



HM Fire Service Inspectorate

Local Area Inspection Scottish Borders



Integrity, Objectivity, and Fairness.

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Inspectorate**

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Scottish Borders**



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A quality assurance review of this report was provided by Simon Routh-Jones QFSM of HM Fire Service Inspectorate who recently joined the Inspectorate and was not part of this inspection. 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_ The local area inspection programme

The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2013 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. We take the Framework as the starting point for structuring and prioritising our inspection programme.

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 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 Act to have a Local Fire and Rescue Plan for each local authority area, which will set 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:

- 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 of government service provision;
- 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 this reason we have adopted a structure for them which follows the structure of the Framework itself:

- The Local Fire and Rescue Plan and Single Outcome Agreement.
- Improved service outcomes and protecting frontline services.
- More equal access to specialist resources and national capacity.
- Strengthened connection between SFRS and communities.

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 Inspection Report we give an opinion on the manner in which the SFRS is carrying out its functions in the above respects.

In our local area 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 what we are told about the local area by SFRS managers, with our own observations and discussions with staff on the ground.

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. 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 we visited every fire station in the area, speaking to Retained Duty System (RDS) crew members on their training night and the duty watch at the time of our visit to the Wholetime shifts at Galashiels and Hawick Fire Stations, as well as the Retained firefighters at both of these stations. 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 and fire station supervision. We also met with community safety staff, support staff and trade union representatives. Additionally, we met with representatives of Scottish Borders Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service and the voluntary sector. We also observed a meeting of the local authority scrutiny committee – the Police, Fire and Rescue and Safer Communities Board.

To gauge service users' opinion of the SFRS we contacted all 69 Community Councils within Scottish Borders. Each was 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.

Our report reflects the circumstance at the time of our visits which were undertaken during July and August 2016. The SFRS is continuing to change and evolve, consequently material changes may have occurred since then.

A summary of our findings

Key points

- Our overall impression of the SFRS's work in Scottish Borders is positive. The vast majority of staff were very committed to the community and to the SFRS. We saw some very committed and high quality managers working very hard to meet the needs of the community, staff and the Service.
- The local fire and rescue plan for Scottish Borders follows the general structure that the Service has established for these plans and there is an absence of local benchmarking and local targets. However, the SFRS's national targets are incorporated within the plan but are not locally focused. The most recent performance report to the local authority scrutiny committee shows that five out of the six SFRS national indicators used to measure performance have not been achieved. Overall performance against these targets has declined since the period ending December 2014 at which point only two out of the six were missed.
- Partnership working is well embedded. In particular the co-location of the SFRS's Local Area Liaison Officer (LALO) and one Community Firefighter within Scottish Borders Council's Headquarters is seen as a great benefit by partners and SFRS staff.
- There are scrutiny arrangements in place, both at a local level through Area Forums and at a collective council-wide level. Elected members and council officials we spoke with describe a positive relationship with the Service. The limited responses we received to the Community Council questionnaire also shows a positive view of the Service's activities.
- To encourage productive and progressive employee relations the SFRS *Working Together Framework* is in place within the Scottish Borders. Recognised trade unions attend LSO meetings at an East Service Delivery level. The trade unions would welcome additional devolved station level meetings to develop increased local engagement.
- Community safety is well resourced in the Scottish Borders. There is a strong commitment and enthusiasm toward the promotion of community safety work and continuing to extend the reach of this beyond traditional activity, such as the Living Safely in the Home initiative which exists in the Cheviot area of Scottish Borders.
- A formal weekly tasking meeting of community safety partners has recently been established, where decisions would be taken on actions to take in response to incidents identified from the various logs by a Partnership Analyst. Recent changes to the SFRS's own incident activity reporting systems have created difficulties in providing the Partnership Analyst with information in order to develop strategies.
- There is a well-resourced Fire Safety Enforcement team with the work being undertaken in line with SFRS standards and procedures. However, there is a lack of easily accessible historical records of enforcement activity pre-dating the creation of SFRS. Thematic enforcement activity is determined locally.

- RDS firefighters form the majority of personnel within Scottish Borders. Some RDS firefighters are providing considerably more availability than they are contractually obliged to and as a consequence are not being financially rewarded for that commitment. There is some evidence that some contracts have been reviewed, but we think that due to the extent of the issue a wide scale review is warranted.
- The SFRS has yet to introduce standard conditions for RDS staff throughout Scotland. In the Scottish Borders the training night commitment is two hours, while in other parts of Scotland it is three hours. This inequality is a source of discontent for some staff; overall RDS personnel described a feeling of being over-stretched and that the SFRS has, at times, unrealistic expectations of them.
- RDS firefighters, and to a lesser extent their Wholetime colleagues, are finding the new national training programme planner 'Training for Operational Competency' difficult to implement, particularly due to time constraints.
- Scottish Borders is a pilot area for the SFRS Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) project, involving firefighters from Hawick, Coldstream and Lauder. Staff and the recognised trade unions are positive about firefighters encompassing the wider public safety agenda in support of colleagues from the Scottish Ambulance Service. There is evidence that this initiative has saved lives within the community.
- Although of varying ages, fire station facilities are generally satisfactory. West Linton fire station commemorates its 60th anniversary this year. All have a level of IT provision, though there are some issues around system connectivity and general availability of computers. There are varying levels of provision of training and fitness equipment available.
- The fire appliances operating within Scottish Borders are comparatively old and as a consequence some equipment faults were noted during the inspection. There is also a lack of local spare appliances and workshop rationalisation is having an impact on repair turnaround times. The locker and stowage configuration of appliances is incompatible with a piece of casualty handling equipment procured by the legacy service. As a result this equipment is unavailable at incidents.
- A number of the fire stations are close to Northumberland or Cumbria. Appliances from Scottish Borders will attend incidents over the border when requested and protocols exist to enable such mobilising. We were advised however, that crews have limited access to information on risks in those areas and the appliance-based Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) system has no maps of the areas, though crews did have access to paper Ordnance Survey maps. We were informed that this situation was replicated between stations that bordered the East and West Service Delivery Areas of SFRS who were mobilised from different control rooms.
- The RDS cadre of personnel is currently under strength. The SFRS has centralised its management of the recruitment process. In a number of stations, local managers are dissatisfied with the recruitment process. Primary Employers have an important role in the employment of RDS staff and a number of RDS firefighters expressed the view that there was greater scope for the SFRS to acknowledge the support they provide in releasing staff.

