



HM Fire Service Inspectorate

Local Area Inspection Highland



Integrity, Objectivity, and Fairness.

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Inspectorate**

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Acknowledgements

We are grateful to John MacDonald¹ the Local Senior Officer for Highland, and those members of staff who provided us with information, helped us to organise visits, hosted us and contributed constructively to interviews. We also wish to thank the representatives of partner organisations who agreed to be interviewed and gave generously of their time.

The fieldwork for this local area inspection was carried out between May and December 2017.

The Inspection team members were:

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A quality assurance review of this report was provided by Jason Thelwell QFSM, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

All the members of the inspection team contributed to the development of this report and the quality assurance reviewer provided a professional challenge to the contents, assumptions and conclusions made. However, the Chief Inspector takes sole responsibility for the report, its contents and conclusions.

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¹ John MacDonald was succeeded as LSO by Rab Middlemiss in December 2017

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1_The local area inspection programme

The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016 sets out how Scottish Ministers expect the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to operate and how, in part, its effectiveness and efficiency are to be measured. The Framework sets strategic priorities for the Service to achieve, but in a change to the previous Framework, the 2016 Framework devolves responsibility for developing performance measures to the SFRS, albeit subject to Ministerial approval. At the time of carrying out this inspection, targets and measures had not been agreed and published.


The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (the 2005 Act) requires the SFRS to appoint a Local Senior Officer (LSO) for each local authority area in Scotland for the purpose of carrying out its functions in that area. The LSO reports to the Head of Service Delivery for the relevant SFRS Service Delivery Area (SDA) (North, East or West). The SFRS is also required by the 2005 Act to have a Local Fire and Rescue Plan for each local authority area, which sets out the SFRS's priorities and objectives for that local area; why they have been selected; how the SFRS intends to deliver them, and (insofar as is practicable) outcomes by reference to which the SFRS's service delivery in the local authority area can be measured. The fact that the 2005 Act is structured in this way is a clear demonstration of the Scottish Parliament's intention that the SFRS's service delivery should be considered both at the national and local authority levels.

Inspections of SFRS service delivery within local authority areas, that examine the development and delivery of Local Fire and Rescue Plans, help to provide assurance about the way in which the SFRS is meeting this intention. By undertaking inspections of SFRS service delivery within local authority areas, HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI):

- can provide assurance to Scottish Ministers and the public, that the SFRS is making adequate provision for local service delivery, and that local areas have access to specialist national resources, and make suggestions for improvement if necessary;
- can take a detailed look at the nature and quality of service provision, including working with partner organisations within local areas and can draw attention to significant matters and areas of good practice;
- can co-operate with other scrutiny bodies to provide collaborative, 'place-based' scrutiny;
- maintains a good level of awareness of the Service's functions and builds a record of how the Service is functioning; and
- can gather intelligence that may inform, or cause to be undertaken, more strategic, thematic inspections of the SFRS.

Our local area inspections are intended to be closely tied to the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016. For this reason, the findings in our report follow the structure of the Framework:

- **Chapter One** - Protecting Communities: Risk, Prevention and Response
- **Chapter Two** – Evolving Role of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- **Chapter Three** – Governance, Accountability and Performance



In following the structure of the Framework, there will be occasions when our observations could be reported against more than one of the Strategic Priorities contained in the Framework. We aim to ensure that our observations and text are allocated in the most appropriate place or places to give a comprehensive understanding of our findings. But there may be occasions when it will be appropriate to repeat our observations against more than one priority.

During our local area inspections we look at a broad range of matters relevant to fire and rescue service delivery within the area being inspected, including any issues arising from our thematic work carried out in that area; and in our report we give an opinion on the manner in which the SFRS is carrying out its functions.

In our inspections we aim to visit as many service delivery locations as we can, and speak to managers and a range of uniformed and non-uniformed staff. We look at premises and equipment, and view a sample of records to enable us to understand the way in which business within the area is conducted. In this way we aim to cross-reference the SFRS's written plans and procedures, and what we are told about the local area by SFRS managers, with our own observations and discussions with local staff.

We do not, however, carry out our local area inspections as a comprehensive audit. The SFRS has a programme of internal station audits that involve a detailed look at station activity and records, and we do not want to duplicate that work, although we do take these into consideration within our inspection. The sampling methodology that we adopt cannot be guaranteed to identify all potential areas for improvement: we intend that it should be a proportionate activity that provides an overview of the area, comparable with other local area inspections that we carry out.

During our inspection of Highland we visited every fire station in the area, speaking to Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel who either attended on their training night or arranged to meet us during daytime station visits, members of Community Response Units (CRUs) including the unit on the Isle of Muck, and Wholetime duty personnel at Inverness Fire Station. We also met separately with the RDS firefighters based at Inverness. We met with the LSO and SFRS local managers with the following areas of responsibility:

- Prevention and Protection
- Service Delivery
- Training and Employee Development
- Health and Safety
- Fire station supervision

We interviewed community safety staff, Health and Wellbeing staff, support staff, trade union representatives, and Inverness vehicle workshop staff.

We met with representatives of Highland Council, Police Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, NHS Highland, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the voluntary sector and various other Community Planning partners.

To gauge service users' opinion of the SFRS we contacted all 64 Community Councils within Highland, receiving nine completed returns. Each were invited to complete a brief questionnaire which explored the relationship between the Community Council and the SFRS, sought awareness regarding SFRS local activity, and asked about views of service quality and any suggested areas for improvement.

This report is a product of both our direct observation and interviews held with staff and partners of SFRS, and reflects the circumstance at the time of our visits which were undertaken during the period May to early December 2017. The SFRS is continuing to change and evolve, consequently material changes may have occurred since then.

Reference was made during the inspection process, and in writing this report, to the outcomes and recommendations from documents and reports of audit and inspection of the antecedent Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service (HIFRS). These are:

- HIFRS CFO's Public Performance Report 2012/13
- HMFSI Inspection Report on HIFRS 2012
- HIFRS Strategic Assessment on handover to the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service March 2013 by CFO Stewart Edgar
- Best Value and Audit Working Group Report 31 January 2013
- Audit Scotland Best Value Audit of HIFRS 2011/12

A summary of our findings

Key points

- Our overall impression of the SFRS's work in Highland is, in the main positive. The vast majority of staff are very committed to the community and to the purpose, vision and values of the SFRS.

Strategic Priority 1: Performance Measures

- Elected members, Highland Council Officers and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) partners have an excellent relationship with the LSO, his management team and local Station Managers. SFRS staff contribute very effectively to wider community safety outcomes.
- A revised SFRS Local Plan was issued in 2017. It contains little focus on local targets and benchmarking. There are no fire station plans although a five point improvement plan was implemented for each station in 2017/18. Also, appraisals are not carried out for RDS personnel.
- It is evident that there is a positive team culture within the LSO management team, collectively working together to improve local service delivery and there is evidence to suggest a priority and focus on reducing risk to local communities.
- There is use of performance targets, measurement and monitoring. Quarterly performance reports for each fire station are submitted to the LSO management team, though performance management could be improved within fire stations.

Strategic Priority 2: Safety, Wellbeing and Prevention

- Personnel in the majority of fire stations carry out a varied amount of community safety engagement activities, mainly in the form of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs), post domestic incident responses (PDIRs), engagement with various school/community groups and attendance at local events such as galas and fetes, though not all activities are recorded on the SFRS Community Safety Engagement Toolkit (CSET).
- The rate of HFSVs in 2016/17 was 39.9 per 1,000 dwellings (6th highest in Scotland) and is above the Scotland average of 27.5. This is an increase from 31.8 visits per 1,000 dwellings in the previous reporting year.
- Personnel in most RDS fire stations carry out HFSVs outside the summer months, as a high number of staff are employed in seasonal industries such as agriculture and tourism and find it difficult to be released from their primary employment during this time.
- In the majority of fire stations, personnel have a good awareness of vulnerable members of their communities and target their resources in conjunction with partners to increase the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable individuals. In most stations, personnel proactively refer partners by using the vulnerable persons form (AP1). We are pleased to see this proactive approach to community safety, particularly when the majority of firefighters in Highland operate under the RDS, and have a limited amount of time available to carry out these activities.
- The majority of uniformed personnel fully support the focus on prevention within the SFRS.
- Most RDS fire stations are underutilised by local communities, although a number of stations do not have facilities that are suitable for community use due to inadequate provision of toilets, available meeting space, and other welfare facilities.
- We were pleased to observe that British Heart Foundation cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training for local communities is carried out and facilitated by personnel in the majority of fire stations. Training material and equipment is available at all stations.
- SFRS Community Safety Advocates and the Community Firefighter are heavily engaged with partner organisations, and provide a consistent level of support to fire station personnel on community safety engagement.
- There is a good working knowledge of the CSET database by most fire station personnel, who are in the main positive around its use, though personnel should make greater use of the 'activities' recording function.
- Fire safety enforcement (FSE) is undertaken in line with SFRS standards and procedures. As in other LSO areas, there is a lack of easily accessible historical records of enforcement activity pre-dating the creation of SFRS, which has an impact on the provision of enforcement history for premises.
- The SFRS national enforcement framework identifies the type and risk category of premises to be audited and also sets an annual target of audits for each Enforcement Officer. These targets are reduced for the Highland area, due to the extended travel distances involved and are achievable.
- Uniformed FSE officers carry out enforcement work for both Highland and Western Isles, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands (WIOS) LSO areas. There were a number of vacancies at the time of our inspection, which was having a negative impact on performance and the ability to complete planned workloads.

- FSE officers in Highland are consulted on every licence application submitted to Highland Council. We believe that this is not an effective use of resources and that there is the potential to reduce the number of consultations received by the Service.
- Uniformed Enforcement Officers do not respond to operational incidents whilst carrying out this specialist role, which can result in a skills decay in managing operational incidents.

Strategic Priority 3: Response and Resilience - (Response)

- Fire appliances and equipment are generally in good condition though some appliances are dated and showing signs that they are becoming uneconomic to repair, particularly the LDV design vehicles, and will face replacement in the not too distant future. There is a general feeling amongst operational staff we met, that the standard of operational equipment has improved since the formation of the SFRS. Although there was consistent negative comment made regarding the poor quality of fire-ground radios in relation to their transmission range and battery life.
- The standard testing of equipment at most fire stations is by and large satisfactory, although there are variances between stations and some room for improvement. This is particularly important in respect of hydraulic rescue equipment. During the fieldwork stage of our inspection, standard SFRS folders and paperwork for recording the findings of tests were issued to all stations, as a replacement for the legacy HIFRS documents. However, there are no test records for delivery hose and no method in place to identify when delivery hose should be tested.
- Some operational firefighter protective clothing is still in use past its recommended lifespan. In general there is room for improvement regarding record keeping by firefighters of the inspections undertaken of their own Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). In some stations there is little evidence of PPE testing.
- Issues around Information and Communication Technology (ICT) system connectivity at the majority of fire stations causes delays and disruption when accessing training packages and the SFRS intranet. There is a wide variance in the number of computers at fire stations, resulting in the use by some personnel of their own home computers to meet their station management requirements.
- Although of varying ages, most fire station facilities are generally satisfactory, however a number of stations have unsuitable welfare facilities, particularly a lack of toilets, showers and changing facilities for female firefighters.
- The recent outsourcing of facilities management for the repair and maintenance of SFRS properties has resulted in long delays in addressing property repairs and maintenance at some RDS stations, with little scope for local solutions.
- There is a general lack of knowledge among firefighters on how to extract Operational Risk Information (ORI) from the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) installed on appliances. The system for the identification, collection, recording and dissemination of local risk information could be improved, however, the production and revision of plans by centrally based support teams is improving.

- At larger and more protracted incidents such as large scale wildfires, firefighters often experience excessive time at incidents before being relieved by other crews, a lack of sanitary provision, and issues with provision of catering. We suggest the early appointment of a welfare officer at incidents to address these issues.
- There is an under reporting of near misses in general, but particularly from the incident ground. This may be due to a number of factors such as; the current health & safety recording system, a general lack of appreciation of the need to report near misses, and a lack of knowledge of what constitutes a near miss and its importance in accident prevention.

Strategic Priority 4: Response and Resilience - (Resilience)

- Incident and training event debriefs are carried out verbally, training needs are identified and actioned, but no written records are kept.
- There is little evidence of multi-agency structured debriefs taking place, though this may be due to the low incidence of large or complex incidents in the Highland area.
- A number of SFRS senior and middle managers raised concerns around the limited number of flexi duty managers (FDMs) available on call at any given time in the North Service Delivery Area, and the time taken for additional officers to attend larger, protracted incidents. HMFSI recognise the challenges that FDMs have in respect of management of operational incidents in Highland, due to factors such as the road network, geography and rural nature, which the LSO should take cognisance of.

Strategic Priority 5: Partnership

- There are a number of examples of premises sharing in the Highland area, such as; Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) using a number of RDS stations for driver testing, Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) storing equipment in a number of stations and Lochaline station sharing a building with Lochaline Primary School. There is also an innovative partnership project with Highland Council to provide a family centre at Dingwall Fire Station, which will allow communities to access various services seven days a week. However, there is scope for further premises sharing agreements with various stakeholders.
- Partnership working across all partners is well embedded and there is evidence of collaborative working towards joint outcomes. An example is the pilot with NHS Highland regarding a SFRS response to falls in the home.
- Highland CPP has devolved community planning to eight Local Area Committees, of which the SFRS chair two (undertaken by Group Managers). CPP partner agencies have expressed how effective the SFRS are performing in leading the local committees they chair, being a very proactive member at both a local and strategic level within the CPP process and contributing to the development of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP). We welcome and acknowledge the commitment and contribution of SFRS to the CPP and actively involving and empowering local communities.
- Local SFRS personnel are held in high regard by Highland communities.

Strategic Priority 6: Service Transformation

- The majority of firefighters we spoke with would embrace the changing role of a firefighter, particularly around an enhanced medical role, if suitable training was provided.
- Staff in the Inverness vehicle workshop had no input regarding the procurement and design of new Rapid Response Units (RRUs) and associated equipment.
- Firefighters are generally content with the progress of Service transformation, although there is a feeling of an over-abundance of new information, procedures and awareness briefings, with an inability, or time, to process it all. Concern was expressed that important information could be missed.

Strategic Priority 7: Modernising Response

- The Highland LSO is piloting an initiative to allow RDS firefighters who work away from their home station during the day, to book themselves available at other stations which helps towards maintaining appliance availability. HMFSI is encouraged with this initiative.
- A number of elected members and RDS personnel raised the issue of why crews cannot be mobilised to incidents with less than four crew members or cannot combine with personnel at other RDS stations to provide a response with a full crew.

Strategic Priority 8: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

- In 2016/17, the SFRS attended 2,088 false alarms in the Highland area, an increase of 1.7% (36) on the previous year. 73.9% (1,543) of these false alarms are recorded as being unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS).
- The rate of false alarms per 100,000 population for Highland at 889.4 was lower than the overall rate for Scotland of 940.6. Around 58% of all appliance mobilisations in Highland in 2016/17 were to UFAS. Where there is an issue identified in particular premises, it is addressed proactively using the SFRS Unwanted Fire Alarms policy. However the level of UFAS is an issue that the LSO should address. UFAS mobilisations are a problem mainly around the main areas of population such as Inverness, Fort William and Thurso.

Strategic Priority 9: Effective Governance and Performance

- The local fire and rescue plan for Highland follows the general generic structure that the Service has established for these plans and was revised in autumn 2017. While the SFRS's national priorities are incorporated within the plan and are locally focused there is an absence of local benchmarking and specific local targets.
- There is a perception within some partner organisations and elected members, that there is a lack of focus and understanding by SFRS national senior management of specific issues within the Highland area and how they impact service delivery. There is also a feeling that the Highland area is not treated as equitably as other LSO areas in the central belt of Scotland. There is a desire that more governance and control over finance and resources should be delegated to LSOs.
- There are no fire station plans within the Highland LSO area although we are informed there are arrangements to develop a pilot plan in 2018, building on the current five point station improvement plans.

