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# HM Fire Service Inspectorate

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## Local Area Inspection Moray



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**Integrity, Objectivity, and Fairness.**



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Inspectorate**

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## Acknowledgements

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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

This is the first local area inspection we have carried out since Scottish Ministers published the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016 in September last year. This Framework continues to set 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 continues to set strategic priorities for the Service to achieve, but in a change to the previous Framework, the new Framework devolves responsibility for developing performance measures to the SFRS, albeit subject to Ministerial approval. At the time of writing this report, targets and measures have not been agreed and published. Therefore discussion within the report regarding how well the SFRS is performing in Moray, is done in part, with reference to the 2013 national targets. In future local area inspections, we anticipate that we will reference new performance measures when they are available.


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 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:

- 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;
- maintain a good level of awareness of the Service's functions and build 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. For this reason we have now adopted a structure where the findings in our report follow the structure of the 2016 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. For example, our observation on the tri-service use of Tomintoul Fire Station could be recorded against strategic priority three, response and resilience, regarding tri-service co-operation or priority four, working with others. 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 we visited every fire station in the area, speaking to Retained Duty System (RDS) crew members on their training night and the Wholetime duty watch at the time of our visit to Elgin Fire Station. We also met separately with the RDS firefighters based at Elgin, and visited the volunteer station at Gordonstoun School. In addition, 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.

Meetings were held with representatives of Moray Council; Police Scotland; Maritime and Coastguard Agency; and the voluntary sector. During our inspection we observed a meeting of the local authority scrutiny committee – the Police and Fire and Rescue Services Committee. We also observed a multi-agency exercise at an industrial site.

To gauge service users' opinion of the SFRS we contacted all 17 Community Councils within Moray. 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 November and early December 2016. The SFRS is continuing to change and evolve and consequently material changes may have occurred since then.

## A summary of our findings

### Key points

- Our overall impression of the SFRS's work in Moray is in the main positive. The vast majority of staff were very committed to the community and to the SFRS.
- The Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Moray follows the general generic 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. That said, of the six targets that the Moray area can contribute to the Service's national targets, a recent scrutiny report states it has exceeded the majority of indicators.
- Partnership working is well embedded.
- There are scrutiny arrangements in place at a Council-wide level. Elected members and Council officials we spoke with describe a positive relationship with the Service.
- Challenges exist around the resourcing of community safety in Moray at a management level. The Group Manager position is a shared resource between two LSO areas, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. Which effectively means that one individual is reporting to two separate LSOs and is responsible for overseeing Prevention and Protection activity in three local authorities that cover a wide geographical area. A similar position exists in relation to the Local Area Liaison Officer position, albeit this post only covers the Moray and Aberdeenshire Council areas, which is still a very large geographical area for one person.
- A formal weekly tasking meeting of Community Safety partners has recently been established, where decisions 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 the information needed to develop strategies.
- Fire Safety Enforcement (FSE) is 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 Moray. The RDS cadre of personnel at the time of the inspection was under strength. The SFRS has centralised its management of the recruitment process. In a number of stations, local managers are frustrated with the recruitment process and the time taken to recruit.
- The SFRS has yet to introduce standard conditions for RDS staff throughout Scotland. In Moray the training night commitment is two and a half hours, while in some parts of Scotland it is two hours and in others 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. The majority of personnel we spoke to would welcome an additional half an hour training per week.
- Although of varying ages, fire station facilities are generally satisfactory. All have a level of IT provision, though there are some issues around system connectivity and general availability of computers. At the time of our visit new broadband connections were being updated in some stations as a result of a contract to improve SFRS's wide area network connectivity. It is hoped that this work will improve overall system speeds.



- A number of the fire appliances operating within Moray are comparatively dated, however despite their age, were generally in good repair. Due to the change of vehicle maintenance location to Dundee, some concern was expressed by personnel relating to a lack of clarity around future servicing of appliances.
- 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.
- A large proportion of the firefighters we spoke to felt that there had been a 'watering down' of the centrally provided training when compared to the training provided by the legacy service of Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, particularly the fire behaviour training delivered at the Portlethen training centre. Firefighters also reported a reduction in the number of visits from Training Officers to support the delivery of training.
- A number of firefighters raised the issue of the availability of driver training courses. The appropriateness of the driver training course was also raised with us. When delivered it is usually done in the centre of Aberdeen and therefore doesn't necessarily replicate the driving conditions experienced on the rural roads of Moray. In the same vein, we understand that a number of days had been assigned for training which, in our view, was of limited relevance to the Moray area. It is our understanding that three days of training input in the SFRS High Rise Premises policy was delivered. It is our opinion that, due to the limited number of premises in Moray likely to meet the policy criteria, this time could be better spent.
- 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 and a half hour training night. Some personnel have been maintaining records in their own time.
- The recording of standard testing of equipment at fire stations became fragmented prior to the termination of the contract for the system previously used by the legacy Grampian Fire and Rescue Service. Due to failures of the hand-held scanners or other hardware, some stations had been unable to record details of tests undertaken for a number of months prior to the termination of the contract. We feel that the paper-based recording process, introduced as an interim measure, contains inadequate detail of all equipment testing to ensure that accurate records are maintained to provide assurance. This is particularly important in respect of risk critical equipment.
- The rate of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) conducted per 1,000 dwellings of 20.4 is the second lowest in Scotland (behind Aberdeenshire) and below the Scotland average of 28.1, though the rate has increased from 16.6 visits per 1,000 dwellings the previous reporting year.
- The rate of false alarms per 100,000 population for Moray at 578 was lower than the overall rate for Scotland of 909.