- The SFRS has recently revised its training strategy for operational firefighters and developed 'Training for Operational Competency'. The majority of firefighters we spoke to, particularly, but not exclusively RDS, said that the new training planner was inflexible, difficult to keep up with, and that they were always in a position of trying to catch-up with what was planned.
- The majority of station-based personnel we spoke to, particularly RDS, expressed dissatisfaction with what they considered to be an over-emphasis on theoretical training which has resulted in a practical skills decay and has the potential to affect morale. Personnel had a desire for more 'hands-on' practical training.
- The BA training facility at Hawick Fire Station has recently undergone some alteration work. The facility however is only designed to use synthetic smoke and will not be able to replicate the 'hot wear' training previously available at the now closed facility in Edinburgh.
- Training records of some RDS firefighters on the PDRPro system are incomplete. This is due to a combination of issues; but primarily a lack of time within the standard two hour training night. Some personnel have been maintaining records in their own time, whilst others were instructed not to do this.

2 About the area

The council area of Scottish Borders is a sparsely-populated rural area covering 1,827 square miles in south-east Scotland bordering England.

The population of Scottish Borders in 2015 was 114,030¹ which is almost static from the 2014 figure and is around 2% of the population of Scotland as a whole. The population for Scottish Borders has increased since 1989. By 2037 the population is projected to be in line with what it was in 2012, compared to an 8.8% projected increase for Scotland as a whole. The over-75 age group is projected to rise by the most in the Scottish Borders, which is the same for the rest of Scotland. The under-16 age group is projected to decline by 7.5% over this 25-year period. The estimated number of dwellings in 2014 was 57,274.

The LSO for Scottish Borders is also responsible for SFRS delivery in the neighbouring local authority areas of East Lothian and Midlothian. In profile, the areas all could be expected to present similar challenges to the LSO and his team.

Area Manager David Farries has only recently taken over the role of LSO on promotion. It was clear to the inspection team that he has been very active in the Scottish Borders, visiting stations, meeting partners and establishing his strategic presence since his appointment.

There are 13 fire stations within the area. The stations at Coldstream, Duns, Eyemouth, Innerleithen, Jedburgh, Kelso, Lauder, Peebles, Newcastleton, Selkirk, and West Linton are crewed by RDS personnel. Galashiels and Hawick are crewed by a combination of Wholetime and RDS firefighters.

A look at some key statistics² for the Scottish Borders area

Appliances from Scottish Borders responded to a total of 1,562 incidents in 2015-16, an increase of 65 or just over 4% on the previous year.

The Scottish Borders has seen a recent rise in accidental dwelling fires. In 2015-16, there were 105 such fires, 24 more than the previous year, a near 30% increase. Over the same period the total number of accidental dwelling fires in Scotland also increased, but only by around 2%. However, the rate of accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 dwellings in Scottish Borders, at 182.2 for 2015-16, remains below the rate of 198.3 for Scotland as a whole.

Regrettably there was one dwelling related fire fatality during 2015-16. There were 17 non-fatal casualties³ during the same period, 13 of these were in accidental dwelling fires. In comparison to the Scotland rate for non-fatal casualties per 1,000 accidental dwelling fires, Scottish Borders is lower at 123.8 compared to a national rate of 179.1.

1 National Records of Scotland, May 2016.

2 Statistics supplied by the SFRS including in the Scottish Borders Performance Report 2015-2016. Totals are provisional and may be subject to change as a result of quality assurance and review.

3 This includes casualties recorded as precautionary check.

There has been a 10% increase in deliberate fires on the previous year, with a total of 106 for 2015-16; 60% of these were secondary fires⁴, just over 47% of which involved refuse or bins. The proportion of deliberate fires which involved refuse has increased by just over 40% on the 2014-15 figure.

788 false alarms were recorded in 2015-16, a decrease of 106 or almost 12% on the previous year. 72% of these false alarms were reported as being caused by a fire alarm system. A published comparator rate of false alarms per 100,000 population shows the rate for Scottish Borders at 691 which is lower than the overall rate for Scotland of 909.3. This is an improvement on the previous year where the rate in Scottish Borders was 784 compared to that year's national rate of 909.4.

Special service incidents are non-fire related incidents which the SFRS is requested to attend. There were 389 non-fire incidents in Scottish Borders in 2015-16. In the Scottish Borders the rate of these per 100,000 population is the highest in Scotland at 341, compared to the rate for Scotland as a whole of 238. The rate of road traffic collisions attended by the SFRS in the Scottish Borders is also the highest in Scotland – at 95 incidents per 100,000 population, it is just over twice the Scottish rate of 46, and contributes to the overall higher rate of non-fire incidents. The rate of special service incidents in Scottish Borders has increased since the previous reporting year, in particular there has been an 86% increase in Medical Incident – Co-responder/First responder. This is likely to be the result of the Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest trial which is being run in the Scottish Borders and is covered in more detail later in this report.