- Quarterly performance reports for each fire station are submitted to the LSO management team and then presented to eight CPP Local Area Committees, with an annual overview to a full council meeting delivered by the LSO.
- There is little evidence of the SFRS career and contribution management process being carried out for RDS staff, other than for a small number of Crew Managers and Watch Managers.

Strategic Priority 10: People

- RDS personnel in general feel very well supported by their supervisory Station Managers, however many are concerned about the high turnover of Station Managers and the lack of continuity this presents.
- There is a disparity in the management span of control for fire stations, compared to other parts of Scotland, with the added difficulty of the geography of the Highland area and distance between stations.
- Daily, there are a large number of RDS appliances that are unavailable to attend incidents, due to a shortage of personnel to complete a full crew. This is particularly an issue during the day when personnel have primary employment which is located outside the agreed response times for their station. However, along with other areas, the LSO is piloting an innovative solution to partly address this issue. We would encourage the LSO to continue to explore alternative options to improve appliance availability.
- RDS and volunteer firefighters form approximately 84% of operational personnel within Highland. A high number of RDS stations have difficulty in recruiting and retaining personnel. The opinion of some elected members, partners and SFRS staff is that entrance standards are a barrier to recruitment and are not suitably aligned to the risks a rural RDS firefighter would be expected to attend. The SFRS has centralised its management of the recruitment process, which has caused local managers frustration with the process and the time taken to recruit. However, a local improvement plan is in place to enhance the recruitment process at a local level.
- RDS personnel expressed a general feeling of being overstretched and unable to meet all of the demands placed upon them by the SFRS, regarding prevention, training and operational response. RDS training nights vary in duration throughout Scotland, between two and three hours, most would welcome an increase in the time available. One outcome of time pressures, combined with poor ICT infrastructure, is that some RDS personnel are unable to fully complete training records within the Personal Development Recording (PDRPro) system, with some personnel completing their records in their own time at home.
- The majority of RDS firefighters think there is an over emphasis on theoretical training and a focus on completing training records, reducing the amount of time for practical training to maintain competence on core skills, which they believe is affecting firefighter safety. HMFSI recognise the challenges and concerns that this workload gives RDS personnel in maintaining their records, and suggest SFRS considers streamlining the software and content of training packages to make them more user-friendly.
- The SFRS training planner is difficult to achieve within the two and a half hours training time available per week for RDS firefighters. There is no flexibility to tailor the training to the risks that personnel expect to encounter at operational incidents.

- The use of a number of District Support Officers to support RDS personnel with training, community safety, administration and other general issues is very positive. However, overall there is a shortage of training staff support locally at stations, though nearing the end of our fieldwork, this situation was improving.
- The delivery and quality of driver training was praised by the majority of personnel. However, there are issues with the availability of initial LGV/HGV, Emergency Response Driving (ERD) and appliance familiarisation courses. A shortage of suitably trained drivers is affecting operational availability of appliances at some fire stations.
- The lack of locally based training facilities in Highland is an issue particularly for RDS firefighters. There are a few suitable local training facilities, such as at Fort William fire station, which has a purpose built Breathing Apparatus (BA) training facility that is unused and a large training area to the rear of the station which is underutilised. Most of the core training courses are delivered at the training centres at Invergordon or Portlethen, south of Aberdeen, with some specialist training provided at other venues throughout Scotland. Some personnel travel long distances to and from training venues, for which no payment is made. The non-payment for travel time is a legacy issue due to there being no nationally agreed terms and conditions for operational firefighters, at the time of our inspection.
- Many RDS firefighters have difficulty with the perceived intimidating culture adopted by some instructing staff at Invergordon Training Centre. Negative behaviour towards attendees is experienced on BA refresher courses, annual refresher training, and trainee firefighter courses. The result is that personnel are apprehensive about attending courses there. We raised this issue with the LSO, who took immediate action to investigate and resolve these issues. Evidence has been presented to HMFSI during the inspection process, to demonstrate how the situation has been addressed and HMFSI are satisfied how this has been resolved and the process put in place.

2_About the area



Figure 1 – Scottish Council Area Boundaries (for full map key see Glossary)

Highland is number 17 on the map in Figure 1 and is the most northerly local authority area of the Scottish mainland. It covers an area of 26,484 km², approximately one third of the land area of Scotland, including some of the most remote and sparsely populated parts of the United Kingdom². It has 4,905 km of coastline, 21% of the Scottish total. It has a border with the local authority areas of Aberdeenshire, Moray, Perth and Kinross and Argyll and Bute. The population of Highland in 2016 was 234,770³; an increase of 0.3% from 234,110 in 2015. The

² Highland Council – Highland Profile https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council_information_performance_and_statistics/165/highland_profile_-_key_facts_and_figures

³ National Records of Scotland, Council Area Profiles - <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/stats-at-a-glance/council-area-profiles>

population of Highland accounts for 4.4% of the population of Scotland and its population is 7th highest out of 32 local authorities in Scotland. Around 34% of the population live in the Inverness area. Other major population centres are Fort William, Nairn, Thurso and Wick.

Highland has a lower proportion of the 16 to 29 age group than Scotland: 14.8% in Highland compared to the Scottish figure of 18.2%, but a higher proportion of people aged 60 and over: 27.9% in Highland and 24.2% in Scotland.

Since 1989, Highland's population has risen overall, in line with Scotland's population which has also risen over this period. The population of Highland is projected to rise to 243,493 by 2037, an increase by 4.5% compared to the population in 2014. This increase is lower than for Scotland as a whole which is projected to increase by 8.8% between 2012 and 2037. Over this 25 year period, the age group that is projected to increase the most in size in Highland is the 75+ age group, which is the same as for Scotland as a whole. The population aged under 16 in Highland is projected to decline by 7.2% over the same 25 year period.

Highland is an area of natural beauty and diverse topography⁴. The natural environment features highly, with areas of special interest, conservation areas and parts of the Cairngorms National Park. The renewable energy sector is a growth area in terms of the local economy, given the availability of extensive natural resources.

The Highland economy features a wide variation of sectors such as; forestry, agriculture, manufacturing, public services, further and higher education, and construction. Tourism and the service sectors that support it feature highly providing a large amount of seasonal employment and income generation.

The number of visitors to Highland has increased in the past few years, due to various attractions, such as the North Coast area 500 scenic driving route, various historic sites, the natural environment and the various outdoor activities that can be enjoyed. The port of Invergordon is also a calling point for a number of cruise liners and in 2017 the number of passengers from these vessels was expected to be in excess of 150,000.

4 SFRRS Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Highland - http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/1235154/highland_local_fire_and_rescue_plan_2017.pdf

Ward No	Ward Name
1	North, West and Central Sutherland
2	Thurso and Northwest Caithness
3	Wick and East Caithness
4	East Sutherland and Edderton
5	Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh
6	Cromarty Firth
7	Tain and Easter Ross
8	Dingwall and Seaforth
9	Black Isle
10	Eilean a' Chèò
11	Caol and Mallaig
12	Aird and Loch Ness
13	Inverness West
14	Inverness Central
15	Inverness Ness-side
16	Inverness Millburn
17	Culloden and Ardersier
18	Nairn and Cawdor
19	Inverness South
20	Badenoch and Strathspey
21	Fort William and Ardnamurchan

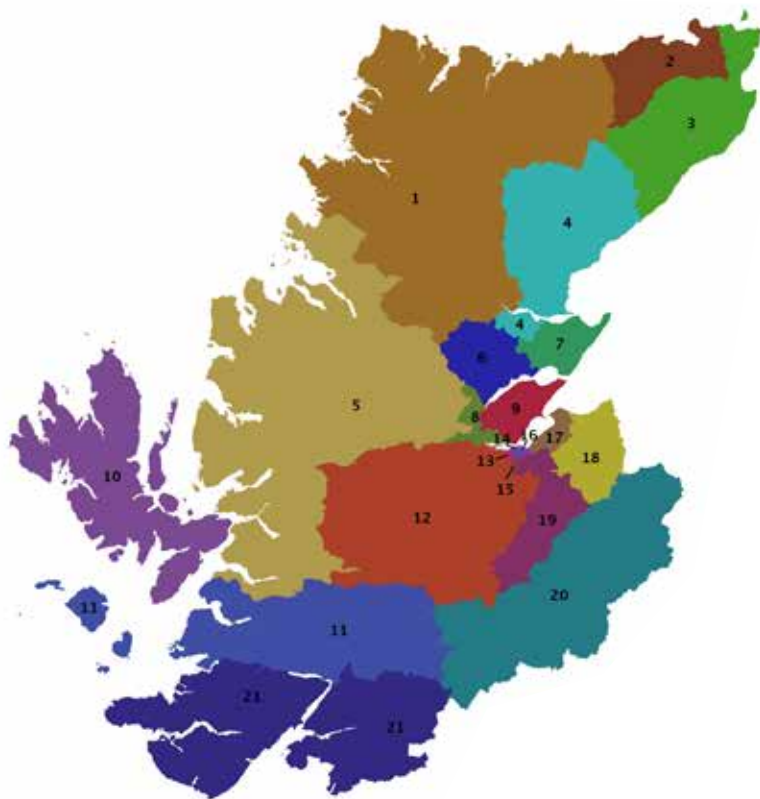


Figure 2 – Highland Council Wards

Highland is organised into 21 Council wards. SFRS service delivery is organised into three areas; Highland North, Highland Central and Highland West, as detailed in appendix A. Management responsibility for each of these areas is delegated to a Group Manager, with a separate Group Manager responsible for the delivery and management of prevention and protection activities in Highland and WIOS.

Highland Council restructured its approach to Community Planning with eight Local Area Committees serving the following local areas: Badenoch and Strathspey, Caithness, Inverness City, Isle of Skye and Rassay, Lochaber, Nairnshire, Ross and Cromarty and Sutherland. The chairs of these committees are split between the SFRS, Police Scotland, NHS Highland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Highland Council.

Scrutiny of SFRS performance is carried out quarterly at Local Area Committees, focusing on local performance and outcomes. The LSO also delivers an annual report relating to performance across Highland at a full meeting of Highland Council.

There are various and wide ranging types of operational risks in the Highland area, such as; domestic properties, transport risks from roads, railways and airports, various commercial and industrial risks, rural risks from forestry and moorland, marine vessels, harbours and ports, the renewable energy sectors and the changes to the socio demographics of the area, particularly the ageing population.

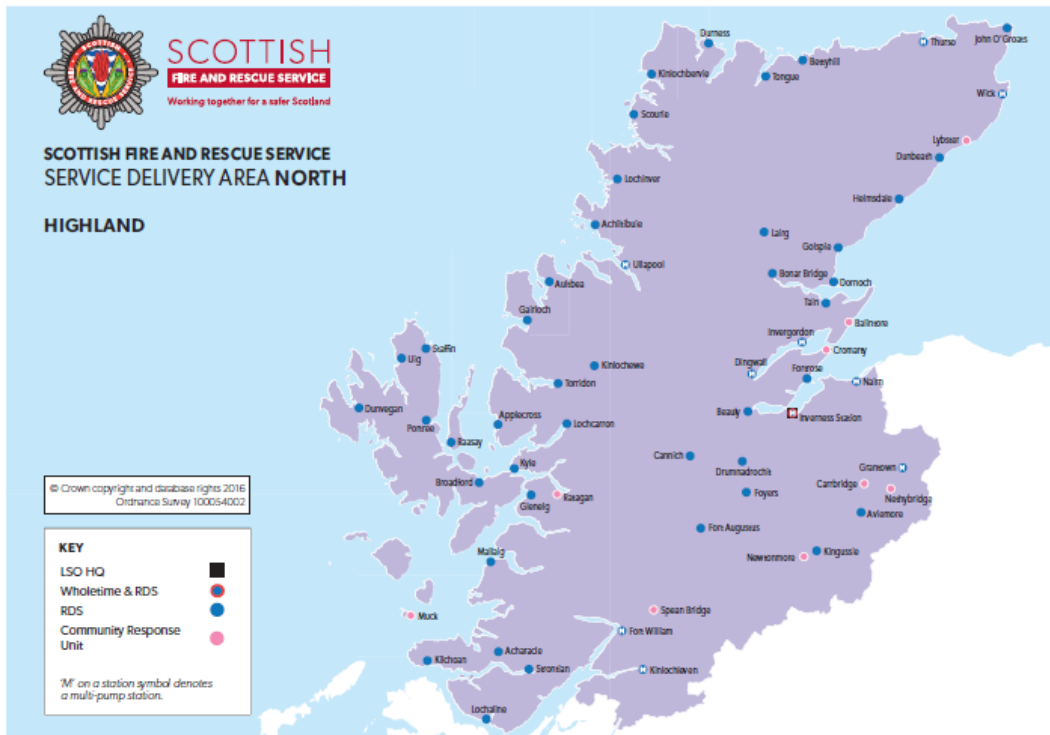


Figure 3 – locations of SFRS Highland Stations (Map courtesy of SFRS)

There are 61 fire stations in Highland, their locations are shown in Figure 3. Of these, 51 stations are crewed by RDS personnel, nine are CRUs and one, Inverness, is crewed by Wholetime and RDS. Groups of stations are managed by 10 Station Managers (SMs) who, along with the Group Managers (GMs), also provide an operational response to incidents, and supervise and support station-based firefighters. There are also additional SMs with the responsibility for 'Prevention and Protection' and 'Training and Employee Development'.

Emergency vehicles. There are 66 pumping appliances in Highland, 17 of which have an enhanced road traffic collision rescue capability. There are also seven vehicles which are configured to respond only to wildfires and road traffic collisions (RTCs). There are 11 specialist appliances (mainly based in Inverness) including; swift water rescue unit, heavy rescue vehicle, aerial ladder platform, command support vehicle, welfare vehicle, wildfire vehicle and a water carrier.

The Service is looking at the potential introduction of smaller vehicles, Rapid Response Units (RRUs), into certain stations within the Highland area. These vehicles would incorporate an ultra-high pressure fire suppression system.

Employees. The SFRS employs 776 staff in the Highland area; comprising of 717 (92%) uniformed firefighters and 59 (8%) support staff. Of the 717 uniformed firefighters, 599 (84%) are RDS or Volunteer firefighters with 72 (10%) Wholetime firefighters based in Inverness with another 46 (6%) based in various locations throughout the Highland area, carrying out various roles. 8% (57) of the uniformed operational staff are female.

Key incident statistics for the Highland area

In 2016/17, Highland area appliances were mobilised to 3,625 incidents⁵, a decrease of 39 from the previous year. Table 1 shows a breakdown of incident type.

Incident type	2015/16	2016/17	Change 2015/16 to 2016/17
Primary fire	377 (10.29%)	378 (10.43%)	0.27% (+1)
Secondary fire	342 (9.33%)	360 (9.93%)	5.27% (+18)
Chimney fire	238 (6.49%)	183 (5.05%)	-23.11% (-55)
Road Traffic Collisions	202 (5.51%)	215 (5.93%)	6.44% (+13)
Other non-fire Incidents	400 (10.92%)	356 (9.82%)	-11% (-44)
False alarm including non-fire false alarms	2,105 (57.45%)	2,133 (58.84%)	1.33% (+28)
Total incidents	3,664	3,625	-1.06% (-39)

Table 1: Incidents recorded in Highland 2015/16 and 2016/17

There were **152 accidental dwelling fire incidents in 2016/17, a 19.7% increase (30) on the previous year**. This is a rate of 130.5 fires per 100,000 dwellings, and is lower than the rate for Scotland as a whole, of 191.3.

In 2016/17 there were 3 fire fatalities, a decrease of 50% (3) on the previous year. Two of these fatalities occurred within dwellings, a decrease of 60% (3) on the previous year's dwelling fire fatalities. Overall this represents 6.82% of the total fire fatalities in Scotland recorded in 2016/17.

In 2016/17 there were 64 non-fatal fire casualties⁶, an increase of 16.36% (9) on the previous year. Forty three occurred within dwellings, an increase of 22.9% (8) on the previous year's dwelling non-fatal fire casualties. This is 5.4% of the total non-fatal fire casualties in Scotland recorded in 2016/17.

In 2016/17, the SFRS attended 215 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) in the Highland area, an increase of 6% (13) on the previous year. This is a rate of 91.6 RTCs attended per 100,000 population, and is the highest in any local authority area and is more than double the rate for Scotland of 45.4.

