponsored two challenges focused on improving firefighter safety, operational effectiveness and long-term wellbeing.

- 10.1 – How can technology be used to improve situational awareness for emergency responders before, during and after a wide range of incidents?
- 10.2 – How can technology identify and measure firefighter exposure to contaminants across a wide range of incidents?

These challenges address areas of growing operational importance where technology has the potential to strengthen decision-making, improve understanding of risk and support the development of practical solutions that could also benefit the wider fire and rescue sector.

Following the challenge and accelerator phases, both projects progressed to pre-commercial development, with funding in place to support the further design and testing of viable products. This stage allowed SFRS to continue working closely with delivery partners to ensure solutions are shaped around operational need, informed by user feedback and capable of being developed into sustainable products. Through this work, SFRS is not only seeking to address immediate organisational challenges, but also to contribute to innovation that has potential value across the wider emergency services and public safety landscape.

CivTech

Progress of the CivTech Challenges

10.1 Situational Awareness

SFRS worked with Rowden Technologies to develop a commercially viable product to improve situational awareness for emergency responders before, during and after incidents. The challenge focused on addressing the limited availability of accurate real-time information on incident ground conditions, risk, resources and developing events, with the aim of improving firefighter safety, strengthening incident commander decision-making and supporting more effective operational co-ordination. The proposed solution combined Rowden's digital platform capability with a tablet and phone-based interface that supports dynamic risk assessment and incident management, helping to create a shared operational picture across crews, sector commanders and control room colleagues.

The solution was intended to provide a more consistent and timely flow of information across devices, allowing those at the scene and those supporting remotely to access the same up-to-date view of an incident. This has great benefit during complex or fast-moving incidents where co-ordination, communication and resource deployment are critical. Rowden has worked closely with SFRS colleagues throughout development, including engagement with Operations, Operations Control, Incident Command and digital and technology teams, alongside pilot user workshops to test concepts and incorporate feedback. This collaborative approach is helping to refine the product so that it is shaped around operational need and can integrate effectively with existing ways of working. The product was scheduled for completion by July 2026.

10.2 Contaminants

SFRS entered a joint venture with Firehaz Research Ltd, led by Professor Anna Stec, to develop an innovative, data-driven solution to identify, assess and reduce firefighter exposure to contaminants across a wide range of incidents. The challenge reflected recent evidence on the long-term health risks associated with exposure to fire effluents, including cancer and other occupational diseases. It also supported the work of the SFRS Contaminants Working Group to strengthen understanding, monitoring and prevention. The proposed solution brought together physiological monitoring, environmental sensing and biological testing to build a clearer picture of both immediate and cumulative exposure.

The solution employed physiological monitoring sensors, vests, gas sensors and mobile devices to support testing and validation, for real-time air quality monitoring, and lateral flow test kits to detect markers linked to exposure to hazardous substances.

A pilot was conducted at Cambuslang National Training Centre. Data and learning has contributed to the development of an exposure tracker application that supports the secure collation of data, with the longer-term aim of establishing a commercially viable product that can improve firefighter safety, health and wellbeing. Progress continued to develop a viable solution over the next 12-16 months.



4. Improvement

Key Achievements and Improvements; Continual Improvement; and Looking Ahead

Read on

Skip to next section

Key Achievements and Improvements

Training, Safety and Assurance (TSA)

- **Respiratory Infection Prevention:** COVID-19-specific documentation, such as task cards, workplace risk assessments and Safe System of Work (SSOW), were withdrawn or consolidated.
- **Hydrant Maintenance Health and Safety Handbook:** A working group established the safety and compliance standards for SFRS personnel undertaking hydrant maintenance activities. It ensures that all such activities are conducted safely and efficiently, in accordance with statutory requirements and SFRS policy.
- **SFRS Stress Management Generic Risk Assessment (GRA):** A new GRA was developed based upon HSE stress management standards, to highlight and signpost staff to the extensive range of control measures SFRS has in place to foster a culture of psychological safety and support.
- The revised Training Centre Audit Form (TA02) has created a more consistent and structured audit process, improving assurance, risk identification, and organisational learning.
- Helicopter safety training was delivered to 10 Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs) in Inverness, enhancing safety during helicopter-supported operations such as wildfire response.
- New Wildfire Operations e-learning and GRA modules, including working in darkness, were developed to support national wildfire strategies and preparedness.
- Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) CPD events were delivered across four locations, refreshing hazardous materials response skills with support from Glasgow Scientific Services.
- A pilot First Response Emergency Care (FREC) programme was launched with the Scottish Ambulance Service to improve clinical skills, governance, and interoperability.
- Joint working with the Scottish Ambulance Service and medical partners supported publication of new extrication guidance, improving casualty care at road traffic collisions.
- The BA Recovery Programme significantly increased operational competence, with BA, CFBT, and Tactical Ventilation refresher completion rates rising to over 90%.