2,542 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) were conducted in Scottish Borders in 2015-16, with the installation of 3,207 smoke alarms during these visits. The rate of HFSV conducted per 1,000 dwellings of 44.1 is higher than the rate for Scotland at 28.1.

⁴ 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 discussed in the introduction to this report, we structure our findings to be directly referable to the Fire and Rescue Framework 2013. (A new National Framework came into force in October 2016, after the field work for this inspection was carried out.) The Framework sets the strategic direction for fire and rescue in Scotland, and has sections on governance and accountability (including planning and reporting); protecting and improving local services; equal access to specialist support and national capacity; and strengthening the connection with communities. The way in which we report our findings follows this structure – with an initial discussion of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan and Single Outcome Agreement (SOA), which are key planning documents for SFRS in each local authority area.

3.1_ The Local Fire and Rescue Plan and Single Outcome Agreement

There are similarities in the way the 32 local plans of SFRS are structured, with the content being 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 Scottish Borders plan follows the general format that the Service has established for these plans and there is an absence of specific detailed local targets and benchmarking.

The SFRS Local Plan contains a matrix to indicate how its five priorities align to the priorities of Scottish Borders SOA. This demonstrates how SFRS activities contribute to the wider outcomes of the Community Planning Partnership. The matrix also aligns to the SFRS strategic aims as well as the National Outcomes and to SFRS's own Equality Outcomes.

The SFRS Local Plan 2014–17 sets Priorities, Actions and Outcomes for the Scottish Borders area within which it creates links to SFRS national targets. In this regard the area has six targets to contribute to the Service's national targets. A recent scrutiny report submitted to the local authority shows that five out of the six targets have been missed with a decline in performance over the last few years. The Scottish Borders area does have in place a local performance management system, but we saw limited evidence that this was adapting to address performance issues and driving improvement activity within the area. We did see that staff were striving to meet nationally set output targets.

The Service nationally is in the process of examining its approach to the construction of local area plans and targets for future.

In addition to the SFRS Local Plan for Scottish Borders, there is a further sub-set of Multi-Ward Operational Plans for the 11 wards within Scottish Borders. These plans are all dated 2015-16 and so are several months out of date. The sub-set of information contained in these plans is a breakdown of SFRS local activity and could provide the depth of information which would enable more detailed local scrutiny if desired. Officers of SFRS attend local Area Forum meetings where local area performance is scrutinised.

The Scottish Borders Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) is a document created at local authority level which sets out that a number of agencies, who are members of the local Community Planning Partnership, will work together in the area to deliver outcomes aligned to nationally agreed priorities, and the principles of public service reform. SOAs take into account the contributions of various local and national bodies in arriving at these outcomes.

The Scottish Borders SOA 2013 has no specific fire improvement indicators as we have seen in other SOA documents by which progress can be measured. The Scottish Borders SOA has three priority areas: Grow our economy; Reduce inequalities; Maximise the impact from the low carbon agenda. As a community planning partner, the SFRS is contributing to the work of the Partnership in achieving the outcomes of the plan, such as measures relating to emergency hospital admissions, which are contained within the plan.

3.2 Improved service outcomes and protecting frontline services

Prevention and Protection

There is one Group Manager and a Station Manager with responsibility for Prevention and Protection across the LSO area.

Community Safety Engagement (CSE) is provided by staff who are based at local fire stations and within Scottish Borders Council premises. Fire Safety Enforcement (FSE) staff are based in Galashiels fire station.

There is one Watch Manager with the function of Local Area Liaison Officer (LALO). The LSO area has a total of three LALOs with one dedicated to Scottish Borders. The LALO has line management responsibility for the CSE staff in the Scottish Borders. The LALO for Scottish Borders is the main point of contact for community planning partners and, along with one Community Firefighter, is co-located with a number of other partners within the Community Safety Partnership Unit of Scottish Borders Council at its headquarters in Newtown St Boswells.

Although the SFRS's community safety staff are primarily dedicated to working in the Scottish Borders there is a degree of working across the whole LSO area when required.

There is a local Fire Casualty Reduction Plan 2015-16 covering the whole LSO area which aims to support the SFRS's national prevention objectives. The plan details the incident activity for the LSO area, down to electoral ward level. The plan also describes the results of an analysis of the incident activity, for example, detailing domestic fire casualties by age and gender and outlining the most common cause. The plan concludes by setting out the prevention and protection approaches in response to the incident activity. We support the production of plans such as this as it contributes to enabling greater partnership and staff buy-in to meeting the goals set for the local area.

We discuss in greater detail below the partnership activities which encompass the work of the CSE staff. In addition to the work of the team, Wholetime and RDS personnel also undertake CSE activity.

Fire Safety Enforcement

There are three Enforcement Officers (EOs) based in Galashiels, one of whom is new to the role. 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). The LSO area has a total of five enforcement staff and, as with the CSE staff, are considered a LSO area resource. Therefore the staff who primarily work within Scottish Borders do carry out enforcement work elsewhere in the LSO area. During 2015-16 this accounted for 104 audits within the East and Midlothian local authority areas. A total number of 290 audits were conducted in 2015-16 in Scottish Borders.

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 Scottish Borders there is a comparatively low number of non-domestic premises which fall into the SFRS priority category for audit. The fire safety audit of these premises is therefore well within the capacity of the enforcement officers located within the Scottish Borders.

In addition to the 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. However, staff within Scottish Borders are given a personal target of 144 audits to conduct. Staff who are categorised as within the development phase in the enforcement officer role have a slightly reduced target.