⁵ Published incident statistics from Fire and Rescue Statistics in Scotland 2015-16 & 2016-17, <http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/about-us/fire-and-rescue-statistics.aspx>

⁶ This includes casualties recorded as precautionary check.

In 2016/17, the SFRS attended **571 non fire incidents⁷, a decrease of 5.15% (31) on the previous year.** This is 4.6% of the total non-fire incidents in Scotland recorded in 2016/17. 6.3% of the incidents in Highland (36) were responses to flooding and 22% (126) effecting entry/assisting other agencies. The biggest change is the **significant reduction of 59% (52) in flooding incidents from the previous year.**

There were **360 secondary fires⁸ in 2016/17, an increase of 5% (18) on the previous year. 67% (242) involved grassland, 20% (72) involved refuse or bins.**

In 2016/17, the SFRS attended **2,088 fire false alarms in the Highland area, an increase of 1.7% (36) on the previous year. 73.9% (1,543) of these false alarms are recorded as being unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS).** The rate of false alarms per 100,000 population for Highland at 889.4 was lower than the overall rate for Scotland of 940.6.

Responding to UFAS incidents represents 58.84% of all incidents attended by the SFRS in the Highland area in 2016/17.

The rate **of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) in 2016/17 was 39.9 (6th highest in Scotland) per 1,000 dwellings and is above the Scotland average of 27.5,** increasing from 31.8 visits per 1,000 dwellings in the previous reporting year.

⁷ Non fire incidents include; RTCs, flooding, rescues from water, Hazardous Materials incidents.

⁸ Most secondary fires are outdoor fires. These include grassland and refuse fires (unless they involve casualties or rescues, property loss, or are attended by five or more appliances).

3 Our findings

As mentioned earlier in this report, we structure our findings to be in line with the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016. The Framework sets the strategic direction for fire and rescue. Contained within the introduction to the Framework and its chapters, are ten strategic priorities for the SFRS. These priorities are outcome focused and are set within the context of the Scottish Government's purpose. To aid the reader, we have replicated the text of those strategic priorities in our report.

3.1 Performance Measures

Strategic Priority 1

The SFRS must, in discussion with the Scottish Government, specify appropriate performance measures to support its Strategic Plan, for the delivery of outcomes relating to the strategic priorities and objectives set out in this Framework.

At the time of our inspection, performance measures had not been agreed at a national level within the SFRS. Therefore for our assessment on how the Service is performing within the Highland area, we were unable to make detailed comment around performance data.

The local Fire and Rescue Plan and Local Outcome Improvement Plan

The 2005 Act requires the SFRS to publish a delivery plan for the local authority area. At the start of our inspection, the 2014/2017 plan for the Highland Council area was current, but was being reviewed as part of a Service-wide review of local plans.

We have consistently commented previously on the original local plans. There are similarities in the way the 32 local plans are structured, with the content similar in many of them. Whilst easing the burden of plan production for the Service, if the framework is not appropriately customised, then they may be of less relevance at the local level. The Highland Plan, which we inspected against, follows the general format that the Service had established for these plans and there is an absence of specific detailed local targets. Those contained within the Plan are derived from the SFRS national targets. There is also an absence of benchmarking.

A new Local and Fire and Rescue Plan for Highland was published in December 2017, after consultation with Highland Council and other stakeholders.

The SFRS Local Plan refers to how its priorities align with its strategic aims, and equality outcomes as well as the Scottish Government's Purpose/National Outcomes and the Fire and Rescue Framework 2016.

The SFRS Local Plan 2017 sets priorities, actions and outcomes for the Highland area and links to the SFRS's strategic direction. The plan has six priorities, which contribute to the Service's purpose, mission, values and priorities.

In addition to the SFRS Local Plan for Highland, there is a sub-set of Multi-Ward Operational Plans for council wards. The information contained in these plans is a breakdown of SFRS local activity and this enables detailed local scrutiny. Ward performance reports are published quarterly and presented to the eight CPP Local Area Committees for scrutiny. These Area Committee performance reports also provide benchmarking against the total Highland area figures.

Nationally, the SFRS sets out a planning structure which defines how it expects its strategic aims will be achieved. Commencing with the SFRS Strategic Plan, describing its strategic aims, from which the statutory Local Fire and Rescue Plans are derived. The Local Plans are further developed into Local Operating Plans which describe local actions and targets. Ultimately these documents are used to generate Station Plans containing station actions and targets, which in turn should be used to populate the individual personal objectives for the staff based at fire stations.

What we have observed in Highland, as in other areas of the country, is a partial picture. As previously mentioned, station plans had not been produced at the time of inspection, although a pilot was planned for 2018 to build on the current five point station improvement plans. We therefore think the planning structure within the Highland area is incomplete and would benefit from further development. We were informed that the LSO is working towards a comprehensive planning and performance system where station and individual contributions to the Service's overall performance can be linked and demonstrated.

The agencies which form the Highland CPP work together in the area to deliver outcomes aligned to nationally agreed priorities, and the principles of public service reform.

A Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) is created at local authority level and sets out outcomes for the CPP. The previous Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) for Highland has been replaced by a ten year LOIP, 'The Highland Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-2027'(HOIP).

The HOIP contains four cross cutting themes and five core outcomes, supported by a delivery plan which will help to achieve the core outcomes and report on performance. The SFRS assists in delivering all of the outcomes via the CPP process and through its core work, particularly around the Community Safety and Resilience outcome.

The LSO and his management team were extensively involved in the planning and consultation process of the HOIP, which aligned with the review of the local fire and rescue plan. Highland Council officials, elected members and other CPP partners were very positive about the high level of involvement from the LSO and his staff in developing this plan.

3.2 Protecting Communities: Risk, Prevention and Response

Strategic Priority 2: Safety, Wellbeing and Prevention

The SFRS should fully contribute to improving the safety and wellbeing of Scotland's communities and must continue to build on the successful focus on prevention. It should ensure that there is a clear process for working with partners to identify the risks faced by communities and individuals so that the SFRS can target activity on a risk-based approach and where it can most effectively improve safety and contribute to addressing inequalities within and between communities.

Prevention and Protection

'Prevention and Protection' is delivered across two LSO areas – Highland, and WIOS, as a single entity under a single planning regime. There is a Group Manager responsible for Prevention and Protection, and that person reports to both relevant LSOs. Reporting to the Group Manager is one Station Manager with responsibility for Prevention and Protection across the LSO area of Highland (there is a separate Station Manager for WIOS), They are supported by a uniformed Local Area Liaison Officer (LALO). Delivery is carried out by four uniformed fire safety enforcement officers, five Full Time Equivalent (FTE) community safety advocates and one Community Firefighter.

Community Safety Engagement

In addition to the Community Safety Engagement (CSE) work of operational personnel, CSE is also provided by community safety advocates who are based in Thurso and Dornoch fire stations, with a Community Firefighter based in Inverness. They are not co-located with Council or other partner agencies community safety staff, although they do engage routinely with Highland Council and other stakeholders. In addition to providing support to station-based personnel, the Community Safety Advocates and Community Firefighter also undertake the delivery of enhanced visits to vulnerable members of the community.

Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) are undertaken by Wholetime personnel, Community Safety Advocates, the Community Firefighter, RDS and CRU personnel. There is an annual target for the completion of visits, depending on duty system. Wholetime personnel have a higher target than RDS, A number of RDS personnel were unaware of what the target is for their station.

Increasing numbers of HFSVs have been delivered in the Highland area over the last three years. A total of 4,651 visits were undertaken in 2016-17, an increase of 980 (around 26%) from the previous year.

HFSVs 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017			
High	Medium	Low	Total
1860 (40%)	1481 (32%)	1310 (28%)	4651

Table 2: HFSVs carried out in Highland 2016/17

Most fire station personnel have a good awareness of the vulnerable members of their community and focus their efforts on persons at highest risk. Although we were advised that there is a focus of delivering these visits to high risk households, the majority of visits are to medium and low risk, particularly within rural areas, this may be due to a limited number of high risk households. A breakdown is shown in table 2.

There is evidence of station personnel referring vulnerable individuals to other agencies and also internally via the SFRS adult protection referral process, where issues of concern are raised during HFSVs. Local fire stations and CSAs also receive referrals from various health and social care partners, to allow their engagement activities to be focused on the individuals referred. An ongoing training programme by partner agencies provides guidance to SFRS personnel on how to carry out alcohol brief interventions whilst carrying out HFSVs, to reduce the risk of harm through alcohol abuse and refer to the relevant agency. HMFSI is encouraged by this approach and that there is also evidence of fire station personnel carrying out HFSVs in neighbouring fire station areas when there are issues with staff availability.

The SFRS CSET database is used to schedule, record and report on all HFSVs and community engagement activities. The majority of operational staff have a good working knowledge of CSET and are positive about its use. Though personnel in the majority of fire stations are only recording HFSVs and Post Domestic Incident Response (PDIR) activity. Participation in various community events is not routinely recorded.

Overall, it is evident that the majority of operational personnel are supportive of the ethos of prevention and increasing the safety and wellbeing of their communities. Even though RDS personnel have a limited availability, this ethos is particularly strong.

In other areas of Community Safety, the Service is working in partnership with other emergency responders and partner agencies through the Highland Road Safety Group to reduce road traffic incidents, particularly those involving young drivers through initiatives such as Driving Ambition. Driving Ambition is a half-day, young driver road safety course aimed at students who are 16 years plus and have started driving or are interested in driving.

Deliberate fires can include those as a result of fire related antisocial behaviour (ASB) or the management of moorland by burning (muirburn). The Service undertakes an analysis of the overall incidents and the periods in which they occur, identifying any seasonal variations, e.g. muirburning season and holiday periods. As a result, the Service has introduced a number of fire reduction strategies and thematic action plans targeting different types of incidents. Working in partnership with other agencies, the Service is working to reduce these incidents. Examples include the promotion of fire reduction through the Safer Highland ASB Group, and the promotion of best practice and partnership working through the Scottish Wildfire Forum (SWF).

Fire Safety Enforcement

There are four Enforcement Officers (EOs) based at Inverness Fire Station. The enforcement staff, as with the CSE staff, are considered a joint LSO area resource. Therefore the staff will carry out enforcement work in the LSO area and also within the WIOS LSO area. FSE staff numbers are less than planned in the most up to date SFRS review of resources. The LSO area has no Auditing Officers, (these are non-uniformed staff involved in the auditing of non-domestic premises and exist in some other LSO areas).

A major focus of the SFRS national enforcement guidelines for its staff is the audit of premises that present a high risk to life safety. In addition to the SFRS national enforcement framework which identifies the type and risk category of premises that should be audited, there is also a national personal target for enforcement staff of 132 annual audits to achieve. Due to the extended travel distances in the Highland area it is difficult to achieve this target and therefore EOs are set a smaller target.

Records of fire safety audits undertaken are maintained using the Service's electronic system Prevention and Protection Enforcement Database (PPED). This national database is intended to provide complete and consistent FSE data across Scotland. The historic records of previous audits conducted in the Highland area were not migrated over to the new system.

During 2012/13 support was given to the former HIFRS by fire safety enforcement officers from other legacy Scottish FRSs in order to deliver an enforcement programme. Some of the enforcement documentation from the support work was not transferred across and this has had a consequent impact on the enforcement work for the premises involved.

We reviewed some FSE case file communication with duty holders and found the standard of work to be similar to that seen elsewhere.

EOs in Highland are consulted on every licence application submitted to the Highland Council. This generates a high workload and is not always the approach used in other LSO areas we have visited. While staff think it is useful work to undertake, this is not a good use of resources. We think there is potential to reduce the amount of low-level licensing consultations received by the Service.

The SFRS has a number of operational staff across Scotland who fulfil similar specialist roles, such as fire safety enforcement and community fire safety staff mentioned above. Whilst these officers are carrying out these specialist roles they don't, in the main, respond to emergency incidents. Because these officers are no longer carrying out a response function they are subject to operational skills decay. If the officer then later wished to return to an operational role, perhaps on promotion, SFRS would have to facilitate refresher training for the individual. We believe, as we have already highlighted above from our conversations with personnel, that there is a general desire among staff to maintain their own operational skills. For those staff in specialist roles we think that this could be facilitated by continuing to use these particular staff, where and when appropriate, in an operational role. An added benefit, if the staff were also given a pager when they were out carrying out their specialist role, would be the ability to augment the number of available RDS crew in the area, potentially maintaining appliance availability. We would encourage the LSO to explore this issue further.

Strategic Priority 3: Response and Resilience - Response

The SFRS should work with other public sector partners to evolve a holistic and dynamic process of identification, evaluation and assessment of community risk and Best Value in order to prioritise and target its use of resources to ensure an appropriate response to incidents across Scotland and support improved outcomes for communities. As part of this approach, the SFRS should promote optimal command, control, communication and tri-service co-operation in response to incidents.

The location of fire stations and, in the main, the resources in the Highland area pre-dates the formation of the SFRS and has been formulated on the previous systems used to define these resources and their locations. These systems were either through the Integrated Risk Management Plan of Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service or the previously withdrawn recommended UK standards of fire cover.

During the existence of the legacy HIFRS, a large number of previously volunteer-crewed fire stations were upgraded to RDS. The move from volunteer to RDS presented challenges for a number of personnel with regard to availability, recruitment and training.

Eighty-four percent of firefighters in the Highland area are employed as either RDS or volunteer firefighters, this is more than double the Scottish percentage of 36.6%. This, coupled with the rural nature and geography of the area, presents particular challenges to operational service delivery.


Appliances

The fire appliances in the Highland area are of varying ages and type. These range from full size and midi pumping appliances, to small LDV vans predominantly located within CRUs. Table 3 gives an overview.

Type of Vehicle	Number of Vehicles
Pumping Appliance (full size and midi)	66 (17 with Rescue capability)
Specialist Appliances	11 (e.g. heavy rescue vehicle, aerial ladder platform)
Community Response Vehicles	7 (wildfire and with limited rescue capability)
Total blue light appliances	84

Table 3 - blue light appliances in Highland area

Almost 50% of appliances are over ten years old, however they are generally in serviceable condition though some appliances, particularly LDV vans, are dated and showing signs that they are becoming uneconomic to repair and will face replacement in the not too distant future. LDV vans also have insufficient space for equipment stowage. A comprehensive Thematic Review on Fleet arrangements within the whole of the SFRS is being undertaken by HMFSI and will be published separately.



An issue that gives fire station staff concern is when appliances are taken away for routine maintenance or repair. Replacement spare appliances are noticeably older and generally not in such good condition. Often, equipment cannot be securely stowed, due to locker configuration and is left off the appliance. This issue is compounded by the slowing down of the rate of renewal of appliances throughout Scotland. Where a replacement appliance has different driving controls or layout, the appliance drivers are required to receive a familiarisation session delivered by a SFRS driving instructor to comply with the SFRS Management of Road Risk policy. It is the opinion of HMFSI that this places an unnecessary burden on drivers and driver training staff and in most cases is unwarranted.

Of the 11 specialist appliances, the majority are based in Inverness including; swift water rescue unit and boat, heavy rescue vehicle, aerial ladder platform, command support vehicle, welfare vehicle, wildfire vehicle and a water carrier. With these specialist vehicles being based at one central location (at the only fire station with Wholetime staff in the Highland area), this places a great demand on personnel with regard to maintaining competence in their use, and availability. HMFSI would question whether all these specialist appliances are at their optimum location. We suggest that the LSO explores the possibility of some specialist resources being relocated to RDS fire stations.

At Fort William fire station, personnel have been trained to provide a water rescue capability, but have still to receive a dedicated water rescue vehicle and boat, to allow them to be declared as an available specialist resource. Better planning and communications between SFRS Response and Resilience and Training and Employee Development Directorates could have reduced this delay.

Workshops and Appliance Maintenance

Fire appliances from Highland, Western Isles and Orkney Islands are maintained at the SFRS vehicle workshop in Inverness. There is a further SFRS vehicle workshop located in Dundee which serves Shetland Islands and other areas in the North SDA.