- Operational crews are generally content with the progress of fire reform, although there is a feeling of an over-abundance of new information, procedures and awareness briefings, with an inability to process it all. Concern was expressed that safety critical information could potentially be missed.
- Although Business Continuity Plans (BCP) were in place for stations within the Moray area, we felt that they were limited in detail and did not recognise the full range of potential risks. We feel that the BCP should be reviewed and strengthened.
- The inclusion within the role of an officer in the Moray area to act as a 'champion' for the reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) is a positive way forward.
- The recent change of Pre-Determined Attendances (PDAs), particularly to distilleries, is having a detrimental impact on local RDS staff and their primary employers.
- Establishment of the RDS is an issue, both with the recruitment and availability. A number of issues were raised during our inspection in respect to: the recruitment process; leave criteria; training and mobilising procedures. These are identified within strategic priority 10 :- People.
- The situation regarding Operational Risk Information (ORI) gathering, updating and storage is highlighted as a concern within this report and we identify it as a significant issue which the LSO should explore.

## 2\_About the area



For full map key see Glossary

Moray, area number 20 on the map above, is located in the north east of Scotland and is the 8th largest Council area in Scotland. It covers an area of 864 square miles (2,238 square kilometres), from the Cairngorm Mountains in the south to the coast of the Moray Firth in the north<sup>1</sup>. It has a border with the local authority areas of Aberdeenshire and the Highlands.

<sup>1</sup> SFRS Local Plan – Moray 2014-17 [http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/610260/sfrs\\_local\\_plan\\_moray\\_v1.pdf](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/610260/sfrs_local_plan_moray_v1.pdf)

The population of Moray in 2015 was 95,510<sup>2</sup>; an increase of 0.8% from 94,770 in 2014. The population of Moray accounts for 1.8% of the total population of Scotland and in terms of its population ranks 26th out of 32 local authorities in Scotland.

Over half of the population live in the five main towns of Elgin, Forres, Buckie, Lossiemouth and Keith.

Moray has a lower proportion of the population aged 16 to 29 than Scotland: 16.2% in Moray compared to the Scottish figure of 18.2%, but a higher proportion of the population aged 60 and over: 26.5% of Moray and 24.2% in Scotland.

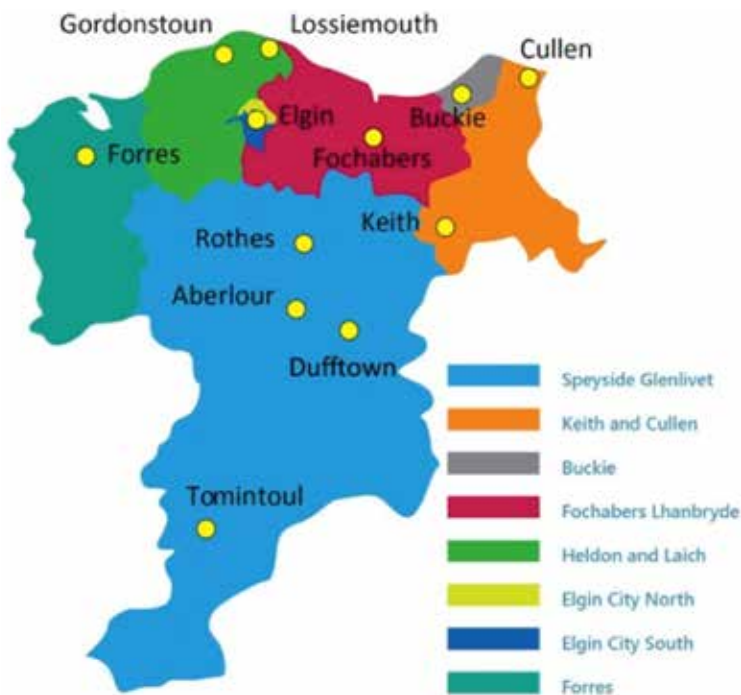
Since 1989, Moray's population has risen overall, in line with Scotland's population which has also risen over this period. The population of Moray is projected to increase by 4.1% by 2039 compared to the population in 2014, to be 98,680. This increase is lower than for Scotland as a whole which is projected to increase by 7.5% between 2014 and 2039. Over this 25 year period, the age group that is projected to increase the most in size in Moray is the 75+ age group, which is the same as for Scotland as a whole.

The population aged under 16 in Moray is projected to decline by 8.1% over the same 25 year period.

The LSO for Moray is also responsible for the delivery of services for SFRS in the neighbouring local authority area of Aberdeenshire. Moray is around one-third of the area and population of Aberdeenshire, but in profile, the areas present similar challenges to the LSO and his team.

There are 12 fire stations in Moray, their locations are shown in the map of the Moray area below, ten are crewed by Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel and one by Wholetime (Elgin), which also has a retained crewed appliance. Gordonstoun is a volunteer station crewed from Gordonstoun School.

<sup>2</sup> National Records of Scotland, Council Area Profiles – <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/stats-at-a-glance/council-area-profiles>



Map of the Moray Council ward areas showing fire station locations

Alphabetically the stations are:

Aberlour, Buckie (2 pumps), Cullen, Dufftown, Elgin (2 pumps), Fochabers, Forres (2 pumps), Gordonstoun, Keith, Lossiemouth, Rothes, Tomintoul.