TSA Accident Summary	
Types of Events:	**Top 3 causations:**
• Accident (28) • NM (10) • VA (8)	1. Slips, Trips and Falls 2. Temperature 3. Manual Handling

- The Tactical Firefighting programme was launched, strengthening thermal imaging camera use and firefighting knowledge across operational crews.
- Investment in water mapping rigs enhanced practical firefighting training, with three installations completed and five more planned across mainland sites.
- Safe Working at Height (SWAH) Tier 1 and 2 training, alongside new equipment rollout, improved operational readiness and standardised capability across the Service. A new USAR Collapsed Structure Simulator at the National Training Centre expanded rescue training opportunities and strengthened firefighter preparedness.
- Significant investment in specialist training, facilities, and technology – including large animal rescue, fire investigation, HAZMAT, driver training, and Workforce Pro – enhanced operational capability, safety, and workforce development across the Service.

Key Achievements and Improvements

Training, Safety and Assurance (TSA) – Safety and Assurance

Policy and Objectives:

- Management Arrangements (MAs) continued their 5-year review cycle and simplification into a more user-friendly format. This year, the Occupational Road, Risk, Safe Use of Lift Trucks and working at Height were updated, and Operational Assurance General Information Notes commenced conversion into MAs with the During Incident Operational Assurance MA.
- Working at Height risk assessment withdrawn and linked into GRA and existing emergency rescue plans, Safe Use of Lifts Truck MA updated and simplified, additional guidance and training content added.

Safety Risk Management

- Premises Contaminants Zoning was implemented, to assist managing fire-contaminants and reduce potential exposure for premises occupants.
- Unscheduled cleaning SSOW and personal Hygiene posters for hand washing and general hygiene published.
- Worked closely with the Prevention Directorate to enhance existing hazards and controls captured in their health and safety handbook, chip pan demonstration GRA and SSOW, youth engagement activities, community engagement, and enforcement action updates for the Museum of Scottish Fire Heritage.
- Developed the Communication and Engagement on the Incident Ground GRA and supporting SSOW for the Communications Team.
- Published Hydrants health and safety handbook, enhancing SSOW and updating the supporting GRA.
- Supported the implementation of Risk and Technical Assessments and SSoW including.
- Training Fire Ground Technicians (implemented).

Training and Communication

- Staff awareness campaigns including Stress management, Cancer Awareness, Home Working Doesn't Have To Be Isolating Poster developed for Digital Wellbeing Month, MSK , Prostate Cancer and Stress Awareness articles.
- Published staff awareness articles for stress awareness month (April) MSK Month (Aug), articles for DSE and manual handling, and Cancer awareness.



Key Achievements and Improvements

Wellbeing

Over 239 Wellbeing Champions in SFRS to support colleagues.

- The 2026 Wellbeing Calendar was aligned to service priorities following evaluation.
- The Mental Health and Wellbeing Group was reinvigorated, and a permanent structural change strengthened the wellbeing framework, reinforcing long-term commitment.
- An action plan addressing the HMFSI Mental and Wellbeing Support Report was established, with progress tracking.
- Benchmarking across UK fire services continued, supporting shared learning on women's health and menopause.
- Wellbeing Champions increased by 20.1% to over 239, expanding peer support across SFRS. Wellbeing was promoted through events and roadshows, including the Women in the Service Event and sessions on mental health, contaminants, and musculoskeletal injury prevention.
- Employee Assistance Programme engagement increased, with providers supporting workshops and roadshows. Targeted roadshows in Thurso and Inverness reached on-call staff and those on sickness absence.
- The Post Incident Support Procedure policy was updated to include self-referrals, with process improvements and a new guidance video developed with Rivers to support staff.



Key Achievements and Improvements

Wellbeing cont.



SFRS continued to support the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme.

SFRS Endometriosis Champions increased awareness through training, communications, and sharing lived experiences.



SFRS hosted an annual Santa Dash and Family Day at the National Headquarters, Cambuslang in aid of The Fire Fighters Charity. The event raised over £3,500.



Mickeysline is an Inverness-based charity bringing mental health and suicide prevention services to remote communities. SFRS personnel attended the wellbeing promotion in Thurso. The event supported both physical and mental wellbeing through collaboration with local wellbeing partners, delivering a programme of sessions with strong colleague engagement.

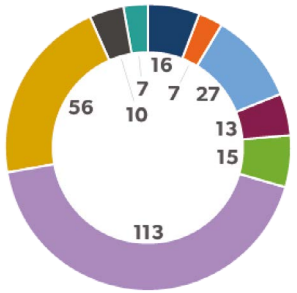
It successfully reached on-call personnel and maintained contact with colleagues on sickness absence, supporting return-to-work outcomes. This generated positive participant feedback.