Part of our fieldwork involved a visit to the Inverness workshop and discussions with workshop staff. They raised a number of issues, such as; concerns around an ageing fleet which requires a high level of maintenance, lack of consultation and information about new appliances, which are expected to be coming to some fire stations in the Highland area, a shortage of equipment maintenance technicians, and a lack of senior fleet management support for the workshop supervisor.

A comprehensive Thematic Review on Fleet Arrangements within the whole of the SFRS by HMFSI is being undertaken and will be published separately.

Equipment

There was a general feeling that the standard of operational equipment had improved since the formation of the SFRS, although there were some issues around the introduction of new equipment and also existing equipment, highlighted on the next page.

New Holmatro Hydraulic Rescue Equipment was being introduced at a number of fire stations at the time of our fieldwork, although there was a delay in bringing it into operational use due to delays in providing training on its use. This enhancement of rescue equipment has been widely welcomed by operational personnel.

Safe Working at Height (SWAH) equipment has been introduced at the majority of stations throughout the Highland area. As part of our fieldwork we discussed with crews the operational use of this safety critical equipment and found that there is a lack of knowledge and confidence in its use. Records of standard testing for each component of the equipment were not available on station which we consider poses a risk. We would recommend that suitable records for each component part are maintained on each station.

A common issue raised during the fieldwork was the opinion that certain models of fire-ground radios are not fit for purpose. The majority of personnel referred to poor transmission range, poor battery life and the need to rely on using personal mobile phones to communicate at incidents. This issue does not apply to the newer radios supplied with BA sets, although there was comment about the restriction in use due to being permanently connected to the BA set.

Some fire stations do not have a Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) and there is a need to mobilise another appliance with a TIC if one is required at an operational incident, and therefore there is a subsequent delay in bringing the incident to a conclusion. We also found that appliance-mounted battery chargers were not fitted in all appliances allocated a TIC.


The introduction of a new BA set across the SFRS was completed in 2016. This required all operational firefighters to receive initial training in its use and thereafter a programme of periodic refresher training. During our fieldwork we tested the knowledge of operational personnel on the new BA set and found a good level of knowledge and understanding.

As part of the BA replacement program, a rationalisation of spare BA cylinders and compressors for cylinder charging was carried out Scotland wide. This has had a negative impact at a number of fire stations where there is a need to travel further to replenish their cylinders or rely on delivery of fully charged replacements by SFRS district support staff. This has reduced the time available or opportunity to carry out BA training on station, although the LSO management team has introduced a procedure to reduce the impact.

During our fieldwork, we sampled a number of BA log books that are used to record the routine periodic testing and maintenance, condition and use of individual BA sets, and found that, in the main, these were being completed regularly. However, HMFSI were concerned about the lack of recording of monthly tests in some fire stations. This was raised with station-based managers during our fieldwork. A number of RDS personnel claimed that the removal of BA compressors from some stations and the lack of spare cylinders on station, created difficulties in carrying out the monthly tests.

Standard tests form an important part of ensuring that the equipment is safe to use, is functioning correctly, and is ready to be deployed at an incident. The periodic testing of equipment at most fire stations is satisfactory and up to date, although there are variances in the standard of recording across the Highland stations and some room for improvement. This is particularly important in respect of equipment such as hydraulic rescue equipment.

During the fieldwork stage of the inspection, standard SFRS folders and documents used to record the findings of tests were issued by the SFRS to all fire stations, as a replacement to the legacy HIFRS documents. However, the new SFRS documents do not include test records for delivery hose and there is no method in place to identify when delivery hose should be tested, when it was last tested or at which station.



On discussion with station personnel, it was recognised, that in certain circumstances hose could be moved from station to station and miss the testing process. It is therefore possible for hose to go for considerable periods without undergoing a standard test. HMFSI believe that there is a risk to the Service in respect to the management of hose and this should be addressed.

RDS personnel have limited time available to carry out all the maintenance and training demands placed upon them, and this includes carrying out standard tests.

As part of our inspection, we asked crews to demonstrate their knowledge and skill on SWAH equipment and BA. We found that although personnel at all fire stations have received training in the use of SWAH equipment, in general there was a lack of familiarity in its use, due to time constraints on training. We encourage crews to devote time to familiarise themselves with this equipment on a more regular basis.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is laundered and repaired centrally by a technician at the Asset Resource Centre (ARC) in Inverness. A short term issue arose about the length of time taken for repairs and/or cleaning due to sickness and the subsequent requirement to send clothing to other parts of Scotland for cleaning and repair.

Some PPE is in use past its recommended lifespan because of a general lack of new structural fire kit within SFRS. A large number of individual firefighter PPE log-books, which are used to record routine inspection, maintenance and cleaning, were not being kept up to date. Virtually all log-books we sampled, had no record of the asset/serial number of individual elements of PPE, therefore not providing an accurate record.

A number of firefighters highlighted the unsuitability of structural fire kit for wildfires/RTCs and the lack of availability of non-structural clothing in the Highland area, compared to other parts of Scotland.

Procurement

The ARC in Inverness carries out the stores function for the Highland and WIOS LSO areas, holding a number of PPE, operational equipment and consumable items in stock. Items are despatched to fire stations using either a SFRS driver or for more rural areas, by courier. This system works well and was the system used by the legacy HIFRS.

All stores items are ordered via an SFRS electronic system, Tech One. Operational firefighters find this system not user friendly, and difficult to navigate and search. One consequence is that procurement staff at the ARC require to amend and review requests from fire stations, creating a duplication of effort and greatly increasing their workload and the time taken to issue stock.

Property

Fire stations are of varying ages and design, with around 16 constructed since 1990. There are a number of older stations which are in good condition, but also a number which don't meet the needs of a modern fire station and also are unsuitable for community use. A number of stations have unsuitable welfare facilities, particularly a lack of toilets, showers and changing

facilities for female firefighters. We had previously raised the issue of a lack of toilets at fire stations with the Service during an earlier inspection of support to the Highland area and temporary measures were introduced.

On-station training facilities are limited in a number of fire stations, with no training area and/or a tower for ladder and working at height practice. However where this applies, there are arrangements in place for use of facilities at neighbouring stations. There is a modern gas-fired BA training facility at Fort William fire station which could be used for hot compartment fire behaviour training but it has not been in use for a number of years. It could be used for local BA training, removing the need for personnel to travel long distances to other training venues.

The SFRS has recently outsourced facilities management for routine property repairs and maintenance. Long delays in addressing fire station repairs are common, to the detriment of the fabric of the building in some instances. We also observed repairs where we feel that the work undertaken was of poor quality.

The majority of fire stations in Highland have poor internet connectivity and very slow broadband speeds. The SFRS has been aware of the issues related to its IT systems and connectivity for some time and let a contract to improve its wide area network. From our discussions with fire station personnel, this contract appears to have had limited success. Poor connectivity causes delays when accessing online training packages and other SFRS systems. Some RDS personnel access SFRS systems from their homes in their own time, where broadband connectivity and speed are superior. The connectivity situation is compounded by the variance in the availability of computers at single appliance RDS stations, where generally there are only two computers between ten personnel. Though two pump RDS stations and the Wholetime station at Inverness have a greater number.

During our fieldwork, we discussed with SFRS personnel and partners the potential to utilise other ICT facilities within the community e.g. schools. We feel this solution could provide benefits to both parties involved and should be explored further by the SFRS.

There was no evidence of business continuity plans for fire stations in the Highland area, however we understand it is intended to commence the development of plans once relevant staff have been trained. We suggest that these plans are completed as soon as possible to reduce the risk to the organisation of serious disruption to service delivery from issues such as flooding, fire damage, loss of utilities etc. All stations had previously had a fire risk assessment carried out by an external consultant. In the future, SFRS property managers will carry out the fire risk assessment process for the SFRS property portfolio. We observed that the recording of weekly fire alarm tests was not carried out in every station where a system was installed. Where relevant, we would suggest that appropriate routine testing and recording should be carried out.

Whilst carrying out our fieldwork, we found that a number of fire station postal addresses on the SFRS website were incorrect. In some cases, the address provided was far from the actual location of the fire station. This should be remedied to allow the public to locate and access community fire stations.

Operational Preparedness and Intelligence

The SFRS has a statutory duty to obtain information which may be required by its personnel in carrying out their operational role. When information is created, either by collection as part of that duty or through the writing of an operational policy, such as a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for an incident type, it is available to firefighters through the MDT built into the fire appliance.

There is no standard system for updating the premises specific information available via the MDT. We also found evidence of legacy service SOPs on the MDT. We regard this as a risk to the organisation, particularly where these SOPs may be in conflict with any SFRS SOP issued subsequently.

In some cases, a paper copy of risk information is carried on the appliance and used in preference to the MDT. However, there are instances where paper copies have also not been updated to reflect changes to premises. Not every appliance has the same paper-based information available and also, this information is not secure.

RDS firefighters often have local knowledge of premises and it is less of a concern to them that local information is not on the central MDT system or that paper copies are up to date. However, that presupposes that local firefighters with personal knowledge will be in attendance at an incident; this will not always be the case. There is also a lack of risk information held for neighbouring LSO areas.

We found that there was a lack of knowledge amongst a number of operational personnel on how to extract information from MDTs. We examined some of the information available on this system such as mapping, operational procedures and tactical information plans (TIPs) and found examples of information that requires updating, with some items, such as operational procedure documents, dating back to the legacy HIFRS. The use of out of date information could impact on firefighter safety, for example where SOPs have been updated and a new SFRS procedure exists.

There is evidence of crews reviewing and updating some TIPs and also carrying out operational assurance visits to care homes and high rise buildings, although the system for identification, collection, recording and dissemination of local risk information could be improved. The time taken for TIPs to be updated and the data then uploaded onto the MDTs, by centrally based support teams, has improved.

It is our view that the ORI system is incomplete and unsatisfactory within the area.

A national project commenced in May 2014 to implement a single SFRS solution to support the provision of ORI to MDTs in appliances to improve the provision of risk information and contribute to firefighter safety. This project is ongoing and a number of pilot programmes are in place elsewhere in Scotland.

HMFSI is currently carrying out a thematic inspection of ORI, where issues will be examined in more detail.

Fire station personnel believe that the amount of information distributed by the SFRS to personnel, in the form of procedures, urgent instructions, awareness briefings and other communications is overwhelming. The majority of personnel feel unable to process it all,

with concern expressed by some personnel that potentially safety critical information may be missed. RDS personnel in particular have restricted time available on their weekly training night and accordingly have limited time to process and acknowledge having read information. A suggestion from staff is that there should be some sort of filter, either centrally or at LSO area level, so that only information relevant to each fire station is distributed. We would welcome this as a pragmatic solution.

Welfare

At larger and more protracted incidents such as large scale wildfires firefighters often experience, excessive time at incidents before being relieved by other crews, lack of sanitary provision and a lack of catering provision. The arrangements that the SFRS has in place for welfare at incidents in the Highland area could be improved.

Health and Safety

Health and safety reporting is carried out using the RIVO Safeguard system. There has been an increase in the number of accident and injury incidents to 36 in 2017 from 33 in 2016. Near-miss incidents recorded on the RIVO system have decreased⁹ from 20 to 7 in the last reporting year.


We found a general lack of understanding by station personnel of the need to report near misses and a lack of knowledge of what constitutes a near miss and their importance in accident prevention and promoting a positive safety culture. Near-miss reporting is described by the Health and Safety Executive as a very important way of identifying problem areas. During our fieldwork we discussed this issue with station staff, explaining the rationale and importance of near miss reporting in supporting firefighter safety.

We were informed that monthly health and safety inspections were being carried out at fire stations, but could not access records to confirm this on all occasions. Performance reporting of health and safety events to the LSO is carried out, although it is acknowledged by some personnel that outcomes from events could be more widely shared to improve awareness.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) place requirements on the SFRS, as an employer, to control substances that are hazardous to health. Substances can take many forms and include: chemicals, products containing chemicals, fumes and dusts. In order to comply with the regulations a risk assessment must be carried out.

A number of fire stations we visited had a COSHH folder containing details of the substances found at the station, although there were others who did not. We found generally that COSHH records are not regularly reviewed and maintained and that staff had not received awareness training. We suggest that the LSO ensures that each station has an up to date readily available COSHH folder and that training is carried out and recorded.

⁹ Near-miss reporting criteria recently changed and some event types, such as failure of a BA set during periodic testing, are no longer considered a near-miss event



Earlier in this report, we referred to the SFRS's programme of fire station audits. These audits are part of the Service's arrangements for operational assurance. The SFRS has a central team whose focus is operational assurance, though local managers also undertake audits, depending on organisational need. Audits can be either routine or thematic, concentrating on a particular subject area.

There is a performance reporting framework to report on the outcome of fire station audits. We reviewed the content of a limited sample of routine audit reports for stations we visited. The reports provided a varying level of detail and offered, to an extent, outline action plans to remedy any noted deficiencies. The sample audits we reviewed were all completed by the supervisory officer responsible for the station. We would suggest that the LSO examines whether it would be possible to introduce a peer review system where audits are carried out by officers other than those responsible for the particular station.

Strategic Priority 4: Response and Resilience - Resilience

The SFRS should support effective multi-agency emergency planning and response arrangements including contributing fully to the work of Regional and Local Resilience Partnerships in assessing risk; and preparing, planning for, responding to, and recovering from major and catastrophic incidents and threats. When working with other responders, the SFRS should play a key role in building community resilience and protecting both Scottish and UK critical infrastructure assets.

We were advised that incident debriefs take place mainly in a form of verbal 'hot' debriefs. No records are kept of learning points or training needs arising from these debriefs, though we were advised that any issues raised are addressed in an appropriate manner. We suggest that any training needs or learning points arising from incidents should be recorded and more widely disseminated.

There is little evidence of SFRS or multi-agency structured debriefs taking place, though this may be due to the low incidence of larger, more complex incidents, occurring in the Highland area.

The LSO and local FDMs have an established relationship with Highland Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) and routinely attend its meetings throughout the year. Highland LRP is part of the North of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership (NSRRP). Specialist support is provided where required by a Station Manager and two non-uniformed Civil Contingencies Officers (CCOs) within the North SDA who have responsibility for arrangements around emergency and special event planning throughout Highland and other LSO areas.

There is concern by some FDMs around the number of officers available on call at any given time in the North SDA and the time taken for additional officers to attend larger, more protracted incidents. It is recognised however, that these larger, more protracted incidents, particularly in the Highland area, occur infrequently and that in most instances, the level of supervisory support for operational crews at incidents is sufficient. The specific geography, road networks and rural nature of the Highland area are all factors that have to be taken into account.

Specialist Resources

The SFRS concluded a national review of specialist equipment in early 2015 with proposed changes to the distribution of some specialist resources nationally. The SFRS's policy on access to specialist resources is to maintain a geographical spread intended to reflect varying risk rather than by operational or local authority area. This means that if a particular resource is required at an incident, it could be requested from neighbouring areas were it not available locally. This approach seems to us to be appropriate.

There are a number of specialist resources within the Highland area, the majority are based at Inverness Fire Station, including swift water rescue, a heavy rescue unit, a high reach appliance and an incident command unit. The number of specialist resources at this station presents a challenge for operational firefighters to maintain competence in all areas. Fort William fire station has been identified as an additional location for swift water rescue capability. Staff at Fort William have been trained and are maintaining their competence, although at the time of our fieldwork, are not yet a declared resource and are still awaiting delivery of a dedicated water rescue vehicle and boat, which is explored in more detail earlier in this report.

There are a number of FDMs in the Highland area who perform the role of National Interagency Liaison Officer (NILO). Police Scotland and other Category 1 responders highlighted the effectiveness of this role in providing advice and guidance surrounding multi-agency emergency planning and emergency incidents.

Strategic Priority 5: Partnership

Community planning and partnership working with other services and communities should be embedded throughout the SFRS. Building on its existing Engagement Strategy, the SFRS should proactively seek collaborative opportunities and innovative ways of working in partnership with other blue light services/key stakeholders to improve outcomes for communities and should ensure effective stakeholder engagement in its approach to all its work including partnership working.