Due to the limited number of premises which fall within the priority category for audit as set out in the enforcement framework, some lower risk audits are undertaken in order to achieve the personal targets. These audits are described by the Scottish Borders staff as thematic audits. We have seen this type of audit work in others areas, however, it is less directed in the Scottish Borders than we have encountered elsewhere.

Records of audits undertaken are maintained using the Service's electronic system PPED (Prevention and Protection Enforcement Database). This national database is intended to provide complete and consistent Fire Safety Enforcement data across Scotland. The legacy service of Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service used different systems to record its fire safety audit work. The historic records of previous audits conducted in the Lothian and Borders area were not migrated over to the new system. As a consequence there is no information on PPED of outcomes from audits for premises prior to its introduction, nor is there a complete record for the total number of non-domestic premises known to the SFRS. Reliance is therefore placed on the local knowledge of the EOs working in Scottish Borders.

Although a download of data from the legacy systems was retained this information has not been transferred to PPED. We were advised that information could be recovered, however it would be administratively difficult. This position would present a problem for the Service should there be a need to readily access the enforcement history of premises.

We reviewed a FSE case file communication with dutyholders and found a good standard of work consistent with the processes generally prevailing within the SFRS.

Service Delivery

The level of operational activity varied across the stations, from an average over the past five years of 439 incidents per year at Galashiels Fire Station to 65 at Newcastleton.⁵

Generally operational crews are content with the progress of fire reform, although there had been a number of perceived teething problems. However, there is a feeling of an over-abundance of new information and procedures and inability to process it all. This is particularly the case for the non-dual contract RDS personnel who have a finite time to complete all that is required during a training night. (Dual contractors are Wholetime firefighters who are also RDS firefighters for the Service and have a separate RDS contract.) Where both types of RDS firefighters exist on a station the non-dual contractors do of course benefit from the support given to them by their dual contract colleagues, not every station in the borders has dual contract personnel. There was acknowledgement by some firefighters that there had been some limited improvement in communications more recently.

Stations

The building fabric of the fire stations and associated training facilities are of varying ages and condition. West Linton Station commemorates its 60th Anniversary this year. Due to the predominately RDS nature of the Service in Scottish Borders the on-station training facilities are limited. In most cases these are restricted to an area attached to the station to conduct drills and a tower for ladder exercises.

Appliances and Equipment

Appliances

Although of generally acceptable condition there were some issues relating to outstanding repairs to appliances for equipment defects, such as stem lighting and 110 volt capability. Overall the fleet is aging and therefore potentially susceptible to equipment problems. There has also been a reduction in the availability of spare appliances in the Scottish Borders area. Galashiels has an old appliance, which was not in good repair, operating as a temporary Incident Support Unit. This vehicle would be expected to transport additional equipment such as that required at a flooding incident.

Equipment

Part of the process of reform of the fire and rescue service and the creation of the SFRS is the standardisation of policies, procedures and equipment. One major project for the SFRS has been the introduction of a new standard breathing apparatus (BA) set for firefighters. There had been four different sets in use in the legacy services and eight different service contracts.

The introduction of a new BA set across the Service was completed in early 2016. The introduction of a new standard set has required all operational firefighters to have initial training in its use and thereafter a programme of periodic refresher training.

⁵ Station mobilisations which do not result in an attendance at an incident are not included in these figures.

The new set is different to the sets previously used in the legacy Lothian and Borders Service. This has required adjustments to be made to the BA set cradles in the rear of the fire appliances. The cradle is designed to hold the set behind the firefighter until it is required to be worn at an incident. We were advised by a number of firefighters that the new seating position created by the introduction of the new sets has made the riding position in the rear very uncomfortable, particularly over extended journey distances which are more common in rural areas. The extended seating position has, for some individuals, also made the seat belt restraint very tight.

The set procured by the SFRS has a telemetry capability whereby the wearer's data, such as cylinder pressure and 'time to whistle' can be electronically sent to a compatible electronic entry control board. Such a system provides improvements to BA wearer safety and incident command and control. Currently nationally the SFRS has not implemented the use of the telemetry functionality of the sets.

A common observation from personnel was that fire-ground hand-held radios have a poor transmission range and because two of the five radios at each station are permanently fixed to BA sets, then they are limited in numbers.

A 'total care package' is supplied by an external contractor to launder and repair Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE appears to be maintained to a good level.

A sample review of appliance equipment standard test records showed that these were being appropriately completed for those inspected.

Spinal Boards

Spinal boards for use during casualty handling have been issued to all stations in the Scottish Borders. These provide rigid support during movement of a patient with suspected spinal injuries. Even though issued by the Service for this purpose the spinal boards are not always available at an incident due to locker configuration and lack of appropriate stowage on some appliances.

Hydraulic Rescue Equipment

A roll out of new Holmatro Hydraulic Rescue Equipment was being undertaken at the time of our field work. Six stations within the Scottish Borders are recipients of new kit on the basis of identified strategic operational risk locations and the replacement of older equipment. With the additional training on its use, this enhancement has been widely welcomed by the crews at the stations involved.

Training

The SFRS policy is to train its firefighters in compartment fire behaviour techniques during initial training and then on a rolling programme of refresher training every two years. Firefighters from the Scottish Borders used to use the hot fire training facility at Fillyside in Edinburgh until this facility ceased to operate as a carbonaceous burn unit earlier this year. Alternative locations are therefore required in order to comply with SFRS policy. The Service has hot fire training sites elsewhere in Scotland, however, the travel distance to these is prohibitive for most stations in the Borders.