Key Achievements and Improvements

Operations

- Introduced Management of Water and Flood Incidents (MWFI) Tactical Advisors, strengthening specialist support for Incident Commanders during water-related emergencies.
- Established Marine Tactical Advisors, enhancing operational resilience and improving response to maritime incidents and emerging risks.
- Improved national resilience by expanding specialist advisory capabilities across key operational risk areas.
- Reduced significant operational risk through structured debriefs, reviews, and improvement actions.
- Increased Mass Decontamination capability availability from approximately 57% to 100%, significantly enhancing operational readiness.
- Promoted long-term firefighter health protection by establishing baseline compliance requirements in contamination management.
- Expanded oxygen therapy capability for operational crews, strengthening emergency medical response at incidents.
- Improved operational consistency and service delivery through stronger national and local collaboration.
- Worked with DaTS and equipment suppliers to develop a roadmap for upgrading digital radio systems across the Service.
- Introduced a new Animal Rescue Response capability as part of the Document Control Project broadening operational response options.
- Introduced a Scottish Equipment Governance Meeting between Operations and Assets to address operational equipment issues proactively.
- Developed and embedded a Wildfire Night Operations Checklist within LCMS training, improving safety and preparedness during complex wildfire incidents.
- Maintained high standards across ERRI through LSM training, strong audit outcomes, and a target for all events to be completed within seven days.

Operations Accident Summary	
Types of Events:	**Most Common Causations:**
• Accident (5) • NM (3) • AoV (2)	1. Impact (Stationary Object) 2. Slips, Trips and Falls 3. Temperature



Operations Improvements

- General Info Note
- Awareness Briefings
- Operational Procedures
- Service Delivery Alerts
- Vehicle Info Card
- Urgent Instructions
- Standard Operating Procedure
- Equipment Info Cards
- Doc Conversion Project

Key Achievements and Improvements

Service Delivery Areas - North

Contaminant Control Measures

- Strategic decontamination support was introduced for remote stations, including post-fire kits and decontamination equipment at designated locations.
- Additional locker storage was installed to separate PPE from personal items, supporting compliance with welfare and contaminant standards.
- A dedicated Multi-Purpose Vehicle was also secured to transport personnel to carbonaceous training sites, reducing the risk of cross-contamination.
- Showers were installed at two remote island locations, improving access to decontamination facilities and reducing travel barriers for personnel.

Low Speed Manoeuvre (LSM) Vehicle Accidents

- The Low-Speed Manoeuvre booklet was communicated to all operational staff and reinforced through face-to-face management briefings.
- Driver training kits, including cones and poles, were distributed to selected stations to support practical manoeuvring exercises. The combination of enhanced communication and hands-on training contributed to a significant reduction in LSM vehicle incidents.

Hazard / Near Miss Reporting

- A communication campaign was delivered through emails, manager briefings, and station-based guidance posters to emphasise the importance of hazard and near miss reporting. The initiative highlighted how early reporting helps prevent incidents, protect personnel, and maintain operational readiness.
- Increased awareness of reporting responsibilities and consequences of non-reporting improved confidence and consistency across the North. This resulted in a significant increase in hazard and near miss reporting, supporting a stronger proactive safety culture.

North Accident Summary	
Types of Events:	**Most Common Causations:**
• VA (51) • NM (46) • Accident (33)	1. Impact (Moving Objects) 2. Falls from Height 3. Manual Handling

4x4 Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) Vehicles

- Two additional 4x4 Flexi Duty Officer vehicles were introduced, and the fleet was strategically redistributed to improve resilience in remote and high-risk areas. Vehicle locations were selected based on risk, geography, and accessibility challenges.
- The initiative provided Flexi Duty Officers (FDOs) with quicker access to suitable vehicles during severe weather events, improving safety and response capability. This strengthened operational resilience across the North and reduced travel-related risks during adverse conditions.

Key Achievements and Improvements

Service Delivery Areas - East

- All premises engaged with the Premises Compliance Process and will continue to engage with Property to manage the outputs.
- Fire Contaminant Zoning was fully implemented at all stations, supporting improved firefighter health and safety. Contaminant Risk Assessments are complete, with SOPs embedded through staff engagement and training.
- The Breathing Apparatus Support Unit (BASU) pilot in MELSB delivered significant operational benefits by reducing road risk and unnecessary journeys, linked to breathing apparatus cylinder replenishment.
- Site-specific risk assessments continued to be developed improving risk awareness, and local training.
- Targeted testing and exercising of digital fireground communications was undertaken across CFS to evaluate performance of digital fireground radios within BA environments. Findings informed recent software updates and system improvements, strengthening reliability of fireground communications, improving situational awareness and contributed to enhanced firefighter safety on the incident ground.
- SSOW-275 document 'Coupling & Uncoupling Trailers' and the Electric Information Card (EIC) for trailers were reviewed and updated, following TASS event. This learning was cascaded nationally with further recommendations being progressed through the SAIG.
- Review of National Ariel Ladder Platform jacking processes following a TASS Event.
- A 12-month trial of an Ultra High-Pressure Lance capability was approved in CoE, aiming to improve firefighter safety in hazardous structures and enhance Electric Vehicle (EV) fire response capability.
- Reallocating the BA van and reserve PPE to Bathgate improved appliance availability, reduced costs and emissions, and enhanced BA servicing support.