As a core Community Planning Partner, the SFRS is contributing to the work of the Highland CPP, in achieving the outcomes of both the HOIP and SFRS strategic priorities, in areas other than just fire related incidents. Partnership working across all partners is well embedded and there is evidence of collaborative working towards joint outcomes. However, we found little evidence of co-location between partners, which we feel would further enhance partnership working between stakeholders.

One good example highlighted during our fieldwork of collaborative and innovative partnership working, was the Uninjured Fallers Response pilot in the Caithness area. This pilot programme is run in conjunction with NHS Highland, to assist elderly vulnerable persons who have had a fall in their home, are uninjured, but need assistance to be able to get up from the floor and resume normal activities. Personnel from Thurso and Wick fire stations were participants in the pilot and received specialist training from NHS Highland. The evaluation of the outcomes of this pilot was not available at the time of writing this report.

Highland CPP has devolved community planning to eight Local Area Committees, of which the SFRS chair two (undertaken by Group Managers). During our fieldwork, CPP partner agencies

expressed how very effective the SFRS is at leading the committees it chairs and described the SFRS as being a very proactive member at all levels within the Highland CPP process. This was also evidenced by positive comments from Community Council questionnaires. From this and our discussions with various stakeholders, it is clear that local SFRS personnel are held in high regard by Highland communities.

As part of the Scottish Government's vision to improve outcomes for individuals who experience cardiac arrest, the British Heart Foundation (BHF) has provided cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) equipment and training guidance for use by local communities. The equipment is stored in local fire stations. SFRS personnel from a number of fire stations have delivered training to local communities, although the limited availability of RDS staff to carry out this training is an issue. Whilst we recognise the availability constraints upon RDS staff, we would encourage station personnel to promote the BHF resource, as it is designed to be a self-directed training resource and therefore shouldn't require a large time input from RDS personnel.

While many RDS fire stations are utilised by members of local communities, there are a number that do not have the facilities or space, to enable community use. Additionally, there are often more suitable and available local community amenities, such as village halls. There are a number of examples of premises sharing in the Highland area, such as the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) using a number of RDS stations for driver testing, Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) storing equipment in a number of stations and Lochaline fire station sharing a building with Lochaline Primary School. However, we feel that there is scope for further premises sharing agreements, particularly at some of the larger RDS stations, where these arrangements will have the potential to help drive further efficiencies and savings, and overall provide a better service to the public.

3.3_Evolving Role of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Strategic Priority 6: Service Transformation

The SFRS should continue to ensure that the benefits of Fire Reform are fully realised, evidenced and tracked, and it should explore through Service redesign new and innovative ways in which it can improve the safety and wellbeing of communities throughout Scotland by building on the traditional roles carried out by the Service.

Operational personnel and representative bodies we spoke to are generally content with the progress of Service transformation and embracing a wider public safety agenda. It is clear that the majority would embrace the changing role of a firefighter, particularly around carrying out an enhanced medical role and community safety interventions, if suitable training, equipment and welfare support was provided. RDS firefighters are particularly enthusiastic, although expressed concern as to how training would be delivered, when they often struggle to keep up with their existing training needs and therefore had no excess capacity within their weekly 2½ hour training night.

To gauge the views of staff, we discussed a few potential options with RDS personnel on how to deliver training more effectively. A majority of personnel who expressed a view are in favour of carrying out theoretical training outwith their training night if they have suitable access to relevant SFRS ICT systems and are paid for their time.

We also discussed with station personnel the potential introduction of Rapid Response Units (RRUs). When combined with a selective paging system, which allows a specific number of available qualified crew to be paged, rather than all available crew members, these are expected to allow a more flexible crewing model to be employed, which should increase the availability of emergency vehicles throughout the Highland area.

Part of the new equipment which is to be deployed with the RRUs is an ultra-high pressure fire suppression system. This system uses water and incorporates an abrasive additive to pierce a hole in the boundary of a room or building creating the ability to then apply a water mist at high pressure to suppress the fire and reduce the temperature within the compartment before firefighters enter the room. As well as enhancing firefighter safety, this system requires fewer firefighters to operate it and therefore in areas of limited firefighter availability may offer benefits. As the system also operates with less water there is less contaminated water run-off which is a benefit to the environment.

Within certain parts of the Highland area, there are District Support Officers, aligned to the role of Watch Manager, whose role is to provide support to personnel in a cluster of RDS stations. The District Support Officers are themselves RDS members who, work around an extra 20 hours per week, in a flexible manner to suit the needs of stations. Station staff we spoke to were very positive about the assistance these individuals provide, particularly around training. It is suggested that this model of RDS support is expanded to cover all Highland stations.

Vehicle workshop staff in Inverness expressed concern that they had no consultation, input or information about the proposed SFRS transformation process and in particular the procurement and design of the new RRUs and associated equipment. These staff will in future be responsible for maintaining these vehicles and equipment and some of them have experience of designing, building and maintaining bespoke emergency vehicles in rural areas, which we feel would have been beneficial to the RRU design and procurement process.

As in some other areas of Scotland, volunteer firefighters contribute to the delivery of fire and rescue service response in the Highland area. Throughout Scotland, dependent on the risk within the area, volunteer firefighters respond to different incident types, although there is a plan to develop a consistent approach nationally. Seven CRUs are staffed by volunteer firefighters. We found these units to be well motivated, who have good availability and provide a response to specific incident types, such as RTCs and wildfires. We were advised of issues around the non-mobilisation of CRU crews to a limited number of incidents, particularly but not exclusively wildfires, where this would not have been the case in the legacy service. Although a fire service response was made to these incidents, that response would also have previously included a CRU crew. The non-mobilisation was primarily due to a failure to adhere to pre-defined mobilising plans for these locations within Operations Control in Dundee; a review of these plans was undertaken by the LSO management team in conjunction with Operations Control managers. We recognise the valuable contribution that volunteer firefighters make in enhancing the safety and wellbeing of their local communities.

Strategic Priority 7: Modernising Response

The SFRS should develop and implement dynamic, innovative and sustainable operating systems throughout Scotland which are fit for purpose and meet local needs (covering both the Retained Duty System and Wholetime firefighter work patterns).

We observed a number of different approaches to service delivery, such as the use of small and midi-sized appliances, the ability of RDS firefighters to provide cover at different stations and other innovative solutions to provide a service in rural communities.

The SFRS operates a minimum crewing level of four firefighters for an appliance to be mobilised to an incident. Shortages of RDS staff means that appliances in Highland can be unavailable to be mobilised to incidents, particularly during the day. SFRS managers monitor and report to the scrutiny committee station availability. Elected members and SFRS staff questioned why appliances cannot respond to certain types of incident with less than four crew, or combine with personnel from another nearby station to ensure a minimum of four firefighters are available, allowing at least one appliance to respond.

This is an issue that we have previously highlighted in other Local Area Inspection reports and expressed our view that protocols for station availability and subsequent appliance response are unnecessarily restrictive and we have recommended that the SFRS introduces a greater flexibility in the way it crews appliances. We have witnessed elsewhere the reputational damage, to local fire stations that can occur from the community and primary employers, when an appliance is unable to mobilise to a local incident.

Due to an inability to recruit RDS firefighters, Lochinver fire station was unavailable to respond to emergency incidents for around three years. However, the three crew members that remained, maintained their competence by training with a neighbouring station. The LSO and his management team took an approach of increasing the catchment area for recruitment and subsequent response time to the station, when mobilised to emergency incidents. This had the result of increasing the number of people who could potentially apply to join the crew, allowing the appliance to be available for emergency incidents. This approach, along with a targeted recruitment campaign was very successful, with a crew of eight now in place. Although some work still requires to be done at the station, primarily related to the provision of qualified drivers, we suggest that this approach could be utilised in similar circumstances at other stations and we commend the enthusiasm and dedication of the local crew and the LSO management team in achieving this very positive outcome.

The Highland LSO team are one of a few LSO areas in Scotland who are piloting one of the many solutions to increasing appliance availability. This is the practice of 'importing'. This is where an RDS firefighter is working in primary employment outwith the response time of their 'home' station (for example in a nearby town) and they are allowed to respond to incidents and train with the local RDS station whilst working in that area. When back at home, perhaps at the weekend, they will respond to incidents with their original 'home' station. This may allow an appliance which was unavailable at certain times due to insufficient crew, to be available. We would encourage this practice to be more widely used in Highland and other LSO areas.

Shortly before the commencement of our fieldwork SFRS introduced a common duty system for Wholetime staff, the five watch duty system. This system had been in use in the former Strathclyde legacy service area but was new to the Highland area and all other areas in

Scotland, where the four watch pattern was used. We spoke to members of two of the new groups at Inverness who felt that the introduction of the new duty system had been badly organised, with poor communication, a lack of guidance and engagement beforehand. We were advised that some staff were only told their new shift pattern two days before it started.

Within the five watch duty system firefighters work a recurring shift pattern of two 10-hour days, two 14-hour nights followed by four days off. Each fire station's establishment is based on the service's crewing level policy, with resilience built in for absences. In practice this means that there are occasions where there are more than the required personnel on duty and other times where there are not enough. The five watch duty system is designed to predict as far as practicable, where those surpluses and deficiencies will occur, and realign resources accordingly.

SFRS's five watch duty system is based on a 10-week, continually repeating, shift cycle. In the 10-week cycle a typical firefighter would have seven periods of working two 10-hour days, two 14-hour nights followed by four days off. At the end of the seven periods, the 10-week cycle is completed by firefighters being rostered off duty for 18 days in a row. All annual leave is allocated within these 18-day break periods.

Within the basic pattern of the five watch duty system, firefighters are not able to provide their full annual quota of contractual hours. Therefore, they can be required to work a number of additional shifts to make up their additional hours. Each firefighter is therefore given a number of additional days (usually 12) per annum (designated as 'Orange' Days) where they may be called in to cover for organisational shortfalls. There are also a few days during the standard shift pattern (up to four) where, due to there being surplus available, staff may be told not to report for work. Where this is the case, staff are provided with a minimum of 48-hours' notice.

To ensure the duty system and Wholetime firefighter availability operates effectively, SFRS has a dedicated national central staffing section, based in Johnstone. Central staffing is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient Wholetime firefighters on duty at a station to crew appliances. This is done by the management of leave, controlled use of overtime, the use of the additional (Orange) days and, in other less isolated areas, the use of detached duty staff. This requires affected 'detached' personnel to temporarily work from a station other than their home station to make up the crewing shortfall. Inverness is the only Wholetime station within Highland and therefore the process of detachment cannot be used. There are usually 13 personnel per watch at Inverness. The establishment has an additional buffer of one to help allow management of numbers.

The view of the personnel we spoke to was that the central staffing process is not working efficiently. There was a lack of response to enquiries, e.g. firefighters asking for leave and not getting a reply until the date had passed, delays in being advised of Orange days and staff being brought in on overtime where there was no shortfall in numbers. The general view was that Inverness should be considered an isolated resource on its own and be granted the flexibility for managers to manage its own availability.

Strategic Priority 8: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

SFRS should develop a new approach to reducing unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS) demand and road risk. This approach should involve the SFRS Board setting stretching targets to support the Service's Strategic Plan in relation to this priority.

As mentioned previously in this report, in 2016/17 the SFRS attended 2,088 false alarms in the Highland area, an increase of 36 (1.7%) on the previous year. 1,543 (73.9%) of these false alarms are recorded as being unwanted fire alarm signals. A UFAS is an alarm of fire sent from equipment which, on investigation, was not caused by an emergency situation in non-domestic premises.

The rate of false alarms per 100,000 population for Highland at 889.4 was lower than the overall rate for Scotland of 940.6, however around 59% of all appliance mobilisations in 2016/17 were to UFAS calls and is an issue that the LSO should address. UFAS mobilisations are, as expected, mainly located around the main areas of population such as Inverness, Fort William and Thurso.

Managers actively monitor UFAS activity; where there is an issue identified it is addressed proactively using the SFRS Unwanted Fire Alarms policy. The majority of UFAS incidents occur in health premises followed by hotels and then education premises.

The Inspectorate carried out an inspection of the Service's policy on managing automatic fire signals in 2014¹⁰. In the report we recommended that a consistent pre-determined attendance¹¹ (PDA) should be planned for calls originating from automatic fire alarms (AFAs), moving away from a 'one size fits all' approach. We also believe that there should be more discussion on the risks and benefits of different levels of response, matching PDAs to the specific risk of premises, rather than using a generic assessment.

The SFRS UFAS policy allows the LSO flexibility to determine property specific PDAs, based on risk levels. Although this policy has not yet been rolled out in the North SDA, we would encourage the LSO to explore making use of the SFRS's existing Control Operating Procedure to amend PDAs to specific premises. We have seen the benefit in other LSO areas of appointing an officer to act as a 'champion' for the reduction of UFAS calls. We understand that an officer within the Highland area has been given that role, and we see this as a positive way forward. We would encourage the LSO to monitor performance and effect of this action in order to provide evidence of any improvement.

A reduction in UFAS calls will allow more resources to be directed towards areas such as community safety engagement and operational training. This will allow a focus on other priorities such as the reduction in dwelling fires and casualties and the maintenance of operational competence. In addition, a reduction in the activity levels will improve the safety of fire crews and members of the public by reducing the number of blue light mobilisations throughout the Highland area. Also, responding to a high level of UFAS calls can have a detrimental impact on the primary employers of RDS personnel, causing disruption to their business, which may in turn reduce an employer's willingness to release staff to become firefighters.

10 <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00486519.pdf>

11 Pre-determined Attendance: SFRS computerised control systems automatically nominate how many fire appliances are mobilised when a fire call is received, based on Service policy on the nature of the call and the nature of the premises involved.

3.4_Governance, Accountability and Performance

Strategic Priority 9: Effective Governance and Performance

The SFRS should ensure it has an effective approach to performance management to support robust scrutiny of the Service at national and local levels. This approach should be regularly reviewed and evaluated in pursuit of continuous improvement. The SFRS should also collect, produce and analyse data and other intelligence to promote the safety and wellbeing of communities, support operational efficiency and performance improvements (including its partnership contributions) and enable effective public reporting of performance.

Local scrutiny arrangements

Highland Council receives regular submissions and performance data from the Highland LSO's team. Highland Council scrutiny arrangements for fire and rescue issues in the Highland area were reviewed and restructured in 2017.

SFRS performance data is now submitted twice yearly to each of the eight Local Area Committees, with an annual report submitted to a full meeting of Highland Council. This arrangement seems to work well, with the annual report providing a higher level strategic overview and the local quarterly submission allowing more detailed scrutiny and focus on local issues and outcomes, with the availability of locally based SFRS managers to provide context and detail as required.

We were only able to attend the one full Council meeting during our fieldwork, although we were provided with copies of performance data created to inform scrutiny. We looked at performance data provided to the Local Area Committees covering quarter 2 of 2017/2018¹². Comparison data was also contained for the four previous years, broken down into quarters. Although there was benchmarking of district performance against previous years and against the overall Highland area, there was no benchmarking, against similar areas in either the North SDA or other districts within the Highland area and no local targets set to promote performance improvement.

We would encourage the LSO to reassess the local performance reporting framework and, if possible, provide specific targets to assist in performance improvement, to assist in reducing local community risks. The SFRS's national targets are incorporated within the local fire and rescue plan but are not specific or locally focused.

As part of the SFRS's suite of planning documents, Station Plans are used to demonstrate how the aims of the organisation are delivered locally through relevant actions and targets. We have seen in other areas of Scotland local awareness and 'station ownership' of plans by prominently displaying the plans on station noticeboards. In Highland, we found limited evidence of awareness amongst station personnel of the Highland local fire and rescue plan and no evidence of developed Station Plans. However, stations were provided with a five point improvement plan based on their annual station audit, to give focus to local performance improvement. There are however plans to pilot station plans in the Highland LSO area in 2018.

¹² https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/3885/lochaber_committee/attachment/72573

From our discussions with the Council Chief Executive, Convener and elected members, a very positive picture was generated about the level of service delivery from the SFRS and the high level of positive engagement, support and assurance from the LSO. The Council is very satisfied with the performance reporting mechanism, level of detail provided to elected members and the level of consultation offered by SFRS on its plans and was fully involved in contributing to the development of the new SFRS local plan. The SFRS was also heavily involved as a key partner in the development of the 2017 to 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan¹³.

