



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

# Safety and Assurance Strategy 2022-2026

**Working together  
for a safer Scotland**



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## 1. FOREWORD – DIRECTOR OF TRAINING, SAFETY AND ASSURANCE

Health and safety is an integral part of delivering a quality service to the public. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) recognises its statutory responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other legislation, and is committed, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensuring the health, safety and welfare, of its employees and others including members of the public, contractors, visitors, etc. who may be affected by Service activities.

It is recognised that preventing harm to employees and those affected by our activities is integral for the success, growth and continued excellent reputation of the SFRS. It is therefore important that we learn lessons from past experiences, notable practice, innovation, event investigations and case law.

To ensure we continue to improve our safety culture in the Service, robust and effective health and safety management systems and operational assurance is required.

As a service we need to ensure that our safety value is known, understood and becomes embedded in everyone's thinking and in all of our actions.

The SFRS Board, senior management and representative bodies are committed to working together to improve and assure the health, safety and well-being of all, which will result in keeping employees and the communities safe and well.

This Safety and Assurance Strategy sets out the strategic objectives for the next five years that seek to improve health, safety and well-being in the workplace and build upon our current successful track record.

**JOHN DICKIE**  
Assistant Chief Officer  
Director of Training, Safety and Assurance

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This strategy is designed to promote the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) safety value and outlines the mechanisms through which the value is brought to life across the service, within all staff groups and in the activities, we undertake.

The document also outlines the SFRS Safety and Assurance (SA) objective and the associated actions that are required to ensure the objective is met. These actions are the stepping stones to maintaining and enhancing safety across the SFRS.

Whilst our safety culture and associated performance is one to be proud of we must not rest on our laurels, as doing so promotes complacency which ultimately, through time, erodes the culture and has a detrimental impact upon the safety of staff. It is vital that we recognise that there are always opportunities to learn whether it be from within our own Service through

processes such as Event Investigations, Operational Assurance; or externally from other Fire and Rescue Services through National Operational Learning (NOL) processes or sector specific bodies such as the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. If we are to continually develop and mitigate new and emerging risk from an ever-changing landscape it is essential that we identify and act upon all learning opportunities.

The success of this strategy is very much dependent upon on strong partnership working across the SFRS and with our representative bodies. Safety cannot and should not be considered as the sole responsibility of a select few, nor can it be considered a never ending thankless task, it is something that can and does add value where there is early engagement and a shared vision of the common goal – to make the SFRS a safer place to work.

## 3. SFRS SAFETY VALUE

Our number one priority is to 'Work together for a safer Scotland and safety is at the core of everything we do'.

We recognise the role we play working alongside communities and in partnership with others in the public, private and third sectors, to keep Scotland safe.

The SFRS are committed to keeping our firefighters safe, whilst it is acknowledged that all operational staff work in dangerous and dynamically hazardous environments as an inherent part of their role the need for safety does not stop there. Many non-operational environments and roles present risks of varying

degrees. Whilst the risks may be significantly less than at an operational incident it is imperative that this is not underestimated. Every member of staff within the SFRS will have safety elements to their role in one aspect or other, therefore everyone can take steps to promote and support a safe working environment.

If every member of staff takes steps to safeguard their own safety, a positive safety culture will flourish and, by engaging with each other, our stakeholders, partners and our communities, we will be better equipped to work together to create a safer Scotland.



## 4. OUR SAFETY OBJECTIVE

**“WE WILL CARE FOR  
OUR PEOPLE THROUGH  
PROGRESSIVE HEALTH,  
SAFETY AND WELLBEING  
ARRANGEMENTS.”**



## 5. DELIVERING OUR OBJECTIVE

Five themes have been identified which are underpinned by specific priority actions.

The identified themes are:

1. **Compliance** – Ensuring processes are in place to identify our statutory duties and ensuring arrangements are put in place to meet them. This includes maintaining the spirit of legislation in the operational environment;
2. **Culture** – Protecting the safety of our staff through a strong proactive safety culture;
3. **Control** – Ensuring the risk to staff is controlled through the identification of significant hazards along with sensible and proportionate mitigation of risk;
4. **Communication and Engagement** – Engaging with staff at all levels, listening to their voice and acting upon what they say to support their safety at work; and
5. **Continuous Improvement** – Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that continually show an improvement in safety performance.