East Accident Summary	
Types of Events:	**Most Common Causations:**
• NM (67) • VA (66) • Accident (44)	1. Manual Handling 2. Slips, Trips and Falls 3. Sharp Object(s)

- Ongoing development sessions and engagement with staff were undertaken across the EAST SDA, with the aim of improving TASS Investigations and strengthening our overall Safety culture.

Key Achievements and Improvements

Service Delivery Areas - West

- Structured debriefs following the Lochgilphead and River Leven incidents improved learning, information sharing and multi-agency collaboration.
- BA emergency procedures and Close Personal Contact training were proactively delivered before formal investigation outcomes, accelerating the adoption of key safety lessons.
- Presentations covered BA emergency procedures, fire behaviour, media and compartment fires, and carbon monoxide incidents to enhance firefighter safety.
- TASS and appraisal sessions focused on reducing low-speed manoeuvre vehicle incidents while improving hazard awareness and reporting standards.
- A fire risk linked to deliberate tampering with school laptops was identified, with partnership working enabling preventative action and supporting future learning.
- Comprehensive thematic audits across wholetime, on-call and volunteer stations promoted consistency, compliance and continuous improvement in health and safety standards.
- A service-wide issue with ageing throwlines was identified and escalated, resulting in the replacement of outdated equipment across the Service and reducing operational risk.
- Several operational safety issues were escalated through West SAIG, including appliance fend-off positioning, dashcam compliance, dashcam data retrieval processes and contaminant cage security.
- Contaminant zoning and decontamination procedures was supported through participation in the CivTech FireHaz contaminants research project.
- Lifelines wellbeing training was rolled out, with personnel trained as wellbeing champions to provide routine and emergency welfare support following traumatic incidents.
- Assurance, training and learning programmes were delivered, including audits, multi-pump incident exercises, EV fire training with Volvo, and regular Safety & Assurance reports to share lessons learned.

West Accident Summary	
Types of Events:	**Most Common Causations:**
• VA (99) • NM (57) • Accident (39)	1. Impact (Moving Objects) 2. Manual Handling 3. Temperature

Key Achievements and Improvements

Financial and Contractual Services (FCS)

Finance and DaTS

- Finance and DaTS have maintained strong engagement with Safety & Assurance through regular participation in SAIG meetings. Health and Safety continues to be embedded within governance arrangements. It remains a standing item at all management team meetings.
- Progress has been effectively managed through the Health & Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP), which is used to track actions and support informed decision-making. All HSIP actions have now been fully completed across both functions. In addition, the Line Manager Health & Safety Responsibilities presentation was delivered to DaTS Management to reinforce roles and expectations.
- Managers have continued to support remote staff through regular MS Teams contact, maintaining a clear focus on health, safety, and wellbeing. The Office Handbook provides guidance and safe remote working information.
- This approach contributed to the achievement of the Gold Award for Support Review Risk Assessments as part of the Quarter 1 Improvement Plan.
- Compliance with mandatory training requirements continued to be evidenced through LCMS (Workforce Pro) and PDRPro.

FCS Accident Summary	
Types of Events:	**Most Common Causations:**
• Accident (7) • VA (5) • NM (1)	1. Impact (Stationary object) 2. Impact (Moving object) 3. Manual Handling

Key Achievements and Improvements

Financial and Contractual Services (FCS)

Property Enhancements

- Maintained oversight of the RAAC remediation and replacement programme, including new build developments, site acquisitions, remediation works, and station improvement projects.
- Progressed key training infrastructure projects, including CFBT facility enhancements, smoke capture installation, new water mapping training rigs, and welfare improvements across training premises.

Fleet

- Completed the build and rollout of 30 Scania 18-tonne Rescue Pumps, fully equipped with operational tools, equipment, and upgraded ESN radio systems.
- Purchased 15 additional Scania 18-tonne chassis to support the next appliance build programme in 2026–27.
- Completed the second batch of 12 Lightweight Pumping Appliances, including full equipment fit-out and installation of new radio systems.
- Delivered four Technical Rope Rescue Units and commissioned four Wildfire Support Units, enhancing specialist operational capabilities.
- Purchased and deployed two Management Team cars, nine Multi-Role 4x4 vehicles, and two standard 4x4 pick-ups to strengthen fleet resilience.
- Procured 20 Ford Ranger 4x4 vehicles for future conversion into Multi-Role and standard operational support vehicles.
- Purchased 16 Mercedes vans to replace ageing Stores and Workshop vehicles and improve fleet reliability.
- Invested in six Multi-Role Crew Vehicles and a new Welfare Unit base vehicle to enhance crew welfare and support during prolonged incidents.
- Added an electric Hydrant Support Van and an electric training minibus, supporting both fleet renewal and net-zero ambitions.
- Expanded and modernised the fleet with accessible support vehicles, 39 Kia e-Niro electric cars, and 19 electric vans to reduce emissions and improve operational support.