**In terms of emergency vehicles**, there are 15 pumps in Moray, 14 with a rescue capability, one high volume pump, one flood response unit, one forest and moorland firefighting vehicle, one water carrier, and one incident support vehicle.

## A look at some key incident statistics for the Moray area

Appliances from Moray turned out a total of 1,206 times<sup>3</sup> in 2015-16 in response to 935 recorded incidents<sup>4</sup> as shown in table 1 below.

Incident type	2014-15	2015-16	Change 2014-15 to 2015-16
Primary fire	142	125	-17
Secondary fire	104	95	-9
Chimney fire	38	29	-9
Non-fire	156	129	-27
False alarm including non-fire false alarms	575	557	-18
<b>Total incidents</b>	<b>1,015</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>-80</b>

**Table 1: Incidents recorded in Moray 2014-15 to 2015-16**

There were 47 accidental dwelling fire incidents in 2015-16, an 11.5% reduction (6 fires) on the previous year. This is a rate of 1.13 fires per 1,000 households, and is lower than the rate for Scotland as a whole<sup>5</sup>, of 2.11.

There were no fire fatalities in Moray during 2015-16, though there were 11 non-fatal casualties<sup>6</sup>. In comparison to the Scotland rate of non-fatal casualties per 1,000 accidental dwelling fires, Moray, in 2015-16 at 234, was higher than the national rate of 179.

There has been a reduction of 6% in deliberate fires with a total of 72 for 2015-16, 74% of these were secondary fires<sup>7</sup>, 48% of which involved refuse or bins and 44% involved grassland.

557 false alarms were reported in 2015-16, a decrease of 18 on the previous year. 62.4% of these false alarms are recorded as being unwanted fire alarm signals.

The rate of false alarms per 100,000 population for Moray at 578 was lower than the overall rate for Scotland of 909.

The rate of non-fire related incidents per 100,000 population in Moray is the second lowest in Scotland (behind the Orkney Islands), at 135. The rate for Scotland as a whole is 239. The biggest change in non-fire incident was in flooding incidents, with none in 2015-16, which is a reduction from the 30 recorded in the previous year 2014-15.


<sup>3</sup> Statistics supplied by the SFRS in the *Moray Performance Report 2015-2016*. Totals are provisional and may be subject to change as a result of quality assurance and review.

<sup>4</sup> Published incident statistics from *Fire and Rescue Statistics in Scotland 2015-16*, <http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/about-us/fire-and-rescue-statistics.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Scotland figure taken from the published Annual Performance Review 2015-2016, [http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/975512/sfrs\\_ann\\_perf\\_review\\_2015\\_16\\_v1.0.pdf](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/975512/sfrs_ann_perf_review_2015_16_v1.0.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> This includes casualties recorded as precautionary check.

<sup>7</sup> 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).



The rate of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) conducted per 1,000 dwellings of 20.4 is the second lowest in Scotland (behind Aberdeenshire) and below the Scotland average of 28.1, though the rate has increased from 16.6 visits per 1,000 dwellings in the previous reporting year. We acknowledge that performance is, in part, due to the historic lack of specifically dedicated community safety staff within Moray to undertake HFSV.

## 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 which was published in September not long before our fieldwork commenced. The Framework sets the strategic direction for fire and rescue, and has chapters on protecting communities: risk, prevention and response; evolving the role of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; governance, accountability and performance. 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 One**

**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.**

As mentioned earlier, at the time of our inspection performance measures have not been agreed. Therefore for our assessment of how the Service is performing within the Moray area, we are using as a guide the targets previously set by the Scottish Government in the 2013 Fire and Rescue Framework.

#### **The Local Fire and Rescue Plan and Single Outcome Agreement**

The 2005 Act requires SFRS to publish a delivery plan for the local authority area. At the time of our inspection, the 2014–2017 plan for the Moray Council area was current. There are similarities in the way the 32 local plans of the 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 Moray Plan follows the general format that the Service has 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 within the Plan.

The SFRS Local Plan contains a matrix to indicate how its seven priorities align to the SFRS strategic aims, as well as the National Outcomes and to the SFRS's own equality outcomes.

The SFRS Local Plan 2014–2017 sets priorities, actions and outcomes for the Moray area, within which it creates links to SFRS national targets. The area has six targets to contribute to the Service's national targets. A recent scrutiny report submitted to the local authority shows that the majority of indicators have been exceeded.

The Service nationally is in the process of developing new local plans for the 32 local authority areas. The development timescales for each draft Plan is determined by local circumstances, therefore consultation dates for each will vary over the course of 2017.

In addition to the SFRS Local Plan for Moray, there is a further sub-set of Multi-Ward Operational Plans for the eight council wards within Moray. The sub-set of information contained in these plans is a breakdown of SFRS local activity, and provides a depth of information which enables a more detailed local scrutiny if desired. Ward performance reports are also published to allow greater scrutiny, and these performance reports also provide benchmarking against the other LSO areas within the North SDA.



A Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) is a document created at local authority level, which sets out a number of agencies, who are members of the local Community Planning Partnership, that 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 SOA for Moray has been replaced by a 10-year plan, *Moray 2026*. This latest version updates *Moray 2023*. *Moray 2026* contains one specific fire improvement indicator, the number of accidental dwelling fires. The target for 2016-17 is 51 with an aim to reduce further to 34 by the year 2026. Intermediate targets are given within the plan for the following financial years, 2020-21 and 2023-24. The intention is to review, update and extend the 10-year plan every two years after 2017.