The BA training facility at Hawick Fire Station has recently undergone some alteration work involving the provision of new movable internal paneling and doors to sub-divide the block. This allows different room layouts to be created for different training scenarios. The facility however is only designed to use cosmetic smoke and has no hot fire facility. Additionally, a formal arrangement exists between the SFRS and the NHS to use surplus premises for off-site training in Peebles, where cosmetic smoke can also be used. We were informed that whilst hot fire training was difficult in the Borders area, all the training outcomes associated with BA training could be delivered with the exception of the hot wear experience.

The SFRS has plans to develop a hot fire training capability at its SDA headquarters in Newbridge near Edinburgh, but this is dependent upon capital finance availability.


A degree of practical training takes place on-station depending on facilities available. It will also take place off-station, sometimes by arrangement, using locally available vacant premises or geographic features such as rivers, where training scenarios can be set up.

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). Each subject has a series of e-learning tools, case studies, interactive packages, and assessments to support learning. The majority of station-based personnel we spoke to, particularly RDS, expressed dissatisfaction with what they considered to be an over-emphasis on theoretical training which has resulted in a practical skills decay and has the potential to affect morale. Personnel had a desire for more 'hands-on' practical training.

Training is recorded using the Personal Development Recording (PDRPro) system. 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. Barriers exist, both electronic systems-based issues and a lack of time, for RDS personnel completing their training records. We were told that some RDS personnel have been completing records in their own unpaid time at home, due to a lack of time on a training night. In some stations we visited we were told that firefighters have been instructed not to do this in their own time, only when on-station. As a result the training records for some staff are incomplete.

The SFRS has a personal development recording system policy, which sets out the minimum recording requirements per person for both duty systems. A lack of a complete record of individual training undertaken poses a risk to the organisation.

SFRS has recently revised its training strategy for operational firefighters and developed 'Training for Operational Competency'. The core elements used in the delivery of this new strategy remain unchanged, i.e. the use of LCMS, PDRPro and MPDP. However, there has been a degree of change around the MPDP. The MPDP covers a three-year programme and sets out which topics should be studied during each quarter. For example, in year one for RDS firefighters during the quarter July to September the following subjects will be covered: Hazardous Materials, Extrication, Driving, Electricity, and Water and Ice. The subjects covered during the same quarter for Wholetime personnel are identical with the addition of a further topic of Refuse.



The majority of firefighters we spoke to, particularly, but not exclusively RDS, said that the new planner was difficult to keep up with, with a feeling that they were always in a position of trying to catch up with what was planned. This is particularly the case when staff are on leave or due to sickness. This poses further difficulties when undertaking confirmation of knowledge exercises with the whole crew when one or more members have missed the input due to absence. We were told that there was little or no flexibility in when the training was to be delivered. We were also advised that trainee firefighters may be assessed in subjects, as part of their three-year development programme, which they have not yet covered in their training. There was unanimous support for the quality and delivery of training by local training officers from the RDS firefighters we spoke to. However, we were told that subjects often had to be rushed through to keep up with the plan.

We were invited to attend a pre-planned multi-pump exercise at an industrial site during our inspection. The objectives of the exercise being to apply operational procedures at a realistic chemical incident scenario; to test joint working arrangements; and to utilise operational intelligence. The training input that crews had previously received as part of the hazardous materials element contained in the MPDP was also confirmed at the exercise. We observed the exercise and the debrief and think that it usefully enabled local SFRS learning and had benefit for the future practice of the site management.

All the stations are provided with IT equipment to allow personnel to carry out the various administrative functions relative to their role, such as recording training undertaken. RDS stations have limited numbers of computers and generally connectivity to central systems is slow in all stations. The lack of adequate PCs and poor connectivity is constraining the time available for training and essential work.

The problems created by slow access is compounded for RDS personnel by the restricted time available to them to log on to systems, and the understandably limited number of computers available on RDS stations. The SFRS is generally aware of the issues related to IT systems and connectivity and has recently let a contract to improve its wide area network connectivity. The contract is expected to be complete by the end of the 2016-17 financial year. We were told that some locations had guest Wi-Fi capability available, but that staff were not allowed access to systems via this facility in order to complete training records and overcome the restricted number of PC's at some locations.

The duration of the training night for RDS stations in the Borders is two hours. Staff pointed out that there is inconsistency throughout Scotland with RDS personnel in some areas contracted to a three-hour training night. The overwhelming majority of RDS firefighters we spoke to would like to see an increase of an hour for their training nights. We were told that it was a challenge for RDS personnel to complete all that is required of them during the two-hour period and that demands on their time had increased.

Within the Borders, Wholetime watches are paired up with RDS stations to give assistance on practical exercises and training during training nights. This is generally appreciated but in a few cases, Wholetime crews have large distances to travel and this limits the time available to participate in these events. For the more remote stations, the LSO may want to explore the option of doing joint training with those stations which they are more likely to attend incidents with, an element of which already occurs. This could be stations from other local authority areas, inside or outside of his control or with neighbouring FRSs (Northumberland or Cumbria).

Driver Training

We were advised at a number of stations that there was a shortage of qualified fire appliance drivers, on occasion, this resulted in the appliance being unavailable. We were further advised that the shortage was influenced by a limited capacity of the SFRS to deliver driver training courses and self-imposed service determined pre-requisite qualifications, such as a restriction on firefighters classed as in development becoming drivers.

Operational Risk Information

SFRS has a statutory duty to obtain information which may be required by its personnel in carrying out their operational role. There is an established central procedure for creating and updating operational risk information (ORI) within the area. The system is based on a legacy service recording process.