There is a perception within some partner organisations and elected members, that there is a lack of focus and understanding by SFRS national senior management of specific issues within the Highland area and how they impact service delivery. There is also a feeling that Highland is not treated as equitably as LSO areas in the central belt of Scotland. There was also a desire that more governance and control over finance and resources, should be delegated to the LSO. The HMFSI recognises that there are challenges in addressing concerns of using a 'one size fits all' approach when devising and implementing policies, in a national service.

Strategic Priority 10: People

The SFRS should aim to be an employer of choice – maximising the effectiveness of its approach to workforce planning; promoting the safety, health and wellbeing of all staff; and being a learning organisation with opportunities for all. The SFRS should also seek to be an organisation that is more representative of the people and communities of Scotland that it serves.

Recruitment and Retention

Eighty-four percent of operational personnel in Highland are employed as RDS or volunteer firefighters. A high number of RDS and volunteer stations have difficulty in recruiting and retaining personnel. The opinion of some elected members, partners and SFRS staff is that entrance standards for RDS firefighters are not aligned to the risks a rural RDS firefighter would be expected to attend or the equipment they may use, for example a 13.5m ladder is not carried on every appliance in the Highland area. The recruitment standards do not take into account the restricted amount of persons living in some rural areas. Together, these factors reduce the number of people who can apply for the role of a firefighter and create a barrier to recruitment. We would encourage the SFRS to explore the possibility of introducing flexibility into its recruitment policy for RDS personnel.

A high number of RDS personnel we spoke to expressed frustration over the time taken from application, to an offer of appointment as a firefighter. This often takes up to 12 months. Once accepted into the SFRS, new trainees require to attend two separate two week courses, within the first year. This poses a difficulty for a number of trainees as this commitment uses up all their annual leave from their primary employment and also places a burden on their primary employer. We found evidence of a number of applicants/trainees who had left the service due to these issues.

¹³ http://www.highlandcpp.org.uk/uploads/9/5/2/0/95206114/hoip_v6_cpp_board_final_no_photo-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf

The SFRS has recently centralised its management of RDS recruitment. Although local managers are involved at the interview stage where possible, the change has caused frustration for local managers with both the process and the time taken to recruit. However, a local improvement plan is in place to improve the recruitment process at a local level.

Availability

In 2016/17, the number of days lost due to sickness absence for operational staff in the Highland area was 3,758, this represented 7.3% of the Scottish figure of 51,503.5. The Human Resources Advisor for the Highland LSO area has no major concerns about staff absence.

We found that the availability of RDS-crewed appliances varied. Most stations have very good availability at night time and weekends, with a number of stations experiencing difficulties remaining available during weekdays. Recruitment and retention issues mentioned above are a factor, though daytime appliance availability is more closely linked to general societal changes where people no longer work within their local community, or travel further afield, due to a lack of local primary employment in their area. However, this is not the case for every station and some have very good availability which is to be commended.

Unavailability of RDS-crewed appliances is a Service-wide issue and the SFRS is well sighted on the matter. A review of the RDS was commissioned in May 2014, the current national Service Transformation project is also aiming to address some of the outcomes of this review, particularly around the appointment of full time crew managers to provide support to RDS stations. It is strongly suggested these outcomes are progressed in order to meet the ever increasing challenges of maintaining availability and operational cover within the more remote areas of the Service.

We have already mentioned elsewhere in this report the practice of 'importing' and the positive effect that this has on appliance availability during the daytime and the solution put in place at Lochinver to ensure that this appliance was available. We encourage the LSO and his management team to continue a flexible approach, to improve appliance availability.

An electronic availability system, Gartan, is used by the SFRS to record RDS individual availability and this then informs appliance availability. The availability of RDS personnel and appliances is scrutinised and monitored locally at station level by each Watch Manager and the relevant Station/Group Manager where appropriate. Appliance availability also forms part of the performance reporting through the scrutiny arrangements.

Generally speaking, RDS firefighters are contracted to provide either 120 hours availability, for a 100% contract or 90 hours for a 75% contract. These contracts restrict the ability to recruit crew who cannot offer as much as 90 or 120 hours a week. A person who can offer less than these hours, might be a vital resource if they included a week day, day time availability for example. We are aware that 50% contracts are in use in other areas of Scotland and would encourage the SFRS and the LSO to continue to adopt a flexible approach to contracted hours, as we view this as a pragmatic solution to improve appliance availability in some locations.

On a number of station visits, we were advised there was a frustration and conflict when trying to maintain availability of the appliance, against the Service's rules on taking leave. RDS staff might need a morning or afternoon off, but are required by the Service to take a whole day's

leave. This has resulted in a vehicle being 'off the run', or with a depleted crew when the individual could be able to respond but is unable to do so due to the leave policy.

The contribution that primary employers make to the provision of RDS staff, by releasing their employees, often goes unrecognised. It is suggested that the LSO explores options on how to express recognition of this commitment by employers and also identifying the benefits to employers of having the knowledge and skills of a RDS firefighter, as part of their workforce. This may increase the number of employers willing to release employees to work as a RDS firefighter.

Appraisal

While personal appraisals are carried out for Wholetime operational personnel and support staff, we found little evidence of appraisals being carried out for RDS personnel.

Learning and Development

The duration of the training night for RDS stations in Highland is 2½ hours. There is inconsistency throughout Scotland, with RDS personnel in some areas contracted to a 2 hour period and in other areas to 3 hours. This is due to legacy FRS arrangements and the SFRS is currently in negotiations to harmonise terms and conditions of firefighters nationally. The majority of RDS personnel expressed a general feeling of being overstretched and unable to meet the demands placed upon them by the SFRS, regarding prevention, training and operational response in the timeframe allocated.

Training for firefighters is designed to be a blended approach of lecture or self-directed study, and practical 'hands-on' experiential learning. Part of this blended approach is delivered using the Learning Content Management System (LCMS) which is an online learning resource for firefighters. The system contains multi-media learning modules covering the skills based on the Maintenance Phase Development Planner (MPDP). The majority of firefighters we spoke to stated that the MPDP was difficult to keep up with, and they were always in a position of trying to catch-up with what was planned. This is exacerbated following staff absence due to leave or sickness. Each subject has a series of e-learning tools, case studies, interactive packages, and assessments to support learning. This training is recorded using the PDRPro system. PDRPro is an electronic system used by both Wholetime and RDS firefighters to record training and learning development, both from formal training and from continuous development obtained during incidents.

Effective use of LCMS and PDRPro systems, rely on a suitable ICT infrastructure, both in provision of computers and adequate broadband connections. A large number of fire stations that we visited had insufficient numbers of computers and poor broadband speeds. This, along with restriction on time on their training night, means some RDS personnel complete their PDRPro records at home in their own time and unpaid. During our visits, we discussed with RDS personnel if they would be willing to complete theoretical training and training records at home in their own time, if paid by the Service. The majority responded positively to this suggestion and believed it would free up more time for 'hands-on' practical training.

There is also the opinion that LCMS and PDRPro had been designed for Wholetime firefighters and were not suitable for RDS personnel. We share some of the views around training and are undertaking a separate thematic inspection of RDS training. In addition to the constraints of

time a number of RDS personnel also said that some of the LCMS modules were excessively long, containing too much detail on some subjects. There was also the opinion that the assessment process, which forms part of the modules, was not suitable and provided very little constructive feedback on performance.

The majority of firefighters we spoke to expressed concerns on what they considered an over emphasis on theoretical training and a focus on completing training records, reducing the amount of time for practical training to maintain competence on core skills, which they believe is affecting firefighter safety. In discussion with personnel it was clear that in a number of stations, staff carry out elements of the MPDP that are not suitable for the type of risks that they would attend. Examples are training on airport, railway or high rise incidents, where those were not a local risk. We suggest that training for each station is focused on core skills and for incident types they are likely to attend.


Practical training takes place both on and off station depending on the facilities available. A number of RDS crewed stations have limited facilities for practical training and personnel utilise nearby stations where appropriate. Off station training also takes place regularly, sometimes by arrangement with external organisations, using locally available vacant premises or geographic features such as rivers, where training scenarios can be set up.

While there is a SFRS training centre in the Highland area, at Invergordon, the shortage of locally based training facilities in Highland is an issue, particularly for RDS firefighters and some facilities are underutilised or unused. For example, Fort William fire station has a purpose built, gas fired BA training facility which is unused and a large training area to the rear of the station which is underutilised. Most of the core training courses are delivered at either Invergordon or Portlethen (south of Aberdeen), training centres, with some specialist training provided at other venues throughout Scotland. This results in some personnel travelling long distances to and from training venues, for which no payment is made. This is a legacy, issue due to no nationally agreed terms and conditions for firefighters.

A number of RDS personnel would prefer if more training courses were carried out at weekends. A number of recent trainees suggested that part of the trainee firefighter Task and Task Management 2 week course, could be delivered over a number of weekends. As mentioned previously in this report, this would have less impact on their primary employment and annual leave entitlement. There was also concern raised around some training courses being cancelled at short notice, after time off had been agreed with their employers, who had already made arrangements for replacement holiday cover. As a consequence those RDS affected were still required to take leave that they no longer needed. Understandably circumstances may make it difficult not to postpone courses however we believe that the impact of cancelling a course should be fully considered before doing so.

Wholetime personnel based at Inverness fire station find it difficult to maintain their specialist skills, particularly water rescue, due to the inability to book appliances unavailable, as they have to remain available to respond to incidents where they may require to utilise their specialist skills.

Training support provided to RDS personnel by training officers, was inconsistent throughout the area. However, as we neared the end of our fieldwork, we saw that this situation was improving with the appointment of a number of Crew Managers to fill long term vacancies.



District Support Officers also provide a restricted amount of training support to RDS personnel. We suggest that the LSO should work with his colleagues within TED to ensure that local training support at RDS stations continues to improve.

Personnel at the majority of RDS stations have concerns about the culture at Invergordon training centre. They expressed concern around the attitude of some instructors, which was not conducive to a positive learning environment, with some firefighters feeling this behaviour amounted to intimidation. Concerns were raised around delivery of all courses at this venue, but particular reference was made to BA refresher courses, annual refresher training, and trainee firefighter Task and Task Management initial courses.

RDS firefighters are apprehensive about attending BA refresher courses and the assessment process, with many experiencing a lack of positive instruction to help remedy gaps in skills and knowledge before the assessment. We were also informed by a number of recent attendees on the Task and Task Management courses, that in their opinion, the behaviour of some instructors was unacceptable, causing a number of trainees to resign from their course. These are serious concerns, and behaviours which, we believe, do not conform to the SFRS's declared values of 'Teamwork' and 'Respect'. We raised our serious concerns with the LSO and his management team during our fieldwork, who took immediate action to investigate these issues. Evidence has been presented to HMFSI during the inspection process to demonstrate how the situation has been addressed and HMFSI are satisfied how this has been resolved and the process put in place.

TED staff in the Highland area provide support to operational personnel in both the Highland and WIOS LSO areas. A combination of Watch Managers and Crew Managers deliver national courses and provide support to local RDS personnel. Local TED staff find it difficult addressing the competing demands of two LSO areas and delivering national courses on behalf of the TED Directorate.

At the time of our fieldwork, TED staff were five instructors under strength. Staff expressed the feeling that there was not enough staff to manage workloads, that they feel stretched and under pressure and that there is a lack of resilience within the team. A large percentage of their workload involves delivering national courses on behalf of the TED Directorate. Staff numbers may be a reason for the lack of visibility of TED staff at some RDS stations and the short notice cancellation of courses.

TED staff also raised concerns about a shortage of specialist qualifications and experience of instructors to deliver specialist courses such as water rescue, fire behaviour, and road traffic collision. This places a burden on those instructors who hold certain specialist qualifications and experience of delivering specialist courses. There is also no succession plans in place to replace personnel who are retiring in the near future, or who may transfer or gain promotion.

National training courses are planned using a central TED Directorate scheduler. Local TED staff find that the scheduler is not user friendly and does not meet their needs. They have created their own spreadsheet to plan training in the Highland and WIOS area, which is duplication of effort. They have fed back the issues around the national scheduler to their line managers. Also, the lack of a central database detailing what qualifications personnel hold and revalidation dates, hinder the planning process.

TED staff and operational firefighters, raised concerns around the lack of realistic BA training for firefighters, particularly training only being carried out at ambient temperatures, with firefighters less likely to be exposed to heat and humidity at operational incidents, due to the general reduction in structural fires throughout the UK in the past few years. National standards state that every firefighter should experience at least one training event annually where temperatures are above ambient. From our discussions with operational personnel, it appears that this standard is not always achieved.

Relevant issues will be explored in more detail in the current HMFSI Thematic Inspection on RDS Training within the SFRS.

Driver Training

During our inspection fieldwork, a common issue raised by personnel was the lack of qualified Large Goods Vehicle (LGV)/Emergency Response (ER) drivers, particularly at RDS stations. A number of stations only have two qualified ER drivers and in some cases, one of those is either the Crew Manager or Watch Manager, which at times can affect operational availability. SFRS policy is that management role holders are not expected to act as drivers as their primary role is incident command. RDS personnel regularly wait around 12 months to attend either LGV or ER initial courses and there are also delays on ER refresher courses. The recent move to a five year revalidation for ER drivers may improve the situation surrounding refresher courses. Another issue affecting driver training capacity is the SFRS policy that familiarisation training must be carried out when any ER driver has to drive a different emergency response vehicle.

There is one driving instructor in the Highland and WIOS area. This contributes to the delays. At the time of our inspection, two civilian instructors had been recently employed and were undergoing training and accreditation to allow them to deliver and assess ER and LGV training. Once fully trained, this will greatly increase the availability of courses in the Highland and WIOS area. In the interim, LGV and ER courses are being provided at other locations throughout Scotland, and this is being embraced positively by RDS staff. The quality and delivery of driver training was praised by the majority of personnel.

LSO Support Staff

Administrative Support

A number of support staff are based in the Highland LSO area, forming part of the North SDA administration support team. These staff carry out various functions, such as; providing support to the LSO management teams, local station managers and stations, providing support to Health and Wellbeing staff, sickness absence and payroll administration and arranging travel and accommodation for personnel attending courses.

There is a team leader based in Inverness, who is responsible for staff working in various locations throughout Highland and WIOS. The team leader regularly meets with similar staff in other SDAs, to ensure consistency in approach and developing standard practices. In discussion, two significant support staff issues were raised. There is limited opportunity for promotion and development, as most posts are located at the National HQ in Cambuslang. Also, many of the systems that staff use, operate in isolation increasing the time taken to access information and complete tasks.

Health and Wellbeing

There are two fitness advisors and an occupational health nurse based in Inverness, covering the Highland and WIOS areas and part of Aberdeenshire. The fitness advisors carry out routine medical examinations and fitness tests at fire stations throughout the areas. This involves a high level of travelling and overnight stays. As well as carrying out routine work, the team managed to clear a backlog of around 400 medicals in 2016/17. The majority of firefighters meet the minimum fitness standards and those who fail routine medicals, do so mainly due to age related conditions such as deterioration in eyesight or hearing.

There are limited options for professional physiotherapy treatment in the area, with services not available to RDS personnel. And there is limited professional psychological support available, which is concerning given anecdotal evidence from the health and wellness team that stress and mental health issues affecting employees are increasing. We were advised that contracts for both of these services were going out to tender in the near future.

It is the responsibility of operational personnel to maintain the appropriate fitness levels to allow them to perform the role of a firefighter. To assist this, the Service proposes to provide a basic level of fitness equipment for use at all fire stations. Currently only a small number of stations have such provision.

Highlife Highland is part of the CPP and operates Highland Council leisure facilities on behalf of Highland Council. From our discussions with Highlife Highland, it is willing to introduce a discounted membership scheme for member of the SFRS. We suggest that the SFRS explores this further as a possible means of encouraging a positive fitness culture for employees in the Highland area.

Workforce

Strategic priority 10 expects SFRS to be an organisation that is more representative of the community it serves. The Highland population estimate in 2016¹⁴ for the 16-64 age group was around 51% female and 49% male. Within the Highland LSO area, the gender balance for operational firefighters is 92% male and 8% female. The operational workforce in the Highland area is therefore not representative of the Highland population regarding gender.