As a Community Planning Partner, the SFRS is contributing to the work of the Partnership in achieving the outcomes of the plan in areas other than just fire. For example, measures relating to the number of casualties due to road traffic collisions by severity, are contained within the plan. The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has declared that it is fully committed to prevention and expects all partners to adopt a preventive approach to intervention to ensure they are aiming towards the following outcomes:

- A reduced need for public services in future by having helped people to retain their independence in the face of age, ill health, disability and other such circumstances.
- A more resilient and self-sustaining population which requires little or no public support in relation to unemployment, crime, domestic violence and so on.

Although CPP partners acknowledge that the SFRS plays a strategic part within the partnership, we were advised that a greater attendance of the LSO in person would benefit the collective and overall decision-making process. CPP members do, however, recognise that the LSO covers two large geographic areas and his capacity to attend is limited. Although concerns were raised by partners about consistent representation of SFRS at strategic workgroups, we believe that there may be some confusion around SFRS's attendance. SFRS manages attendance at meetings in a delegated way, with officers being empowered at various levels. We would therefore encourage the LSO to re-emphasise to partners the agreed attendance structure for these meetings.

We would like to highlight that we believe the performance management framework currently within the Moray area is incomplete and would benefit from further development. 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 the station.

What we have observed in Moray, and in other areas of the country, is a partial picture. As we have described in this report we have examined a number of documents for Moray which form part of the overall Performance Framework, however, we were unable to review station plans, as these have not been produced. We believe that the LSO should be working towards a comprehensive performance system where individual contributions to the Service's overall performance can be linked and demonstrated.

## 3.2 Protecting Communities: Risk, Prevention and Response

### Strategic Priority 2: Safety, Well-being and Prevention

The SFRS should fully contribute to improving the safety and well-being 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

There is one Group Manager and a Station Manager with responsibility for Prevention and Protection across the LSO area of Moray and Aberdeenshire. Additionally, the Group Manager is continuing to carry out this role for the Aberdeen City LSO area, a situation that we highlighted in our 2015 report on service delivery in Aberdeen City.

We were informed that this was having a detrimental impact on the Service being able to operate to a level that is expected by partners. There is a likelihood that SFRS may be seen as not being fully committed to its role of Prevention and Protection, or the officers being sidelined, due to a perceived lack of engagement. We do however recognise that there are a number of groups in the local area convened to co-ordinate and plan community planning matters, for example; the Community Engagement Group, the Community Planning Officer Group, and the Prevention Working Group. A similar structure could be expected to exist in the other part of the LSO area which contributes to the reduced ability to engage.

In addition to the Community Safety Engagement (CSE) work of operational personnel, CSE is also provided by dedicated staff who are based at Elgin Fire Station and although not permanently co-located with Council community safety staff, they have use of Moray Council premises. Fire Safety Enforcement (FSE) staff are based in Elgin Fire Station.

Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) are undertaken by Wholetime watches, Community Safety Advocate and some RDS personnel. There is an annual target for the completion of visits. In addition to providing support to station-based personnel, the Local Area Liaison Officer (LALO) and Community Safety Advocate also undertake the delivery of enhanced visits to vulnerable members of the community. At the time of our inspection the Community Safety Advocate was temporarily in post and due to move to another role shortly after our visit, which could be expected to have an impact on the delivery community safety activity.

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

Increasing numbers of HFSVs have been delivered in the Moray area over the last three-years and this trend is continuing in the 2016-17 financial year. A total of 917 visits were delivered in 2015-16, an increase of 286 from the previous year. 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. This has been primarily due to a lack of dedicated Community Safety staff to undertake the enhanced visits to high risk households.

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The LALO has provided training to Council staff to assist in generating referrals to SFRS of potentially vulnerable individuals. In the six month period 01.04.2016 – 30.09.2016 there were a total of 176 such referrals. This level of activity demonstrates the benefit of engaging with partners to proactively refer people who may otherwise not have come to the attention of the SFRS. There are also protocols for the sharing of relevant information by the SFRS to partners where issues of concern are identified during HFVSs.

Some of the work of the community safety team and partners, notably Operation Avon, is directed towards youth engagement work in an effort to reduce deliberate fires. There has been a small reduction in the number of deliberate fires in the Moray area, 68, down from 72 the previous year. Seven of these fires were in non-domestic buildings which was a small increase over the previous year.

Although the SFRS's community safety staff are primarily dedicated to working in the Moray area there is a degree of working across the whole LSO area and into Aberdeen City when required.

There is a perception by some partners that SFRS is currently unable to financially contribute to some community safety initiatives and this was a barrier to the SFRS fully engaging. Although there has been a change in funding stream from that previously available, SFRS does still make financial contributions at an individual initiative level, an example being Moray Smoke Free Homes. Additionally SFRS would contribute in-kind through the participation of its workforce.

Overall operational 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.

### **Fire Safety Enforcement**

There are two Enforcement Officers (EOs) based in Elgin. One of the EOs works primarily in the Moray area. The enforcement staff, as with the CSE staff, are considered a LSO area resource. Therefore the staff will carry out enforcement work elsewhere in the LSO area.

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 Moray 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 working in Moray.

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. However, staff within Moray are given a personal target of 99 audits to conduct. In 2015-16 a total of 193<sup>8</sup> premises were audited, an increase of 79 audits on the previous year.