Health & Safety Management

- Reviewed Safe Systems of Work
- Development of Equipment / Vehicle PUWER Assessments.

Governance & Strategic Planning

- Strategic Asset Management Plans in place for Fleet, Equipment, Property and Training.
- Local Asset Management Plan for Shetland prepared.
- 10-year risk-based capital investment plan aligned with condition, suitability and operational need.

Equipment Improvements

- Completed the tier 1 and 2 SWAH standardisation.
- Introduced new TIC's to front line appliances ensuring every appliance had thermal image capability.
- Introduced PFD's to all flood response stations.
- Provided new DIM equipment for 4 new units.

Key Achievements and Improvements

People

- Maintained People SAIG governance and engagement, including monthly People SAIG meetings and ongoing Safety Assurance Coordinator input into People managers' meetings to support health, safety, wellbeing, assurance.
- Partnered closely with Safety & Assurance colleagues to shape and deliver the 2025–26 Improvement Plan, including a clear focus on implementing controls relating to fire contaminants, welfare, and other key objectives.
- Delivered strong progress against the 2025–26 Improvement Plan, with 100% year-end completion.
- Strengthened local assurance through the People Directorate Self-Compliance programme (2025–26), updating the People self-compliance standards and evidencing compliance via established controls such as the People Compliance Tracker, LCMS/Workforce Pro records and TASS evidence.
- Improved DSE (Display Screen Equipment) compliance evidence by completing the assessment within the TASS DSE module and monitoring the process.
- Continued the three-year stress risk assessment approach, with stress questionnaires completed. The supporting evidence retained within the People Compliance Tracker.
- Strengthened the occupational road risk controls for People staff, This included requesting and tracking licence/driver documentation.
- Reported no People Directorate Events within the period covered by the People SAIG Spotlight reporting. People recorded zero accidents/injuries, near misses, vehicle accidents and acts of violence across the quarterly reporting lines shown, supporting proactive prevention and assurance.
- Empowered staff to report confidential issues to the Confidential Reporting Line.
- Strengthened assurance over risk assessments and safe systems of work by maintaining the RA Gantt Chart and reviewing the People Office Handbook.
- Enhanced event reporting and investigation controls, ensuring personnel are current in Event Reporting and Investigation learning modules, reiterating the importance of timely investigation.

Key Achievements and Improvements

Portfolio Office

Portfolio Improvements

- Promoted Safety Awareness and Compliance across the Service through the established SAIG framework.
- Supported Management Arrangement reviews for COSHH, Radiation, PPE/RPE, Liaison with the HSE, and Operational DRA/ARA processes.
- Assisted with the implementation of Methods of Entry Training enhancing operational competence.
- Procured a new electronic Safety and Assurance Management System (e-SAMS) and participated in its design.
- Continued to foster a strong safety culture through the ongoing review and improvement of Safety and Assurance processes across the Service.

SPPC Improvements

- Achieved 100% completion of all actions within the Annual Health and Safety Improvement Plan, demonstrating a strong commitment to continuous improvement.
- Provided the Power BI Dashboard and Tracker enabling managers with oversight of outstanding actions and compliance.
- Recorded Health and Safety events through TASS and ensured improvements were implemented to enhance colleague safety.
- Supported Homeworking colleagues with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments, with reasonable adjustments and equipment provided, where required.
- Lead the Civtech Contaminants Project "How can technology identify and measure firefighter exposure to contaminants across a wide range of incidents?" SPPC support the exposure-monitoring technology and explored future health surveillance arrangements to improve firefighter safety and long-term health outcomes.

Key Achievements and Improvements

Prevention

Prevention Improvements

- **Prevention H&S Handbook:** Introduced the Prevention and Hydrant Maintenance Health and Safety Handbook details information on safe working practices. Equipment Information Cards (EICs), GRA 009 "Hydrant Maintenance" and SSOW 050 "Hydrant Maintenance" documents standardises approaches to prevention and hydrant activities.
- **Proactive Process Review:** Reviewed Generic Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work. The revised processes enhance control measures, particularly for lone working, through improved planning, dynamic risk assessment, and clear escalation arrangements. Increased emphasis on reporting violence, aggression, and near misses supports the proactive identification of trends and emerging risks.
- **Staff Health and Wellbeing Support:** The Prevention Directorate continues to embed a positive health and wellbeing culture through the development of its Wellbeing Group and a network of Wellbeing Champions. The integration of Health and Wellbeing Facilitators via the Lifeline Scotland programme ensures accessible, peer led support for all staff. The PISP policy review has strengthened inclusive support arrangements.
- **S19 Hydrant Strategic Working Group:** The establishment of a multi-agency strategic working group for S19 Aqua Hydrants demonstrated a collaborative approach to risk management. The work ensured alignment with statutory duties and national guidance while supporting the development of a safer, more resilient operational environment.
- **Introduction of New Equipment:** The introduction of new specialist equipment enhanced the safety and efficiency of hydrant inspection activities. There was positive feedback from frontline users. Battery powered pumps enabled the safe removal of contaminated water, reducing risks associated with hygiene and environmental exposure. Hydraulic lifters for seized hydrant lids significantly reduces manual handling exposure and the risk of musculoskeletal injury. This investment demonstrated a proactive commitment to improving working practices, exceeding minimum standards, and protecting staff through practical, risk reducing innovation.