For relevant risks within the Galashiels and Hawick area each of the watches at these fire stations are allocated a number of premises to review and update risk information as required from a central list. A separate system exists for the risks in the outlying areas covered by the RDS stations. In this case if the RDS personnel are unable to review the information due to other commitments, it will be reviewed by arrangement by available Wholetime personnel.

Any amendments are then centrally uploaded to the appliance-based Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) system. The processing of plan drawings has been rationalised and centralised. Where the information includes changes to plan drawings of premises there is currently a delay in getting amendments made due to a backlog. Although there is a delay in updating some of the information electronically, in practice we found that station personnel place a heavier reliance on hard copy information in preference to the electronic MDT system.


A number of the stations are close to Northumberland or Cumbria, and appliances from Scottish Borders will attend incidents over the border when requested. Working across the border is a long-standing practice.

Protocols exist to enable the mobilising of SFRS appliances to incidents in Northumberland and Cumbria. We were advised however, that crews have limited access to information on risks on the MDT's in those areas and that the MDT system has no maps of the areas, though crews did have access to paper Ordnance Survey maps. We were advised that stations located close to the border sometimes use roads in England to attend incidents within Scotland as these roads provide a quicker response, these more direct routes are not covered by the MDT-based systems.

We were informed and saw that there was a similar lack of MDT maps and risk information between stations in the East and West Service Delivery Areas of the SFRS.

In addition to responding to incidents, SFRS provides cover from Coldstream for the RDS station area at Wooler, in Northumberland, when the appliance there is unavailable, with the NFRS station at Berwick reciprocating this arrangement for Eyemouth, when the Eyemouth appliance is unavailable.

We were advised that managers from both the NFRS and the SFRS continue to discuss and exchange information to support cross-border working and personnel safety, and make each FRS aware of any change in policies or procedures that impact on incident management. There have been recent changes in middle managers responsible for the North area of the NFRS and arrangements are in hand to continue the liaison work undertaken to date.



The NFRS and the SFRS attended and participated in a cross-border multi-agency exercise in May 2016, the scenario for which involved a mid-air collision resulting in one aircraft landing in England and the other in Scotland.

Working with the Scottish Ambulance Service

Scottish Borders is a pilot area for the SFRS Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) project, involving firefighters from Hawick, Coldstream and Lauder. Real benefits have been achieved in public safety with people being alive today as a result of this joint work. Other firefighters and the trade unions we spoke to were positive about the extension of the role to encompassing this wider public safety agenda provided it is accompanied with suitable training, equipment and welfare support. There is strong support from community safety partners, including the local authority and the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) for the SFRS's involvement in providing this important service to the public. More widely, the extended pilot project has been undergoing a service-wide evaluation and a report is due to go to the SFRS Board in November 2016. Some firefighters in the area who are not participants in the pilot, want the system implemented in their community.

A strong partnership exists locally between the SFRS and the SAS, primarily through operational incidents and, in a more limited way, preventative work, such as a young drivers' education programme. SAS area managers advised us they would welcome the opportunity to explore greater cooperation with the SFRS such as the opportunity for SAS personnel to use fire stations as a base in some outlying areas. Police Scotland already use a limited number of the fire stations as a base for their officers to use when required. We were advised locally that Police Scotland welcome the access to facilities that this provides and would welcome the opportunity to expand this arrangement to other stations in the Borders.

Workforce

The availability of RDS personnel and appliances is monitored locally at station level by individual Watch Manager and also by the relevant Station Manager.

At the time of the inspection there are 197 station-based operational firefighters, of whom 141 are RDS personnel.

We were advised that cadre of RDS personnel is currently under strength at some stations. The SFRS has centralised the management of the recruitment process, including the advertising of vacancies. In a number of stations, local managers are dissatisfied with the recruitment process due to the Service's priority system and the Service not engaging with managers at station level.

Within the centrally managed system, recruitment is prioritised to areas where the need for staff is deemed most urgent. This means that there are areas of the country where vacancies do exist and where potential candidates are known to be available, but recruitment is not undertaken because it is not a priority location.

We spoke to a number of officers, firefighters and trainees who described their own experience of and concerns with the recruitment process. The Service has undertaken a review of the RDS system which did encompass recruitment and retention of staff. We were advised of new recruits resigning after a few months due to a lack of understanding of the commitment required.

We found a varied picture of RDS availability. Whilst most stations had high availability levels, some stations had weekday crewing difficulty.

An electronic availability system, Gartan, is used by RDS staff to record their individual availability to respond and this is used to inform appliance availability. Gartan is mostly well supported and liked by staff. However, one of the difficulties with Gartan, as it is operated in Scottish Borders, is that system information is not readily available to personnel arriving at their station in response to a pager call. Personnel may not know how many crew members may be expected to respond or what the make-up may be in relation to drivers or those qualified in incident command. The crewing in a two pump station offers an extra level of complexity and the need for information.

In other parts of Scotland, we have seen monitors provided in the muster area of RDS fire stations for the display of crew availability, including personnel skill sets and the provision of this information is welcomed and works well. In the Scottish Borders there are no monitors displaying Gartan information.

We observed a significant number of RDS staff who are on a 75% availability contract but who are regularly providing well in excess of the hours availability required for a 100% contract. The LSO has provided some information that shows a degree of contract review has occurred in the past, particularly for addressing poor performance, but the extent of these issues would, in our view, warrant a fuller review being undertaken throughout the Scottish Borders, where there may be an opportunity to acknowledge commitment in excess of that contracted to.

A management ridership factor for the RDS single appliance stations is one Watch Manager and two Crew Managers, except for Duns and Newcastleton where station personnel believe this to be one Watch and one Crew Manager, due to the length of time where this has been the established position. This is placing additional pressures on the managers of these two stations to complete administration tasks.