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

Records of 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 Fire Safety Enforcement data across Scotland. The legacy service of Grampian Fire and Rescue Service used different systems to record its fire safety audit work. The historic records of previous audits conducted in the Grampian area were not migrated over to the new system. Although a download of data from the legacy systems was retained this information has not been transferred to PPED. 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 Moray. A local system is used for the scheduling of audits.

We reviewed some FSE case file communication with dutyholders and found a very good standard of communication by comparison with the processes generally prevailing within the SFRS.

However, we witnessed a situation where the copy of an enforcement letter to a dutyholder that was saved on PPED, contained a difference from the actual letter sent out. To be robust we think that local practice should change and that copies of signed letters, as issued, should be saved to PPED.

### **Strategic Priority 3: Response and Resilience**

**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.**

Defining the location for fire stations and, in the main, the resources in the Moray 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 Grampian Fire and Rescue Service or the previously withdrawn recommended standards of fire cover, which were set nationally by government.

The way in which SFRS defines its activities, and to a limited degree, its resources within a local authority area is through the requirement to produce a local plan, which we mentioned earlier. The process by which the plans are produced involves consultation with public sector partners and others across the community safety arena.

At the moment, most of the scope to target resources where they are most needed, as expected by the above strategic priority, rests in the prevention function of the Service rather than the response, i.e. numbers and locations of fire stations and operational personnel. The targeting of intervention resources, i.e. firefighters and fire appliances is predominately a national SFRS function, rather than at a LSO level. A wide ranging review of fire cover provision i.e. the location of fire appliances and fire stations, commenced in April 2014 with the aim of identifying obvious gaps, duplication or over-provision in service delivery, to inform a new standard approach to fire cover, rather than that of the legacy services. We observed in our report on Planning and Defining Service Resources in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service<sup>9</sup>, that the fire cover review offered the SFRS the opportunity to promote innovation and challenge traditional delivery models used previously. The outcomes of the SFRS review have yet to be published.

The level of operational activity varied across the stations, from an average over the past five years of 17 incidents per year at Tomintoul Fire Station to 424 at Elgin<sup>10</sup> (the Unit at Gordonstoun School is covered separately in an annex to the report).

Generally operational crews are content with the progress of fire reform, although there had been a number of perceived teething problems. There is a feeling of an over-abundance of new information, procedures and awareness briefings, and inability to process it all, with the concern, expressed by some personnel, that potentially safety critical information may be missed. There was acknowledgement by some firefighters that more recently there had been a limited improvement in the number of communications received. The staff most affected by the increase in the level of communication are the non-dual contract RDS personnel who have a finite time to complete all that is required during a training night. (Dual contractors are Wholtime 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 Moray has dual contract personnel.

## **Stations**

The fire station buildings and associated training facilities are of varying ages with fabric generally in good condition. On-station training facilities are normally limited in RDS stations, and this is the case in Moray which is predominately RDS. In most cases facilities are restricted to an open area attached to the station to conduct training and a tower for ladder and working at height practice. Elgin station has a BA training facility, which previously had the capability to be used for hot compartment fire behaviour training. However, the gas burning system has been decommissioned; this has been a source of frustration to station personnel.

The fire station at Tomintoul is unique within the Moray area in that the station is a tri-service facility. It is also used as a base by officers from Police Scotland and by the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). An extension was added to the fire station in 2014 to provide additional accommodation to house the police and ambulance staff.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00486723.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Station mobilisations which do not result in an attendance at an incident are not included in these figures.

## **Appliances and Equipment**

### **Appliances**


The appliances are of varying ages, and 13 out of 16 response vehicles are over ten years old. However despite the age of most of them, all were in good repair. Until recently, appliances from Moray had been maintained at the vehicle workshops in Aberdeen, but the facility closed in 2016 and a new asset resource centre, which includes workshops, opened in Dundee. Some station personnel expressed the view that there was now a lack of clarity around the future servicing of the appliances due to this change. We believe that more could be done to communicate the servicing schedule of vehicles so that crews could contribute more in making concerns known. It would also enable better planning of training on station if crews knew when appliances would be taken for servicing.

### **Equipment**

The legacy service used an electronic asset management system to maintain a record of appliance equipment and the periodic and standard tests carried out on that equipment. These 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 legacy system used a barcode to identify equipment and a hand-held scanner to read those barcodes, with the details of tests maintained on a computer record.

Following the creation of the single service, a decision was taken to move to another method of recording this type of information and not to continue with the legacy electronic system. The SFRS replacement system was not due to be in place by the time of the official termination of the legacy system in December 2016. During our inspection it became clear that, because of the departure of key personnel and failures of the hand-held scanners or other hardware, some stations had been unable to electronically record details of tests undertaken prior to the termination of the contract. In fact the inability to record information electronically for some stations goes back as far as December 2015. As an interim measure until the replacement SFRS system is available, a process of recording on paper tests undertaken was instigated in September 2016, nine months after the first failure of the electronic system. However, we feel that the interim measure of the introduction of paper records contain inadequate detail to ensure that accurate and comprehensive records are maintained to provide assurance of all equipment testing. For example, equipment with multiple components, such as safe working at height equipment, have only one paper record for the whole kit, rather than one record for each component part. This new paper process has temporarily, although only partly resolved the issue, there remains the fact that a gap, in some cases a considerable number of months, was allowed to develop in the recording of information. The LSO should ensure that a robust system is implemented locally until such time as the new national recording system is in full operation.

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.