Prevention Accident Summary	
Types of Events:	**Top causations:**
• VA (1) • AoV (1)	1. Temperature 2. Threatening Behaviour

Continual Improvement



SA Improvements

- A Low-Speed Manoeuvre (LSM) booklet has been published to raise awareness of common risks and reinforce safe driving practices across the Service. This guidance supports drivers in reducing minor LSM events through improved understanding, consistent application of procedures, and strengthened driver behaviours.
- eSAMS (Electronic Safety Management System): currently in development to support Operational Assurance by providing a single platform for capturing, analysing and sharing safety and incident data, strengthening organisational learning and evidence-based improvement.
- A new Health and Safety program for Organisational Learning has been launched within the SFRS, centralising all mandatory and role-specific health and safety training in one location. This initiative aimed to provide quarterly training for all staff, ensuring that everyone maintains their health and safety knowledge and skills throughout the SFRS.
- The following new courses were introduced: -
  - Operational Incident Risk Assessment (PRA/DRA/ARA)
  - Event Reporting and Investigation
- Enhancements to existing courses included:
  - The creation of a "Driving for Support Staff" program that links existing modules with additional resources.
  - Minor revisions to the Stress, Noise, and Vibration programs, reflecting updates from HSE guidance.

Support Reviews

Support Reviews provide assurance that SFRS requirements are met and support legal compliance, while promoting best practice and identifying areas for improvement to enable standardisation across the Service. A new Management Aarrangement has been introduced to strengthen governance and oversight of the established process, with ongoing refinement to further enhance audit and assurance activity.

During the reporting period, reviews were undertaken across a range of areas or topics. These reviews have identified areas of learning which continue to be implemented through routine workstreams.

Sample of the following topics were undertaken:

- Specific Risk Assessment;
- Individual Safe System of Work Process;
- Face Fit Testing (FFP3); and
- Statutory Inspection.

Corporate papers on the effectiveness of the Organisational Learning Group, Food Safety training, and Safety and Assurance Improvement Groups were progressed through governance routes, with recommendations applied where appropriate. These provided assurance on current arrangements and identified opportunities for improvement to strengthen organisational performance.

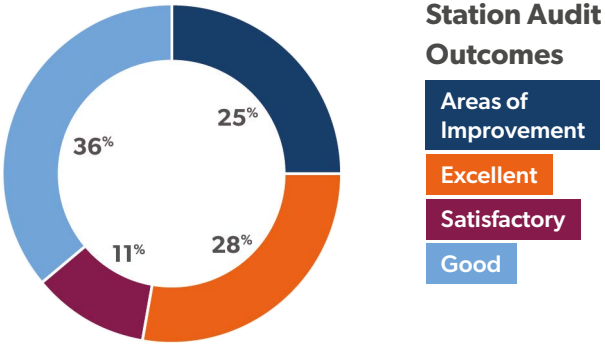
Continual Improvement

(Operational Assurance)

2025/26 Service Delivery completed the Station Audit process utilising the Operational Assurance Reporting and Recording System (OARRS).

- North Service Delivery Area 70 audits completed;
- East Service Delivery Area 42 audits completed; and
- West Service Delivery Area 116 Audits completed.

Actions continued to be monitored where significant improvement was required, and where minor areas of improvement were identified, these actions continued to be actioned at local level.



Operational Assurance enhanced audit governance by introducing a formal Management Arrangement and transitioning from Station Audits to Assurance Audits for 2026–27. The scope included Control Rooms, supported by defined roles, structured programmes, and strengthened audit independence.

A consistent, evidence-based approach was embedded, with mandatory practical skills assessment, clear timescales, and a four-grade scoring system supported by formal escalation and Senior Management Board oversight. Discretion was removed, with audit outcomes directly informing performance and strengthening firefighter safety and professional standards.