The associated priority actions are:

### Theme 1 Compliance

- The SFRS Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) and Operational Assurance (OA) system continues to be developed in line with ISO 45001;
- Development of a programme for the development and implementation of topic specific Health and Safety Management Arrangements and OA procedures which are prioritised based on risk; and
- Develop an SFRS Annual SA Improvement Plan, supported by bespoke Directorate SA Improvement Plans.

### Theme 2 Culture

- Define role specific requirements to achieve our safety value;
- Develop an OA campaign to embed and enhance the outcomes of robust operational assurance on the incident ground;
- Prioritise safety responsibilities and expected behaviours in all training courses.

- SA is ‘designed-in’ when implementing change decisions; and
- Develop a behavioural safety campaign.

### Theme 3 Control

- Identification of significant hazards and determine the associated risk to SFRS staff, by carrying out the assessment of the risk then identifying and implementing risk control measures required to mitigate the risk;
- Development of an associated method of recording and ensuring defined periodic reviews of assessments within the required timescales;
- Ensuring the SFRS has a holistic approach to the management of risk through the Management of Risk at Operational Incidents framework; and
- Ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable that SA documentation is simplified with the end user in mind.

### Theme 4 Communication and Engagement

- Develop feedback arrangements to inform staff involved in changes following lessons learnt; and
- Develop business partner engagement feedback processes.

### Theme 5 Continuous Improvement

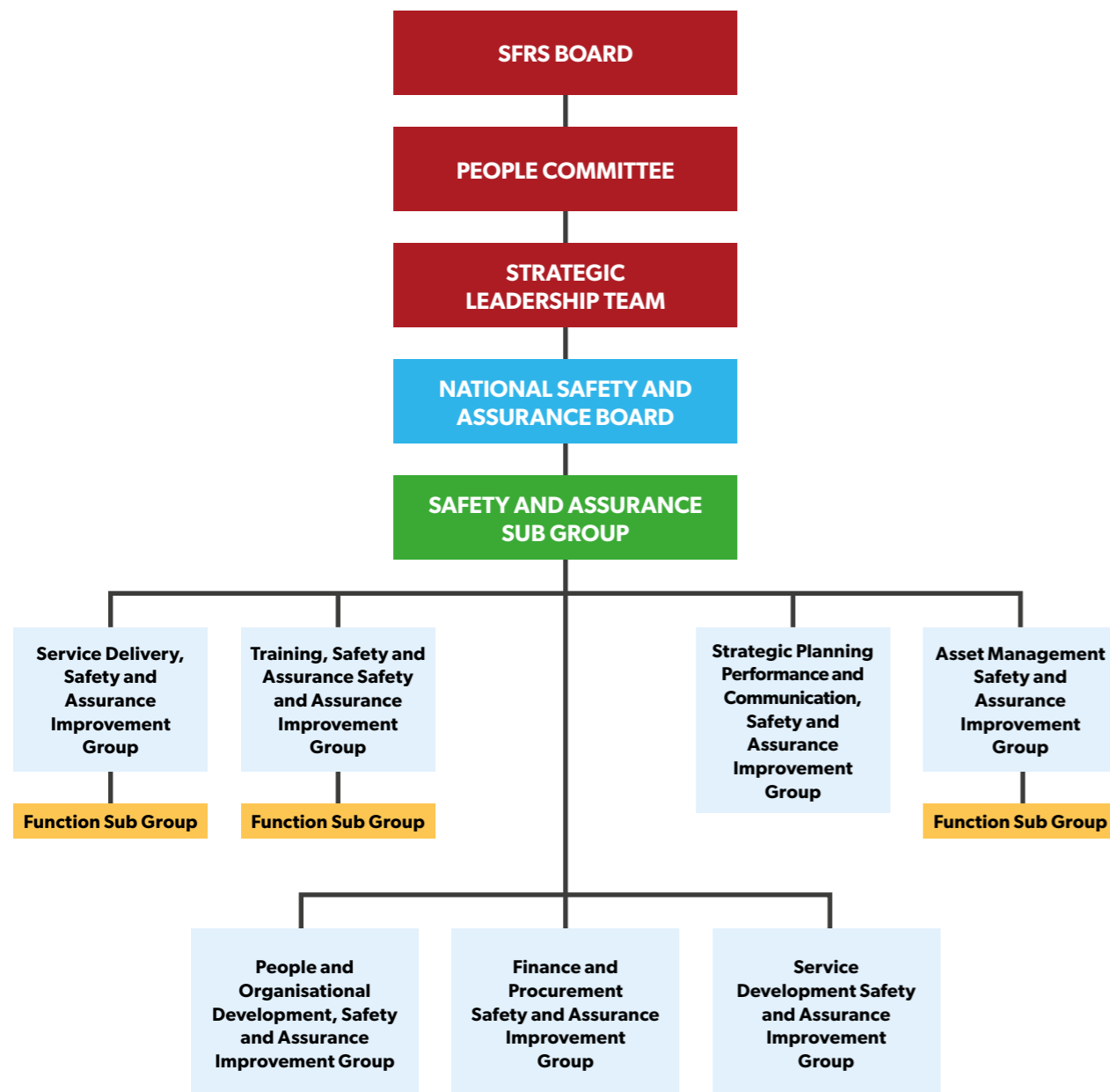
- Promotion of active monitoring through the delivery of SA support visits;
- Review Operational performance through OA processes and make recommendations for improvement where necessary;
- Production of an Annual Health and Safety Performance Report to identify and build on best practice, identify areas of development and inform annual Health and Safety Improvement Plans;
- Development of a lessons learnt programme for Organisational learning;
- Review safety event investigation arrangements and make recommendations for improvement; and
- Develop and implement a programme of topic specific SA audits.