Using the 2011 census, around 80% of the Highland population is classed as 'white Scottish', we would say that locally the Service is reflective of that demographic.

Personnel at most fire stations feel very well supported by their supervisory Station Manager, however many expressed concern about the high turnover of Station Managers and the lack of continuity this presents.

A number of Group Managers and Station Managers expressed concern about the large number of fire stations they have management responsibility for, compared to colleagues in other parts of Scotland. There is also the added difficulty of the geography of the Highland area and the often extended travel distance between stations.

14 <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-analyser/jsf/tableView/tableView.xhtml>

3.5_Overall conclusions

We were impressed by the knowledge, standard and commitment shown by SFRS staff within the Highland area and also the high level of engagement with both partners and local communities. Additionally, both partners and local communities expressed high levels of satisfaction with the service the LSO and his team provides to the Highland area.

The 2005 Act requires that the SFRS must have regard to this report and, having done so, must take such measures (if any) as it thinks fit in relation to the report. We are therefore confident that where we have expressed a view on particular issues, the LSO will consider what we have said and will take it into account in forward planning. We have identified a number of issues during the inspection which we have highlighted in this report. In order to assist the LSO in improving performance, we are suggesting the issues below, which the LSO may wish to explore further and if appropriate act upon.

These areas will include working with other departments of the SFRS on the issues that are Service wide and not specific issues to the Highland LSO area. For ease of reference we have highlighted the issues that are out with the direct control of the LSO and are National with a (N) at the start of each bullet point.

Strategic Priority 1 – Performance Measures

There is an absence of local focused targets and benchmarking within the local fire and rescue plan, although multi ward plans were in place and provided local performance information. Station plans have not been produced, which would link both service wide and local objectives with individual staff appraisals.

We would encourage the LSO to develop a comprehensive performance management framework, linking individual performance to the station and local fire and rescue plans, the HOIP and SFRS strategic objectives, creating a ‘golden thread’ from individual to service wide performance.

Strategic Priority 1 - Recommendation (N) = National Implications

That the LSO should:

- Continue the effective working relationship with Elected members, Highland Council Officers and CPPs.
- Consider setting appropriate local targets for the Highland area utilising suitable benchmarking. To ensure the targets are properly embedded within the area it is recommended that station plans are introduced into the area. Furthermore, staff appraisals should be carried out across all stations to ensure that the work of all personnel is fully aligned to the area targets and priorities.
- Work to maintain the positive culture within the management team with a continued focus on reducing risk to local communities.
- Further embed performance management within the fire stations in the Highland area.

Strategic Priority 2 – Safety, Wellbeing and Prevention

The number of HFSVs have been increasing steadily over a three year period and is the 6th highest in Scotland. This is a considerable achievement considering that 84% of operational staff in Highland are employed on the RDS or volunteer system.

There was evidence of station personnel referring vulnerable individuals to other agencies and of focussing efforts on delivering HFSVs to those individuals who are at highest risk.

It was evident during our inspection that the majority of operational staff were supportive of the ethos of prevention and increasing the safety and wellbeing of their local communities.

Strategic Priority 2 - Recommendation (N) = National Implications

That the LSO should:

- Ensure that all community safety activities are recorded in the CSET system.
- Continue the high rate of HFSVs by enhancing the positive community safety engagement culture within both the RDS and the Wholetime station areas.
- Review the potential options for the use of RDS stations that have adequate facilities for use within the communities, to ensure the best use of public assets.
- Together with his area personnel continue the positive partnership with the British Heart Foundation (BHF) in relation to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training for local communities.
- Carry out a review of the work carried out by the FSE officers with a view to reducing the number of consultations received in relation to licence applications.
- Explore the feasibility of maintaining the operational competence of FSE officers whilst they are within the FSE function.
- Liaise with the Prevention and Protection Directorate, to ensure that there are sufficient FSE Officers to carry out enforcement activity in the Highland area.

Strategic Priority 3 – Response and Resilience (Response)

The age and condition of some emergency vehicles gave us cause for concern. An example of this is LDV vans and the spare appliance fleet, some of which are becoming uneconomic to repair and will require to be replaced in the not too distant future.

Various different types of structural fire kit are in use and used operationally beyond its normal lifespan, due to delays in the new Service wide procurement process for structural fire kit. There was also a lack of suitable recording in PPE log books, documenting the life journey of each item of PPE. We suggest that the LSO ensures that accurate records are kept of the life journey of safety critical PPE.

The electronic procurement system, Tech One, is not user friendly and causes difficulties for staff to order stock items, resulting in a duplication of effort at the ARC in Inverness to amend and process orders.

A number of fire stations had unsuitable welfare facilities, such as a lack of toilets, showers and changing facilities for female firefighters. There is also a lack of welfare facilities available at larger, protracted operational incidents.

Poor broadband speeds and internet connectivity was an issue at the majority of stations, which created difficulty accessing SFRS systems, such as LCMS training packages. We suggest that the LSO could explore other solutions to address this issue, such as sharing facilities with other community premises such as schools and putting systems in place for RDS personnel to access SFRS systems from home or mobile devices.

There is a lack of suitable local training facilities in the Highland area, resulting in staff travelling long distances to training courses at locations such as Invergordon or Portlethen.

We found that some ORI was out of date and that there was a lack of a standard effective system for identifying, collating and recording risk information. There was also a lack of knowledge displayed by operational crews on the operation of appliance mounted MDTs, to access risk information.

The importance of reporting near miss occurrences to prevent more serious accidents, requires to be addressed and communicated to all operational staff, particularly those arising at operational incidents. This should assist in increasing the reporting of near misses and embedding a positive health and safety culture. The reporting process for near misses could also be simplified further, to encourage reporting.

Strategic Priority 3 - Recommendation (N) = National Implications

That the LSO should:

- (N) Liaise with the Asset Management Team within SFRS to ascertain if a suitable replacement for fire-ground radios can be sourced.
- Ensure that test records and a testing regime be introduced for delivery hose across the Highland area.
- Introduce a review of the PPE and record keeping within the area to ensure that the standard of PPE is appropriate and that suitable and sufficient testing has been carried out and recorded.
- Liaise with the ICT Department to ascertain a suitable solution in relation to the issues around ICT system connectivity at the majority of stations.
- (N) Liaise with SFRS's Property Management department to ensure that a suitable long term capital plan is in place to improve welfare facilities within the stations that are below a suitable standard for use by a diverse workforce.
- Liaise with SFRS's Property Management Team to ensure that there is a greater understanding of the terms of the maintenance and repair (facilities management) arrangements within the area. This is in relation to both the timescales involved and the quality of work being carried out.
- Ensure that additional instruction is given to operational personnel in the use of the Mobile Data Terminals to ensure that operational risk information can be adequately retrieved at operational incidents.
- Liaise with the Response and Resilience Department and Operational Control in Dundee to ensure an appropriate system for relief crews is put in place for protracted incidents in the area. In addition, arrangements for incident ground catering and welfare facilities should also be reviewed and appropriate arrangements put in place. Furthermore, Flexi duty officers should be reminded that welfare support should be considered at an early stage of incidents that are likely to be protracted, to ensure that adequate arrangement can be made timeously.
- Work with the Health and Safety Liaison Officer for the area to ensure that the importance of near miss reporting is highlighted, particularly on the incident ground. The effectiveness of any interventions should be monitored through the health and safety performance management statistics.
- Carry out a review of the COSHH arrangements at all premises across the Highland area ensuring that the information is up to date, and that staff have received training focused on the hazards identified in the risk assessments.
- (N) Explore the possibility of some specialist resources being relocated to RDS fire stations within the Highland area to reduce the training burden on Inverness Station.
- Introduce a system for station audits that involves personnel that do not have managerial responsibility for the station being audited.
- Explore the possibility of using local training facilities for RDS training, such as the BA facility at Fort William fire station.

Strategic Priority 4 – Response and Resilience (Resilience)

There was no evidence of any Business Continuity Plans during our inspection. We suggest that these plans are completed as soon as possible to reduce the risk to the organisation of service disruption from issues such as severe weather or loss of critical infrastructure, and to increase organisational resilience in these circumstances.

We suggest that written records are kept resulting from ‘hot debriefs’ at incidents and training events, particularly where there is individual or organisational learning identified, and that any organisational learning is progressed via the operational assurance process.

Strategic Priority 4 – Recommendation (N) = National Implications

That the LSO should:

- Ensure that a system is introduced to record incident debriefs. This should include any training needs that have been identified and how they will be addressed utilising the operational assurance process. The system should also be utilised for any multi agency debriefs that take place. This should ensure that organisational learning is progressed in an appropriate manner.
- Ensure that suitable business continuity plans are completed for all stations across the Highland area. Furthermore, that the plans are tested and exercised at appropriate intervals.
- Take cognisance of challenges that FDM’s have in respect of management of operational incidents in Highland, due to factors such as the road network, geography and rural nature of the area.

Strategic Priority 5 – Partnership

Partnership working is well embedded across Highland, however we suggest that the introduction of co-locating of staff between the SFRS and partner agencies would further enhance partnership working and improve outcomes for individuals and local communities, as we have observed in other LSO areas.

The outcomes of the Uninjured Fallers Response pilot in the Caithness area should be evaluated and any recommendations delivered locally and nationally, regarding the next steps for this example of identified partnership working.

We observed that the Highland delivery model of devolving community planning to eight local area committees, is providing a local focus, delivering local outcomes and that local SFRS managers are performing well as part of this process. This is an approach that other LSO areas could develop, in conjunction with their CPPs.

We observed a number of examples of sharing SFRS fire stations with other agencies. We welcome those agreements already in place, but suggest that this could be developed further, particularly where there is capacity at a number of larger RDS stations. Police Scotland in particular is interested in identifying the potential of sharing facilities at some rural and remotely located fire stations.

Strategic Priority 5 – Recommendation (N) = National Implications

That the LSO should:

- Ensure that the positive partnership work continues in relation to shared facilities and community planning. In particular the involvement in local area committees should be proactively continued.
- Consider the co-location of SFRS and partner agency personnel to further enhance partnership working.
- Liaise with the Prevention and Protection Department to carry out a full evaluation of the falls response pilot being carried out in conjunction with NHS Highland. Thereafter, recommendations should be delivered locally and shared nationally.

Strategic Priority 6 – Service Transformation

Operational crews and support staff were in general content with the progress of service transformation and the majority of operational crews were enthusiastic around the changing role of a firefighter. However, RDS staff did express concern as to how capacity would be created to train for new skills such as an enhanced medical role and ultra-high pressure suppression systems, which will be deployed as an integral part of RRUs at certain stations.

A number of RDS stations in Highland are assisted by a uniformed District Support Officer. Station staff valued this support greatly, particularly around training and general administration. We suggest that this effective model of RDS support is provided to all stations across the area.

There was concern raised by operational personnel about the over-abundance of information disseminated to them, some of which is not relevant, and also the inability of individuals to process the sheer volume and the concern that safety critical information could be missed.

Strategic Priority 6 – Recommendation (N) = National Implications

That the LSO should:

- Liaise with the Response and Resilience Department in relation to the over-abundance of new information, procedures and awareness briefings and the ability of crews to absorb all of the information. This is to reduce the possibility that risk critical information may be missed due to the volumes and time constraints within the RDS and Volunteer Duty System (VDS) stations. Therefore a method should be considered to filter information passed to operational personnel to ensure its relevance.
- (N) Investigate the options to introduce additional uniformed District Support Officers across the Highland area.
- Ensure that workshops personnel are fully engaged and consulted as regularly as operational personnel, regarding plans and proposals for service transformation, particularly around fleet and operational equipment.

Strategic Priority 7 – Modernising Response

We suggest that the LSO develops further innovative solutions and flexibility regarding appliance availability in the Highland area, such as widening the practice of ‘importing’ and the approach implemented to reinstate the operational availability of Lochinver RDS station, by increasing the catchment area and response time required by crew members, to respond to operational incidents.

There were concerns raised by personnel at Inverness, regarding the introduction and management of the five watch duty system operated at Inverness. Issues were raised around the effectiveness of the central staffing process, and whether Inverness could be managed as an isolated resource by local managers.

Strategic Priority 7 – Recommendation (N) = National Implications

That the LSO should:

- Consider the wider implementation of the pilot initiative to allow RDS firefighters who work away from their home station during the day, to book themselves available at other stations which helps towards maintaining appliance availability.
- Liaise with the Response and Resilience Department to investigate the feasibility of RDS and Volunteer appliances being mobilised to certain incidents with smaller crews which could include the option of combining with another station to make up a crew of four.
- Consider increasing the catchment area and response time for personnel to respond to operational incidents.
- Liaise with the Response and Resilience Department and SFRS Central Staffing around the effectiveness of the central staffing process and whether Inverness could be managed as an isolated resource by local managers.

Strategic Priority 8 – Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

In 2016/17, 59% of all appliance mobilisations in the Highland area were to UFAS. We suggest that the LSO and his team focus on reducing these types of incidents, within the constraints of the SFRS UFAS reduction policies and procedures. These types of incidents place an unnecessary demand on SFRS resources, placing firefighters and public at risk due to unnecessary appliance movements and cause disruption to businesses.

Strategic Priority 8 – Recommendation (N) = National Implications

That the LSO should:

- Urgently review the response to UFAS incidents and endeavour to reverse the slight upward trend experienced last year. Where there is an issue identified in particular premises, it should be addressed proactively using the SFRS Unwanted Fire Alarms policy.

Strategic Priority 9 – Effective Governance and Performance

The new scrutiny arrangements introduced in 2017 meet the needs of all partners, with quarterly local scrutiny allowing more detailed scrutiny and focus on local issues and outcomes, and an annual Highland wide report giving a more strategic overview.

Elected members and other external partners were very positive about the level of local service delivery, engagement, support and assurance from the LSO and his team and are valued as a key partner in the CPP. However, there is a perception from external partners and elected members that there is a lack of focus and knowledge of issues specific to the Highland area, within the SFRS national senior management team.

There was a desire from both SFRS staff and external partners, that the LSO should have more governance and control over finance and resources, allowing flexibility in how resources should be deployed to address local risks and issues, we would encourage the SFRS to delegate more control to LSOs.

Performance plans and data provided by the SFRS, do not contain any local targets for the Highland area and there is an absence of benchmarking against LSO areas, with similar risk profiles and demographics. We would encourage the LSO to review the local performance framework to provide specific targets and benchmarking, to encourage and support performance improvement.

We suggest that station plans are produced, which would give clear direction and linked to achieving objectives contained within the HOIP and local fire and rescue plan.

Strategic Priority 9 – Recommendation (N) = National Implications

- As per Strategic Priority 1, above the LSO should consider introducing station plans and ensure that the career and contribution process is carried out across all stations in the area. The objectives should be linked to the HOIP and the local fire rescue plan.

Strategic Priority 10 – People

There was evidence to suggest that new trainees attending two blocks of two week residential training courses in the first year of their service, places too much of a burden on both the individuals and their primary employers.

Appliance availability during weekdays is an issue in the Highland area, mainly due to a lack of local primary employment opportunities. We encourage the LSO to further expand the practice of ‘importing’ to increase appliance availability. We also suggest that availability could be improved by adopting a more flexible approach to the number of contracted hours an RDS firefighter could work, and also around the restrictions placed on individuals when taking leave.

The recording of training events and activities on PDRPro is time consuming, particularly for RDS personnel. It is suggested that the Service explores more efficient and effective methods of recording training, allowing RDS personnel to maximise the limited time available to them, to focus on practical and theoretical training.

A number of LCMS training packages are excessively long and contain too much detail for RDS personnel to absorb in a weekly 2.5 hour training session.

There is a lack of locally based training facilities throughout the Highland area, with some personnel requiring to travel considerable distances to attend training courses. We suggest that the LSO should explore the possibility of utilising suitable training facilities in his area, such as the purpose built BA facility at Fort William, to deliver more locally based training. We also suggest that there is more flexibility regarding the duration and delivery of longer training courses, to reduce the burden on RDS firefighters and their employers.