Continual Improvement

(Organisational Learning Group)

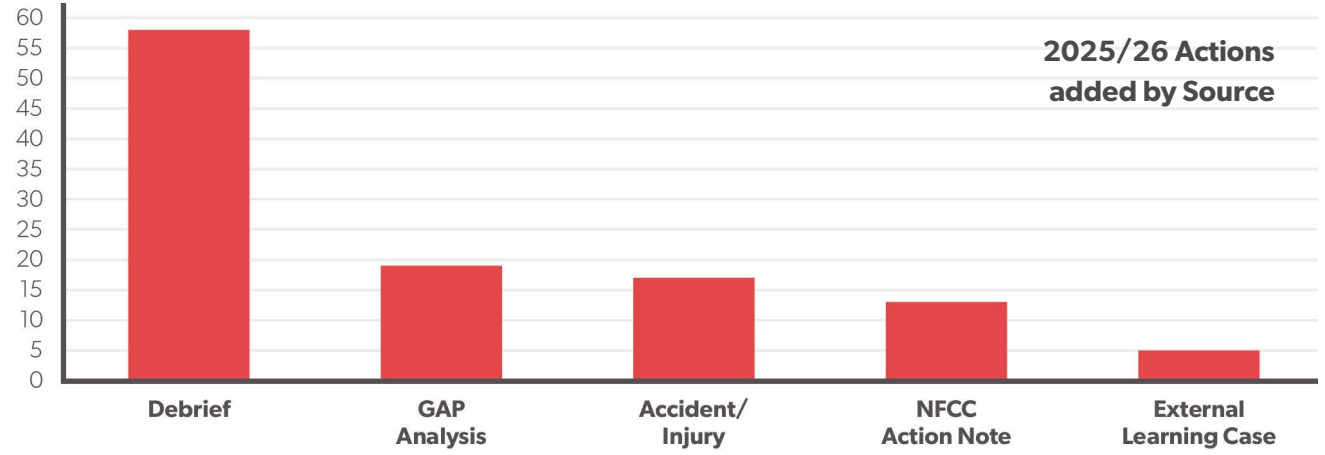
The Organisational Learning Group (OLG) managed recommendations from incidents, investigations and operational learning etc. It gave risk owners and key stakeholders access to live data, enabling them to identify trends and monitor progress, supporting continuous improvement across the Service.

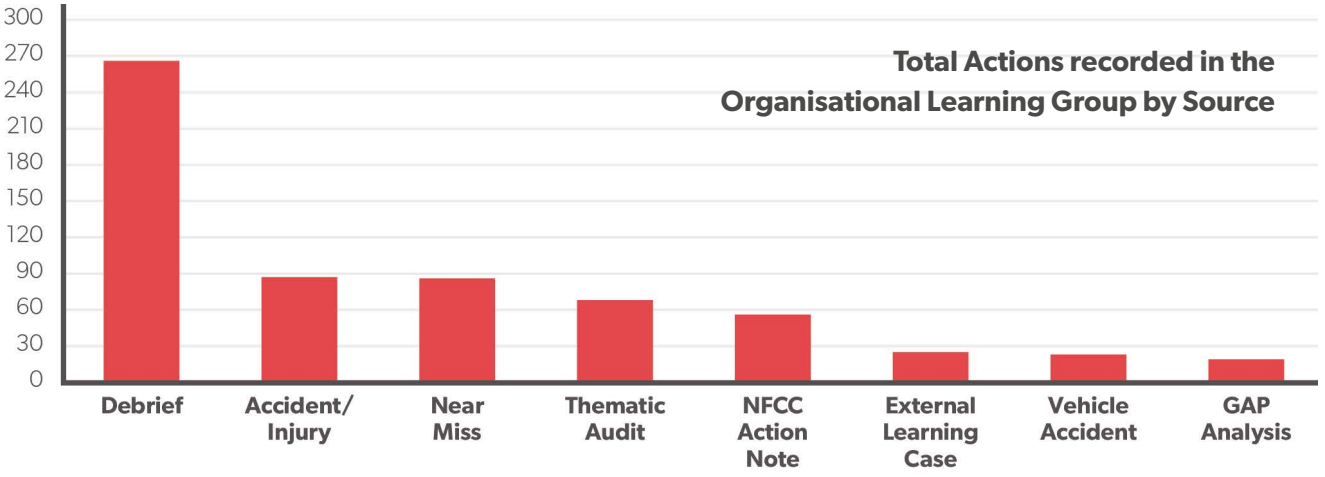
A total of 630 recommendations were recorded, of which 492 were completed, demonstrating sustained progress.

During 2025–26, 112 new recommendations were generated from 17 action plans, including structured debriefs, NFCC Action and Information Notes, significant event investigations and reports of Operational Discretion.

A further 130 actions were closed following OLG scrutiny with supporting evidence.

Risk owners continued to manage recommendations through engagement, embedded learning, and improving health, safety and assurance. Their approach has driven improvement and embedded learning across the Service.





Continual Improvement

(Organisational Learning Group)

Significant Event Summary

The SFRS carried out a total of 4 Significant Event Investigations in 2025-26;

Blackness Road Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP)

- **Description:** Whilst carrying out on-station training utilising the ALP, a Firefighter fell from the deck of the ALP onto the tarmac below, resulting in injuries to their wrist and elbow.
- **Outcome:** Following the investigation, 10 recommendations were made.

Lochgilphead Near Miss

- **Description:** Whilst undertaking firefighting operations at a persons reported fire in a block of flats, a floor collapse occurred, causing a Firefighter to fall into the flat below requiring rescue using a short extension ladder. The firefighter was not injured.
- **Outcome:** This investigation is ongoing through relevant governance routes. Recommendations will be progressed to the OLG.