# 6. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

As SA is a corporate governance matter it is integrated into SFRS governance structures, including the Board, sub-committees and the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). Scrutiny occurs annually at the SFRS Board, quarterly at the People Committee (PC) and six monthly at the SLT. Associated risks are also scrutinised at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC).

Subordinate groups of the PC which provide regular scrutiny and direction of Health and Safety across the SFRS are shown in the diagram below. The primary group is the National Safety and Assurance Board (NSAB) which meets 8 weekly and is chaired by the Director of Training, Safety and Assurance (TSA).

## THE NATIONAL SAFETY AND ASSURANCE BOARD (NSAB) WHICH MEETS 8 WEEKLY AND IS CHAIRED BY THE DIRECTOR OF TRAINING, SAFETY AND ASSURANCE



# APPENDIX 1

## Year 1 – 2022-23

- SFRS has a documented programme for SA audits and support visits;
- SFRS will have a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of reporting all health and safety events;
- SFRS has a defined lesson learnt programme which will be implemented following identification of lessons from internal or external sources;
- SFRS has a HSMS and OA system development programme which has been agreed with ICT;
- SFRS will develop SA improvement plans based upon risk priorities and identified areas of improvement;
- SFRS has a defined process for ensuring all risk control documents are reviewed within defined timescales;
- SFRS will continue to engage with employees and their representatives to continue to build our safety culture;
- The SFRS procurement process actively considers Health and Safety from the outset;
- SFRS will have a defined feedback mechanism informing of changes following a significant health and safety event; and
- SFRS will have a documented lesson learnt programme which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of TSA.

## Year 2 – 2023-24

- SFRS has a defined programme for both proactive and reactive audits;
- Hazard perception is measured during the recruitment process;
- SFRS significant event investigations are carried out in a timely manner by proficient investigators;

- The SFRS appraisal process is linked to measurable SA performance;
- SFRS has a defined behavioural safety campaign to reduce events attributed to human error and poor situational awareness and to enhance our safety culture;
- SFRS will review arrangements in place to manage enterprise risk within the context of the operational environment through targeted engagement and support reviews;
- SFRS will have a revised event investigation and OA process which expedites the identification of lessons; and
- SFRS will have defined arrangements for topic specific audits which are informed by lessons learnt, audit outcomes and event trends.

## Year 3 – 2024-25

- SA Improvement Plans are 100% complete at the end of the financial year;
- SFRS will have a ISO 45001 gap analysis carried out by an accredited body;
- SFRS has a documented asset design process in place that actively considers Health and Safety; and
- All SFRS staff are fully trained to allow tasks to be undertaken safely.

## Year 4 – 2025-26

- SFRS HSMS meets the full requirements of ISO 45001.

## Year 5 – 2026-27

- SFRS has a streamline suite of operational documents; and
- SFRS has a HSMS that is certified to ISO 45001.



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