An issue was raised by the majority of RDS around the negative behaviours adopted towards them, by some instructing staff at Invergordon, when attending BA refresher and other core courses. The LSO took action on this issue during our inspection and should continue to monitor and seek feedback from operational firefighters, to ensure that this issue has been resolved.

There is a lack of capacity to deliver the required amount of driver training courses in Highland, which at times can affect appliance availability.

In most areas of Highland, Group Managers and Station Managers have responsibility for a larger number of fire stations, therefore more spans of control, than those in most other LSO areas.

Strategic Priority 10 – Recommendation (N) = National Implications

That the LSO should:

- (N) Liaise with the People and Organisational Development Directorate to explore the possibility of introducing flexibility into its recruitment policy for RDS personnel, particularly within areas that have a limited number of people to select from.
- Continue to monitor the culture at the various training centres within the Highland area to ensure that recent changes are sustained in the long term.
- Liaise with the TED Department to explore other alternative delivery methods for trainees who are required to attend two blocks of two weeks training in the first year. More flexibility regarding the duration and delivery of longer training courses, may assist in reducing the burden on RDS firefighters and their employers.
- Explore options on how to demonstrate to primary employers, the added value and benefits to them of employing RDS personnel.
- Liaise with TED to explore more efficient and effective methods of recording training within the RDS Stations.
- (N) Liaise with TED to review the content of LCMS training packages and consider abbreviating training packages where appropriate, to focus on the salient points, perhaps providing a summary section, similar to those contained within SFRS SOPs.
- Explore the possibility of utilising suitable training facilities in the area, such as the purpose built BA facility at Fort William, to deliver more locally based training.
- (N) Continue to work with his colleagues within TED, to improve the availability of TED staff in delivering training to individual stations. The provision of District Support Officers also provides limited training support to some stations and we suggest that the Service should explore the possibility of increasing this valuable resource.
- Work alongside colleagues within TED, to identify how to improve driver training capacity and prioritise courses for individuals from stations with the greatest need.
- Liaise with Occupational Health and Wellbeing in regard to increasing the availability of professional physiotherapy and psychological services in the Highland area. Furthermore, to improve the fitness levels of employees, they should explore the feasibility of a discounted fitness membership scheme with Highland Council, similar to agreements in place in other council areas in Scotland.
- (N) Liaise with SFRS senior management to look at options to standardise the level of management responsibility of fire stations throughout Scotland. HMFSI recognise the challenges that FDMs have in respect of management of stations and operational incidents in Highland, due to factors such as the road network, geography and rural nature, which the LSO should take cognisance of.

4_Glossary and abbreviations

Throughout this report, at the risk of some repetition, we have minimised the use of abbreviations in the interests of readability. There are some exceptions, particularly where an abbreviation is used so widely within or outside the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service that spelling it out on each occasion would look unnatural. An example is 'SFRS' for Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. An explanation of abbreviations used can be found below.

AFA	Automatic Fire Alarm
ARC	Asset Resource Centre
BA	Breathing Apparatus
BHF	British Heart Foundation
Category 1 responder	As defined in the Civil Contingencies Act
CCO	Civil Contingencies Officer
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations
CPP	Community Planning Partnership
CRU	Community Response Unit; a smaller vehicle staffed by volunteer firefighters, who attend specific incident types
CSE	Community Safety Engagement
CSET	Community Safety Engagement Toolkit
EO	Enforcement Officer
ER	Emergency Response
FDM	Flexible Duty Manager
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
FSE	Fire Safety Enforcement
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HFSV	Home Fire Safety Visit
HIFRS	Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service
HOIP	Highland Outcome Improvement Plan
LALO	Local Area Liaison Officer
LCMS	Learning Content Management System: an online learning resource for firefighters
LDV	LDV is a trading name for the vehicle manufacturer
LGV	Large Goods Vehicle
LOIP	Local Outcome Improvement Plan
LRP	Local Resilience Partnership

LSO	Local Senior Officer: by law the SFRS has to appoint a LSO for each local authority area in Scotland
MDT	Mobile Data Terminal
MPDP	Maintenance Phase Development Planner: a training planning calendar to maintain firefighter competency covering the various skills sets
NILO	National Inter-agency Liaison Officer: A Fire and Rescue Service officer who can advise and support Incident Commanders, Police, Medical, Military and other Government Agencies on the organisation's operational capacity and capability to reduce risk and safely resolve incidents at where an attendance may be required. This will include major incidents, public order, domestic or any other situation that would benefit from the attendance of the NILO.
ORI	Operational Risk Information
PDIR	Post Domestic Incident Response
PDRPro	Personal Development Recording: PDRPro is an electronic system used by both Wholetime and Retained firefighters to record training and learning development, both from formal training and from continuous development obtained during actual incidents
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPED	Prevention and Protection Enforcement Database
RDS	Retained Duty System
RRU	Rapid Response Unit
SDA	Service Delivery Area. The SFRS is organised into three SDAs, North, East and West
SFRS	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
SOA	Single Outcome Agreement: documents created by Community Planning Partnerships in each of the 32 local authority areas across Scotland, which include specific plans for the delivery of improved outcomes locally
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SWAH	Safe Working at Height Equipment
TED	Training and Employee Development
TIC	Thermal Image Camera
TIP	Tactical Information Plan
UFAS	An event in which the SFRS believes it has been called to a reportable fire or special service incident but there is no such incident.

UFAS Triggers	Stage 1 The attending crew give initial advice onsite at the time of attendance
	Stage 2 When premises have five or more UFAS calls in a three month period SFRS writes to the operator of the premises, outlining the consequences if there is no improvement in performance.
	Stage 3 When premises have 10 or more UFAS calls in a six month period
WIOS	Western Isles, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands
2005 Act	The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005

Figure 1 key

Key	Local Authority	Key	Local Authority
1	Aberdeen City	17	Highland
2	Aberdeenshire	18	Inverclyde
3	Angus	19	Midlothian
4	Argyll and Bute	20	Moray
5	Clackmannanshire	21	North Ayrshire
6	Dumfries and Galloway	22	North Lanarkshire
7	Dundee City	23	Orkney Islands
8	East Ayrshire	24	Perth and Kinross
9	East Dunbartonshire	25	Renfrewshire
10	East Lothian	26	Scottish Borders
11	East Renfrewshire	27	Shetland Islands
12	Edinburgh, City of	28	South Ayrshire
13	Na h'Eileanan Siar	29	South Lanarkshire
14	Falkirk	30	Stirling
15	Fife	31	West Dunbartonshire
16	Glasgow City	32	West Lothian

5 Appendices

Appendix A – List of fire stations in Highland

Station	Duty System	LSO Delivery Area
Bettyhill	RDS	<p style="text-align: center;">Highland North (26 stations; 23 RDS, 3 CRU)</p>
Dunbeath	RDS	
John O Groats	RDS	
Thurso	RDS	
Lybster	CRU	
Tongue	RDS	
Wick	RDS	
Bonar Bridge	RDS	
Dornoch	RDS	
Durness	RDS	
Golspie	RDS	
Helmsdale	RDS	
Lairg	RDS	
Balintore	CRU	
Invergordon	RDS	
Kinlochbervie	RDS	
Lochinver	RDS	
Scourie	RDS	
Tain	RDS	
Dingwall	RDS	
Gairloch	RDS	
Achiltibuie	RDS	
Aultbea	RDS	
Cromarty	CRU	
Fortrose	RDS	
Ullapool	RDS	

Station	Duty System	LSO Delivery Area
Aviemore	RDS	<p>Highland Central</p> <p>(14 stations; 10 RDS, 3 CRU, 1 WT/RDS)</p>
Carrbridge	CRU	
Grantown-on-Spey	RDS	
Kingussie	RDS	
Nethybridge*	CRU	
Inverness	WT/RDS	
Newtonmore	CRU	
Fort Augustus	RDS	
Beauly	RDS	
Cannich	RDS	
Drumnadrochit	RDS	
Foyers	RDS	
Nairn	RDS	
Acharacle	RDS	
Fort William	RDS	<p>Highland West</p> <p>(21 stations; 18 RDS, 3 CRU,)</p>
Kilchoan	RDS	
Kinlochleven	RDS	
Lochaline	RDS	
Mallaig	RDS	
Muck	CRU	
Spean Bridge	CRU	
Strontain	RDS	
Applecross	RDS	
Glenelg	RDS	
Kinlochewe	RDS	
Kyle of Lochalsh	RDS	
Lochcarron	RDS	
Ratagan*	CRU	
Torridon	RDS	
Broadford	RDS	
Dunvegan	RDS	
Portree	RDS	
Raasay	RDS	
Staffin	RDS	
Uig	RDS	

* not operational

Appendix B – HFSV Performance Information

Highland HFSVs 1st Apr 2016 – 31st Mar 2017

Station	Completed by	Breakdown			Total HFSVs
		High	Medium	Low	
Acharacle	P&P Advocate	2	0	0	2
	RDS	1	0	0	1
		3	0	0	3
Achiltibuie	RDS	1	0	0	1
		1	0	0	1
Applecross	P&P Advocate	1	0	0	1
	RDS	1	0	0	1
		2	0	0	2
Aultbea	P&P Advocate	1	0	0	1
	RDS	2	5	6	13
		3	5	6	14
Aviemore	P&P Advocate	19	0	1	20
	RDS	12	23	25	60
	White	0	7	6	13
		31	30	32	93
Balintore	Community Action Team	2	4	7	13
	P&P Advocate	8	3	3	14
	Volunteers	15	19	16	50
		25	26	26	77
Beauly	Blue	0	2	0	2
	Green	0	0	1	1
	P&P Advocate	35	4	1	40
	RDS	14	19	11	44
	Red	1	0	1	2
	White	0	0	1	1
		50	25	15	90
Bettyhill	P&P Advocate	15	1	1	17
	RDS	1	0	0	1
		16	1	1	18

Station	Completed by	Breakdown			Total HFSVs
		High	Medium	Low	
Bonar Bridge	P&P Advocate	5	0	0	5
	RDS	9	19	22	50
		14	19	22	55
Broadford	P&P Advocate	1	0	0	1
	RDS	25	20	4	49
		26	20	4	50
Cannich	RDS	1	7	2	10
		1	7	2	10
Carrbridge	Green	0	1	0	1
	P&P Advocate	7	0	0	7
	RDS	1	0	0	1
	Volunteers	1	8	12	21
	White	0	3	1	4
		9	12	13	34
Cromarty	P&P Advocate	3	0	0	3
	Volunteers	1	0	0	1
		4	0	0	4
Dingwall	FCSP Home Fire Safety Visit Team	1	0	0	1
	P&P Advocate	106	34	11	151
	RDS	29	54	55	138
	Red	0	1	0	1
	White	0	1	0	1
		136	90	66	292
Dornoch	P&P Advocate	69	9	8	86
	RDS	40	10	10	60
		109	19	18	146
Drumnadrochit	P&P Advocate	8	1	0	9
	RDS	18	8	9	35
		26	9	9	44

Station	Completed by	Breakdown			Total HFSVs
		High	Medium	Low	
Dunbeath	P&P Advocate	2	1	2	5
	RDS	3	1	5	9
		5	2	7	14
Dunvegan	P&P Advocate	1	1	0	2
	RDS	7	4	1	12
		8	5	1	14
Durness	Alternative Duty Personnel	1	1	0	2
	P&P Advocate	1	0	0	1
	RDS	0	0	2	2
	Volunteers	0	0	3	3
		2	1	5	8
Fort Augustus	Alternative Duty Personnel	0	0	1	1
	P&P Advocate	11	1	0	12
		11	1	1	13
Fort William	P&P Advocate	25	1	1	27
	RDS	70	228	254	552
		95	229	255	579
Fortrose	Green	1	0	0	1
	P&P Advocate	15	6	0	21
	RDS	7	15	2	24
		23	21	2	46
Foyers	Community Safety	0	1	0	1
	P&P Advocate	6	0	0	6
	RDS	0	0	5	5
		6	1	5	12
Gairloch	P&P Advocate	3	0	0	3
	RDS	37	81	45	163
		40	81	45	166

Station	Completed by	Breakdown			Total HFSVs
		High	Medium	Low	
Golspie	P&P Advocate	10	1	0	11
	RDS	32	62	31	125
		42	63	31	136
Grantown	P&P Advocate	16	1	3	20
	RDS	11	27	33	71
	White	0	2	4	6
		27	30	40	97
Helmsdale	P&P Advocate	1	0	1	2
	RDS	3	11	5	19
		4	11	6	21
Invergordon	P&P Advocate	94	26	6	126
	RDS	11	17	14	42
		105	43	20	168
Inverness	Blue	45	109	100	254
	Green	27	74	104	205
	P&P Advocate	62	5	1	68
	RDS	204	111	87	402
	Red	57	88	89	234
	Volunteers	0	1	0	1
	White	37	86	72	195
		432	474	453	1359
John O'Groats	P&P Advocate	2	3	0	5
	RDS	9	9	5	23
		11	12	5	28
Kilchoan	RDS	1	1	1	3
		1	1	1	3
Kingussie	P&P Advocate	15	1	1	17
	RDS	1	0	3	4
		16	1	4	21

Station	Completed by	Breakdown			Total HFSVs
		High	Medium	Low	
Kinlochbervie	P&P Advocate	1	1	0	2
	RDS	1	1	2	4
		2	2	2	6
Kinlochewe	RDS	1	0	0	1
		1	0	0	1
Kinlochleven	RDS	13	38	84	135
		13	38	84	135
Kyle of Lochalsh	P&P Advocate	1	0	0	1
	RDS	9	11	12	32
		10	11	12	33
Lairg	P&P Advocate	0	0	1	1
	RDS	2	12	10	24
		2	12	11	25
Lochaline	Community Safety	1	2	0	3
	RDS	0	1	0	1
		1	3	0	4
Lochcarron	P&P Advocate	14	1	0	15
	RDS	5	6	3	14
		19	7	3	29
Lochinver	Community Safety	0	1	1	2
	P&P Advocate	4	0	0	4
		4	1	1	6
Lybster	P&P Advocate	8	1	2	11
		8	1	2	11
Mallaig	RDS	6	10	11	27
		6	10	11	27
Muck	RDS	0	0	1	1
	Volunteers	1	0	3	4
		1	0	4	5

Station	Completed by	Breakdown			Total HFSVs
		High	Medium	Low	
Nairn	Blue	0	1	0	1
	P&P Advocate	81	4	2	87
	RDS	8	11	7	26
	Red	0	1	0	1
		89	17	9	115
Nethybridge	P&P Advocate	8	1	1	10
	RDS	3	0	1	4
	White	1	2	0	3
		12	3	2	17
Newtonmore	P&P Advocate	7	2	0	9
	Volunteers	1	1	2	4
		8	3	2	13
Portree	P&P Advocate	1	0	0	1
	RDS	8	9	9	26
		9	9	9	27
Raasay	RDS	0	1	0	1
		0	1	0	1
Ratagan	Community Safety	0	1	1	2
	RDS	2	2	1	5
		2	3	2	7
Spean Bridge	P&P Advocate	4	0	0	4
	RDS	0	1	1	2
	Volunteers	4	12	11	27
		8	13	12	33
Staffin	RDS	1	1	2	4
		1	1	2	4
Strontian	Community Safety	1	7	7	15
	P&P Advocate	2	0	0	2
	RDS	0	0	1	1
		3	7	8	18

Station	Completed by	Breakdown			Total HFSVs
		High	Medium	Low	
Tain	P&P Advocate	61	12	2	75
	RDS	0	0	1	1
		61	12	3	76
Thurso	P&P Advocate	194	40	19	253
	RDS	5	0	0	5
		199	40	19	258
Tongue	P&P Advocate	8	2	0	10
	RDS	0	2	1	3
		8	4	1	13
Torridon	P&P Advocate	4	0	0	4
	RDS	0	2	0	2
		4	2	0	6
Uig	RDS	1	0	1	2
		1	0	1	2
Ullapool	P&P Advocate	8	0	0	8
	RDS	5	7	3	15
		13	7	3	23
Wick	P&P Advocate	90	32	9	131
	RDS	1	3	3	7
		91	35	12	138
Totals		1860	1481	1310	4651



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