An issue that was raised at a number of stations was the reduction in the number of spare BA cylinders since the introduction of the new sets. We understand that there has been a rationalisation of the number of cylinders when a BA servicing and charging facility at Elgin station was created. Crews at some of the more remote stations within Moray advised that they are experiencing long delays on the recharging and replacement of BA cylinders. This is further exacerbated during inclement weather. Due to the time taken to replace BA cylinders, although meeting the minimum training requirements, personnel are not carrying out BA training as regularly as they once did in order to keep charged cylinders available for operational use.

We examined a number of BA log books that are used to record the maintenance, condition and use of individual BA sets, and found that these were being completed regularly.

We are aware that the Service has procured a piece of equipment to be used in conjunction with BA sets. Emergency Air Supply Equipment (EASE) provides access to a supplementary supply of air into a BA set when it's in use within an irrespirable atmosphere. It is intended to be used in an emergency when removal of the BA wearer to fresh air is not possible, for example when the firefighter is injured or trapped. The Service has nationally provided the equipment and training in its use. However, despite this it has not been declared available by SFRS Response and Resilience Directorate to be used were it ever required at an incident, and it is not carried on appliances. The LSO should pursue this issue with colleagues in Response and Resilience to resolve it as soon as possible.

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 routinely fixed to BA sets, then they are limited in numbers.

### **Hydraulic Rescue Equipment**

New Holmatro Hydraulic Rescue Equipment was being introduced at Elgin station at the time of our fieldwork. With additional training on its use, this enhancement has been widely welcomed by the crew.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

A new process to launder and repair Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has recently been introduced in the Moray area. PPE is now collected and taken to the asset resource centre in Dundee. Previously PPE had been laundered at each station. There was a large scale opinion amongst staff that the new arrangement has introduced delays in getting equipment washed and also issues around the return of the correct PPE. The PPE we did see appears to be maintained to a good level. Individual firefighter PPE log-books were also being maintained to record regular checks.

## **Strategic Priority 4: Response and 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.**

In support of developing resilience capability, SFRS has an established relationship with Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) and routinely attends its meetings during the year. Grampian LRP is part of the North of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership (NSRRP). A major focus of the LRP has been in helping to co-ordinate the preparedness for the response to flooding events.

A number of partners made mention of the benefit that fire service reform had brought by way of greater access to national resources, particularly during the widespread flooding that occurred in the north-east area in 2016. SFRS resources from as far south as the central belt were mobilised to the area to assist. Though there was praise for the work of SFRS on this occasion, there was some criticism of the overall flexibility of working of some other members of the LRP, which was felt had hindered the collective response of partners.

We observed a pre-planned multi-pump, multi-agency exercise at a distillery during our inspection. The objectives of the exercise were to test the abilities of the key participating agencies to meet the requirements of the 'Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH)' and to specifically initiate and test the site owner's on-site emergency plan, and the emergency plans of key external agencies including SFRS. In our view, the exercise was well managed, with SFRS playing an effective and integral part within it. A comprehensive debrief was undertaken at the conclusion of the exercise and a number of learning points were identified.

The main points specific to the SFRS related around:

- During most of the exercise, the Incident Commander (IC) was positioned away from the Multi-Agency Strategic Coordination Group (SCG), as he was undertaking the roles of both the Operational Commander and Incident Commander. This resulted in key decisions in the (SCG) being made in his absence, which appeared to make the SCG involvement a 'table-top' exercise whilst the main exercise was running independently.
- Communication between Incident ground and SCG was limited.
- Command and Control Tabard management was lacking, causing confusion on roles of personnel.
- Radio protocol was poor with multi-transmissions being made at the same time, resulting in regular bleed over and requirements to repeat of messages. Better radio procedures should be adopted.
- Water Runoff from firefighting was well managed, but needs to be highlighted in the plan to ensure damage is mitigated to a minimum.



These points were all captured and will be addressed within the 'lessons learnt' to improve the On-Site Emergency Plan.

### **Specialist resources**

There are a small number of specialist resources maintained within the Moray area based at Elgin Fire Station, including water rescue, high volume pumping, and wildfire.

The Service concluded a national 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 nationally and Elgin was planned to be the location for additional resources of Environmental Protection and Hazardous Materials. Following the national review of specialist equipment a further decision was taken to relocate the equipment to Peterhead to better reflect the risk in the area.

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.

### **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.**

There is one Temporary Watch Manager with the function of Local Area Liaison Officer (LALO). The LALO has line management responsibility for the single temporary Community Safety Advocate (CSA) in Moray. The member of staff filling the CSA post was temporary in that role and was due to move to another post within the Service.

When undertaking interviews, one of the concerns raised by partners was the turnover of staff from 'blue light' organisations, and therefore the lack of continuity and a perceived lack of commitment of that organisation. The SFRS management team within the Moray area has been consistent for some time, however, as officers work a rota system this may appear to partners as turnover of staff. We note that there is shortly to be a turnover in senior management in the area due to officer's length in service and age profile, we would therefore encourage the SFRS to consider its succession planning to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to meet movement or unavailability of key staff.

The LALO for Moray is the main point of contact for Community Planning Partners, who were very supportive of the LALO and the engagement and contribution that he makes to the work of the partnership. Community safety activity in the Moray area is co-ordinated as a whole at a Community Safety Hub at the council offices. The Hub operates similarly to others we have seen elsewhere, there are formal weekly meetings of multi-agency partners to collectively agree on the actions to take in response to incident activity. In addition to the regular meetings there is also daily contact when required. These partners work to develop and implement

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. We found a strong commitment from personnel to promoting all aspects of community safety. An example of this was the involvement of SFRS personnel in Operation Avon, an initiative to tackle underage drinking and anti-social behaviour in young people in the Moray area.