The contribution that primary employers make to the provision of the RDS service, by releasing their staff, often goes unrecognised. A number of RDS firefighters expressed the view that there was scope for the SFRS to acknowledge this support and that this might make it easier to retain and recruit personnel and assist existing firefighters getting time off to attend incidents when needed. One member of staff who is also a primary employer of RDS firefighters confirmed that there was no contact and that contact would be welcomed.

Administrative support is provided by staff from the East SDA pool based at Newbridge near Edinburgh and at one station within the LSO area. The complement of staff supporting the LSO area have mostly been working in the area for some time and are ex-Lothian and Borders service. A feeling of being under-valued by the Service was expressed by a limited number of staff and consequently there is a general feeling of low morale amongst some support staff.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety reporting is carried out using the RIVO Safeguard system. Unlike other areas of Scotland we have visited, RDS stations in the Borders have not been granted access to the RIVO system. This has been a conscious decision, taken in order not to overburden RDS staff. If a Health and Safety event were to occur at a RDS station, initial reporting of this would be through Operations Control, all processing thereafter would be by Wholetime managers.

There has been a welcome reduction in the overall number of Health and Safety incidents in the last three financial years. There is evidence that the RIVO system has been used to record near-miss incidents which have increased in the last reporting year. Near-miss reporting is described by the Health and Safety Executive as a very important way of identifying problem areas; it is therefore encouraging that there has been an improvement in reporting. Performance reporting of Health and Safety events to the LSO is carried out, although it was acknowledged that outcomes from events could be more widely shared to improve awareness.

We indicated in the introduction to this report that the SFRS has a programme of internal station audits. These audits are carried out as part of the SFRS's Operational Assurance Policy. The station audits form part of the pre-incident audit arrangements of this policy. 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 audit outcomes. We reviewed the content of a limited sample of routine audit reports for some of the stations we visited. We feel that the reports do not always contain sufficient detail and evidence to support the judgements made by the auditors. And they contain limited advice on the development and delivery of action plans to remedy any noted deficiencies.

3.3 More equal access to specialist resources and national capacity

Capacity within the area

As mentioned above, some of the RDS stations are currently under complement and this is contributing to difficulties with appliance availability, particularly during the day. This is often 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, and are not available to crew an appliance during the day. However, this is not the case for every station and some have very good availability which is to be commended. Unavailability of RDS appliances is a Service-wide issue and the SFRS is well sighted on the matter and is undertaking a review of the Retained Duty System.

Specialist resources

Water rescue

Nationally the Service concluded a review of specialist equipment in early 2015. As a result of the review it was agreed that there would be some changes to the specialist resources currently based in the Scottish Borders. The High Volume Pump currently based at Hawick will be moved to another LSO area. Hawick will in future be the base for a swift water rescue capability, and training of personnel is ongoing, and at the time of our inspection the expectation was that a resource will be declared available in September 2016 on completion of the training and provision of equipment. The Service's plan is that water rescue capability in Galashiels will be enhanced by the provision of a dedicated vehicle and boat which will replace the current incident support vehicle.

In some areas of Scotland, as a result of legacy service policy, the SFRS provides remuneration of an additional responsibility allowance (ARA) to personnel who maintain specialist skills such as water rescue.

This type of payment has not been made to the staff at Hawick even though they have been maintaining the water rescue skill. This is inconsistent with the Galashiels personnel who are receiving the payment. We were advised that because the water rescue capability at Hawick has not been declared available, primarily due to a lack of equipment and a suitable vehicle, the ARA payment could not be made. This we were advised was because of limitations contained within the legacy ARA policy which restricted payments to declared capability only. We were further advised that as soon as the equipment and vehicle have been delivered and the capability declared, the ARA payment would be made. We would encourage the LSO to work with his colleagues from the Response and Resilience Directorate and Asset Management to resolve the issues relating to the delay in the delivery of the necessary equipment as a matter of urgency, as this issue has been unresolved for some time.

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.

3.4_ Strengthened connection between SFRS and communities

Knowing the community

Personnel described a feeling of being well connected to the community, particularly RDS personnel and happy to participate in a wide variety of local community events.

Home Fire Safety Visits are undertaken by Wholetime watches, Community Firefighters and some RDS personnel. There is an annual target for Wholetime watches for the completion of visits. In addition to providing support to station-based personnel, Community Firefighters also undertake the delivery of enhanced visits to vulnerable members of the community.

The SFRS standard Community Safety Engagement Toolkit (CSET) is used to record and report on visits. CSET is also monitored by Community Firefighters and Wholetime personnel to ensure that requests for areas covered by RDS stations are suitably actioned.

All the personnel we spoke to in the Scottish Borders area were very focused on the need to reduce the risk posed by road traffic accidents.

Working in partnership

As described above the LALO and a Community Firefighter are based within the Council Headquarters and this co-location is seen by SFRS staff and partners alike to provide great benefits in addressing issues quickly. A formal weekly multi-agency tasking and co-ordinating group has recently been established and the SFRS is represented at it. At the meeting, partners come together to discuss emerging issues from incidents, identify appropriate action and co-ordinate appropriate responses. The LALO and CSE team is involved, along with a number of community safety partners, including the voluntary sector and registered social landlords, in the development and implementation of a number of wide ranging initiatives relating to areas such as youth education, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, driver awareness schemes, wilful fire raising and home safety with vulnerable persons groups.