Lundholm Road ATV

- **Description:** When carrying out a consolidation exercise following All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) acquisition training, an ATV overturned, with no injury to the occupants.
- **Outcome:** This investigation is ongoing through relevant governance routes. Recommendations will be progressed to the OLG.

Scott Street, Perth

- **Description:** Whilst in attendance at a level 4 incident, a number of Health and Safety events occurred (four near miss events and one Firefighter injury).
- **Outcome:** This investigation is ongoing through relevant governance routes. Recommendations will be progressed to the OLG.



Looking Ahead

The Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Assurance Strategy provides a clear framework for how the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will protect, support and assure its people and services. It is founded on the principle that effective health, safety, wellbeing and assurance processes are essential to delivering a Service that is safe, resilient, learning-focused and capable of meeting the evolving needs of the people we serve.

The strategy:

- Recognises the value of an assured health, wellbeing and safety culture, where leading, engaging and learning are shared duties and where all personnel are empowered to identify and report.
- Recognises the need to strengthen organisational learning by improving how information is gathered, analysed and used to identify themes and trends to prevent recurrence and improve performance.
- Recognises the evolving research relating to firefighter health, contaminants and occupational exposure, supporting continued partnerships, researchers and the wider fire sector to ensure our arrangements remain proportionate, evidence-based and aligned with emerging good practice.
- Recognises the opportunities presented by innovation, including the introduction of e-SAMS, to enhance event reporting, safety risk management, assurance activity, performance monitoring and organisational learning.

The strategy also recognises that excelling in health, safety, assurance and wellbeing requires teamwork. Success depends upon effective collaboration across all business partners, representative bodies, staff networks and external partners. Through a coordinated approach, the Service will continue to strengthen its capacity to keep people safe, support workforce wellbeing, learn from experience and provide assurance that risks are being effectively managed, helping to deliver a safer, healthier and more resilient Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

The continued focus on safety relies on application of the SFRS values; teamwork, respect, innovation and safety.



We sincerely thank all employees for continually contributing to the health, safety and wellbeing of our people and creating a Safer Scotland.

For further information of enquiries please contact **sfrs.healthandsafety@firescotland.gov.uk**

5. Glossary of Terms

The following glossary is an alphabetical list of terms and/or abbreviations contained within the report with their corresponding meanings or explanations.

Accident/Injury Rate: The total number of reported Accidents/Injuries divided by total number of employees multiplied by 500 to give the accident injury rate per employee.

ALP: Aerial Ladder Platform Power

AoV: Acts of Violence

ARA: Analytical Risk Assessment

ATV: All-terrain Vehicle

BA: Breathing Apparatus

BAU: Business as Usual

CAT: Community Action Team

COSHH: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

CSA: Community Safety Advocate

DRA: Dynamic Risk Assessment

DSG: Drivers Safety Group

DSE: Display Screen Equipment

DSU: Distress Signal Unit

ESDA: East Service Delivery Area

FBU: Fire Brigades Union

FDO: Flexi Duty Officer

FCS: Fleet and Contractual Services

FRS: Fire and Rescue Service

GANTT: A graphical representation of activity against time

GIN: General Information Note

GRA: Generic Risk Assessment

HS: Health and Safety

HSE: Health and Safety Executive

HSIP: Health and Safety Improvement Plan

HMFSI: His Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate

HSMS: Health and Safety Management System

HW: Health and Wellbeing

IP: Injured Person

ISO: International Organisation for Standardisation

KPI: Key Performance Indicators

LCMS: Learning Content Management System

LSM: Low-speed manoeuvres

5. Glossary of Terms

LSO:	Local Senior Officer
MA:	Management Arrangement
MSK:	Musculoskeletal
NEOP:	National Event Operational Plan
NFCC:	National Fire Chiefs Council
NM:	Near Miss
NSDA:	North Service Delivery Area
OA:	Operational Assurance
OARRS:	Operational Assurance Recording and Reporting System
OLG:	Organisational Learning Group
People:	People Directorate
PPE:	Personal Protective Equipment
PRE:	Pneumatic Rescue Equipment
PUWER:	Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations
RA:	Risk Assessment
R&D:	Research and Development
RIDDOR:	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
RPE:	Respiratory Protective Equipment
SAIG:	Safety and Assurance Improvement Groups
SA:	Safety and Assurance
SAMS:	Safety and Assurance Management System
SCBA:	Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
SDA:	Service Delivery Area
SFRS:	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
SLT:	Strategic Leadership Team
SMART:	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
SOP:	Standard Operating Procedure
SPPC:	Strategic Planning, Performance and Communication
SSOW:	Safe System of Work
TfOC:	Training for Operational Competence
TASS:	Think, Act, Stay, Safe
TSA:	Training, Safety and Assurance
UFAS:	Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
UHPL:	Ultra High-Pressure Lance
VA:	Vehicle Accident
WSDA:	West Service Delivery Area

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