### 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 well-being of communities throughout Scotland by building on the traditional roles carried out by the Service.**

All the fire stations are provided with networked computers to allow personnel to carry out the various administrative functions relative to their role, such as recording training undertaken. RDS stations have a limited number of computers. All single pump stations have three, although one of these is a dedicated Gartan system computer and therefore not available for general use. Two pump RDS stations have five, because of the larger number of personnel. The Wholetime/RDS station at Eglin has 15. Generally, connectivity to central systems has been slow in all stations. Due to the use of PCs for the delivery of on-line learning and the need to record that training undertaken, the limited number of PCs and poor connectivity means that staff are spending long periods recording training and other station activity. This is constraining the overall time available for training and essential work.

The problems created by slow network 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 has been aware of the issues related to IT systems and connectivity for some time and 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 and to give a minimum speed of five megabits per second download and one megabit per second upload speed. At the time of our inspection, the network upgrade work had been completed in some of the Moray stations and were reporting a difference in speed of connectivity, although even after upgrade some stations were reporting slow access.

Although Moray is not a pilot area for the SFRS Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) project, the LSO is co-chair of the Grampian OHCA Forum and is the SFRS national project lead on the Scottish Government's OHCA Delivery and Reference Groups overseeing the national project. Additionally the LSO supports the 'Sandpiper Wildcat Project', aimed at saving lives across Scotland through the provision of appropriate, standardised and uniform medical equipment. Real benefits have been achieved in public safety, some people who have experienced cardiac arrest are alive today as a result of this joint work<sup>11</sup>. Firefighters and the trade unions we spoke to, were positive about the extension of their role to encompassing this

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news-campaigns/news/2016/06/national-out-of-hospital-cardiac-arrest-co-responding-trial-extended.aspx>

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, 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 the outcome of which will be considered further by the SFRS Board.

In support of the Scottish Government's overall vision to improve the outcomes for individuals who experience cardiac arrest, personnel in a number of stations have been delivering cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training to their communities. During 2015-16 approximately 150 members of the public in Moray received training in CPR.

From our discussions with station personnel we understand that there is limited use of station facilities by community groups and organisations, such as the DVLA, British Red Cross and BASICS (British Association of Immediate Care, Scotland). In part this is understandable as the facilities, either in layout or accessibility, do not always lend themselves to use outside of their intended purpose. Additionally, there are often more suitable and available local community amenities, such as village halls. However, where appropriate, we would encourage the wider use of fire stations by the community.

As mentioned above, the station at Tomintoul is also the base for Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service. We support such tri-service shared use of buildings and would encourage the Service locally and at a national level to look at the opportunities to exploit this further when considering changes to the Service's estate.

The Scottish Government supports the role and contribution that volunteers make to their communities across Scotland. As in some other areas of Scotland, volunteers contribute to the delivery of a fire and rescue service response in the Moray area through the volunteer Unit at Gordonstoun School. We cover the Gordonstoun Unit in more detail later in this report. The Inspectorate recognise the valuable contribution that volunteer firefighters make in supporting their 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).**

Although pre-dating the creation of SFRS, we observed a number of different approaches to service delivery, such as the use of midi-sized appliances and the use of 10-personnel crew cabs. Elgin also has an all-terrain specialist vehicle which can be used at wildfire incidents to deploy a specialist fogging suppression capability.

Nationally, the SFRS will be undertaking evaluation trials for innovative equipment, such as ultra-high pressure suppression systems for extinguishing fires. These systems incorporate the addition of an abrasive additive to pierce a hole in the boundary of a room 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, these systems also require fewer firefighters to operate and therefore in areas of limited firefighter availability may offer further benefits. As the systems also operate with less water there is less contaminated water run-off which is a benefit to the environment. At the time of

our inspection it was expected that some of this new equipment will be based in this area of Scotland as part of the evaluation trial.

SFRS operates a four-person minimum crewing rule for appliance mobilisation. An issue which we have highlighted previously is the potential to mobilise an appliance when, due to crew unavailability, it has less than minimum crew. There may be occasions when an incident could be safely responded to with less than the minimum crew. The personnel of one station we visited felt that there had been incidents locally, where a response could have been made by the station, but wasn't, because it had less than the minimum crew available. As we have seen in other areas there is the potential for reputational damage to the local station from their community, including primary employers, when its appliance is not mobilised to a local incident.

We reviewed a small sample of recently completed business continuity plans for stations in Moray. They were sparse in content. Due to the risk created by issues such as, structural damage to the fire station, loss of utilities or services such as ICT, fire damage, flooding, loss of personnel due to health matters, (e.g. pandemic flu), it is suggested that these plans are reviewed and strengthened where possible.

### **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 indicated earlier in the report, 557 false alarms were reported in 2015-16, a decrease of 18 on the previous year. 62.4% of these false alarms are recorded as being unwanted fire alarm signals.

The rate of false alarms per 100,000 population for Moray is lower than the rate for Scotland, at 578 compared to the overall rate for Scotland of 909. The latest available comparative statistics<sup>12</sup> for the percentage of false alarms that are 'due to apparatus' give a figure for Moray of 84% compared to the Scotland wide percentage of 77%.