In particular, the Cheviot area home safety initiative, Living Safely in the Home, has been submitted to the SFRS Board for consideration to be put forward to the Scottish Government as a Social Impact Pledge. A Social Impact Pledge is a Scottish Government initiative aimed at increasing the social impact of public sector organisations by making a commitment to increase their social impact through a public commitment to change three aspects of their current operations or policies.

There is evidence of these strong partnerships generating referrals for home fire safety visits. The LALO has also been delivering training and awareness to partner organisations in fire safety and the referral process.

Further evidence of the partnership work to extend the contribution that SFRS provides to the communities of Scottish Borders, is the work the CSE team have been doing with Heat Energy Scotland to enable SFRS staff to identify and refer people who may be in fuel poverty. Equally, Heat Energy Scotland staff will also be able to refer people for HFSVs.

One area of slight concern expressed to us is the time taken out of the RDS training programme for RDS personnel to be briefed on these new preventative initiatives.

In support of local resilience capability there is a developing partnership with Scottish Borders Resilience Group; the SFRS attends its meetings during the year. A major focus of the Group has been the preparedness for the response to flooding events.

Local scrutiny arrangements

Scottish Borders Council's scrutiny committee for fire and rescue service issues – Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board – receives regular submissions and performance data from the LSO's team.

At the scrutiny meeting which we observed, statistics of SFRS activity in Scottish Borders for the period covering 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 were presented with comparative data for previous years and benchmarked against performance in the SFRS East Service Delivery Area and Scotland as a whole. Detail at local ward area was also contained within the performance report which allows for more localised scrutiny by elected members if desired.

We think that the SFRS performance reporting of Fire Safety Enforcement work could be improved. Performance is reported on the basis of the number of fire safety audits achieved against personal targets. A more meaningful report might include some information on risk, outputs, and outcomes.

From our discussions with the Council Acting Chief Executive, the Chair of the Scrutiny Board of the Scottish Borders Council and a representative of the voluntary sector who is also a member of the Scrutiny Board, a very positive picture was generated about the level of engagement with the LSO and Service. The council is very satisfied with the performance reporting mechanism and level of detail provided to elected members. Overall, the Service was described as being a very good community planning partner, providing good detail of user-friendly reports to the Board and always willing to provide more. The Service interacts well with the council's community safety team and is seen as a key partner at the Community Planning Partnership level.

3.5 Overall conclusions

There are strong local partnerships. SFRS staff and managers are seen as being open and engaging and willing to act to support partners' objectives where possible.

There are structures in place for local scrutiny of the SFRS, with elected members and council officials satisfied with the performance reporting provided by the LSO and his team. The level of scrutiny within Scottish Borders is similar to examples we have seen elsewhere.

Personnel within the area demonstrate great commitment to the local community and to the Service.

We were impressed by the knowledge, standard and commitment shown by many of the officers within the Scottish Borders area. The LSO has inherited a good team in order to address the risks and challenges that he faces.

We have identified a number of issues during the inspection which we have highlighted in this report. In order to assist the LSO we are suggesting below issues which the LSO may wish to explore further and if appropriate act upon.

There is one issue that we feel stands out above the others and should be acted upon as quickly as possible, because of its potential to affect firefighter safety and that is in relation to the availability of risk information to crews in the South and West of the Scottish Borders area when attending incidents, including those over the border with England.

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. In relation to certain significant issues that we encountered in the course of this inspection we would highlight the following:


- The LSO should investigate the provision of risk information and mapping and take steps to ensure that comprehensive, tailored and up-to-date maps and site-specific operational risk information is available to crews through the appliance MDTs.
- The LSO should discuss with colleagues in the SFRS Training and Employee Development department how the new training planner can be adapted to recognise the competing demands on RDS staff.
- The LSO should review RDS contracts to see whether there is any scope to revise contracts to appropriately reflect the actual availability provided.

- The LSO should consider how relationships with RDS local primary employers may be improved.
- We encourage the LSO, in conjunction with colleagues within the SFRS Training and Employee Development department, to review the delivery of hot fire training and explore all potential sites, including the use of mobile units and facilities over the border, in order that staff can continue to maintain their competency.
- The LSO should continue to actively seek the opinion, even anonymously, of his staff about their own experience and views of the RDS recruitment process and appropriately share any findings.
- The LSO should, in conjunction with colleagues in the Prevention and Protection directorate, identify what community safety engagement material and resources are available centrally to enable CSE staff to engage more effectively.
- The LSO should take the lead and work with Asset Management to identify, where possible, a solution which would allow the existing spine boards to be carried on all appliances.
- We would encourage the LSO to assess the possibility of creating an additional employee engagement forum at a station level in conjunction with employee representative bodies.
- We would encourage the LSO to reassess the local performance framework and, if possible, refine or adapt personal targets to meet changes in local community risks.
- The LSO should explore what potential there is to enable RDS personnel to access training systems using the existing Wi-Fi facilities at stations.
- The LSO should continue to provide encouragement to staff to appropriately report Health and Safety near-misses.
- The LSO should examine what scope there is to remove the inconsistency in the payment of additional responsibility allowance payments for water rescue by removing any remaining barriers to declaring this capability.

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.

ARA	Additional Responsibility Allowance
BA	Breathing Apparatus
CPP	Community Planning Partnership
CSE	Community Safety Engagement
EO	Enforcement Officer
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
FSE	Fire Safety Enforcement
HFSV	Home Fire Safety Visit
LALO	Local Area Liaison Officer
LCMS	Learning Content Management System: an online learning resource for firefighters
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
OHCA	Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest
ORI	Operational Risk Information
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
PPED	Prevention and Protection Enforcement Database
RDS	Retained Duty System
SAS	Scottish Ambulance Service



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
TED	Training and Employee Development
2005 Act	The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005



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