The Service carried out four staff seminars prior to the new UFAS policy going live. A representative from each Wholetime watch and each RDS station were invited to attend. Some staff we spoke to felt that more training could have been given on the new procedure prior to its introduction.

The SFRS UFAS policy has staged trigger points for particular actions. For premises at stage one, operational crew will give initial advice on-site at the time of attendance. Stage two is reached when premises have five or more UFAS alarms in a three-month period. The process at stage two is to formally write to the operator of the premises, outlining what the consequences will be if there is no improvement in performance. Stage three is reached when a premises accumulates 10 or more UFAS calls in a six-month period. In 2015-16, ten premises were sent a stage two letter out of 348 UFAS incidents that year, there were no stage three premises. Only one premises has reached stage three, this occurred in 2014-2015.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/about-us/fire-and-rescue-statistics.aspx>

As a result of discussions with the dutyholder at one premises, investigations established that valves in the sprinkler system had been incorrectly installed which then resulted in malfunction of the alarm system during mains water pressure fluctuations. Subsequently UFAS faults reduced at this site. This example shows the positive benefits which can be derived from direct engagement with dutyholders. We have seen the benefit in other local areas of appointing an officer to act as a 'champion' for the reduction of UFAS calls. We understand that an officer within the Moray 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.

Each of the eight legacy fire and rescue services had its own control room. In September 2013 the SFRS Board took the decision to reduce the number of control rooms to three. The week before the commencement of the fieldwork for our inspection of Moray, the legacy Grampian FRS Control Room in Aberdeen closed with the function being transferred to a control room in Dundee.

As a consequence of this transfer, the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) was standardised for some premises in the Moray area on to a SFRS approach rather than legacy service arrangements. The PDA relates to the initial (or pre-determined) number of appliances that will be sent to an incident. In the case of automatic fire alarm (AFA) system actuations from distilleries in the Moray area, this change in PDA has resulted in the initial number of pumps despatched increase from two to three.

During our inspection local managers expressed concerns to us of the detrimental impact this increase is having on the local RDS crews and their primary employers, which may in turn reduce an employer's willingness to release staff to become firefighters.

The Inspectorate has carried out an inspection of the Service's policy on managing automatic fire signals<sup>13</sup>. In the report of that inspection we recommended that a consistent PDA should be planned for calls originating from automatic fire signals. We also recommended that SFRS should reflect on previously published reports on the speed and weight of response to AFA calls.

SFRS recent AFA policy, which is to be incrementally rolled out across Scotland, allows the LSO to put together property specific PDAs. 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 would encourage the LSO to review the impact that UFAS calls are having on local service delivery, particularly the recent increase to PDAs, and adopting the SFRS policy on managing UFAS take action to reduce the vehicle movements, the burden on fire crews and the issues raised by primary employers.

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13 Managing Automatic Fire Signals

## 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 well-being of communities, support operational efficiency and performance improvements (including its partnership contributions) and enable effective public reporting of performance.

#### Local scrutiny arrangements

Moray Council's scrutiny committee for fire and rescue service issues – Police and Fire and Rescue Services Committee – receives regular submissions and performance data from the LSO's team.

At the scrutiny meeting which we observed, statistics of SFRS activity in Moray for the period covering 1 July 2016 to 30 September 2016 were presented with comparison data for previous years and benchmarked against performance in the SFRS North Service Delivery Area and Scotland as a whole. Detail at the eight Moray local ward level was also contained within the performance report which allows for more localised scrutiny by elected members if desired. Although there was benchmarking of performance there were, generally speaking, no localised targets for performance improvement. The SFRS's national targets are incorporated within the Local Plan but are not locally focused.

We would encourage the LSO to reassess the local performance framework and, if possible, refine or adapt targets to meet changes in local community risks.

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 Moray, we found limited evidence of awareness amongst station personnel of the Moray local plan and no evidence of developed Station Plans.

From our discussions with the Council Chief Executive and the chair of the scrutiny board of Moray Council, a positive picture was generated about the level of service delivery from the SFRS and the continuity provided by 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. The Council expect to be fully involved in contributing to the development of the new SFRS local plan.

The Service interacts well with the Council's Community Safety Team and is seen as a key partner at the Community Planning Partnership level. The Community Planning Partners, though valuing the contribution that the Service does provide, would like to see an increase in the attendance of SFRS strategic managers at CPP meetings. We recognise that the LSO will have pressures facilitating the needs of two separate councils, however, we would suggest that there would be benefits across partners if he was able to maintain a higher profile across his area.

The Council was aware of technical difficulties with the Council's on-line consultation process for its own plan, and that this may have constrained the involvement of the LSO.

### **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 well-being 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.**

At the time of the inspection there are 160 station-based operational firefighters, of whom 133 are RDS personnel.

We found a varied picture of RDS availability, some stations had very good day-time cover, some stations were experiencing 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. The availability of RDS personnel and appliances is scrutinised, challenged and monitored locally at station level by the individual; the Watch Manager and also by the relevant Station Manager.

We were advised, at the time of our inspection, that the cadre of RDS personnel is currently nine members under strength, this varies from one person short to a maximum of two people short at the affected stations. The SFRS has centralised the management of the recruitment process, including the advertising of vacancies. Alterations and modifications of this centralised process were introduced during our inspection fieldwork period, which has created an open-ended recruitment campaign, removing the use of a recruitment area priority system. This has removed the problem experienced of not being able to recruit on an individual station basis. Although these are recent changes, and their impact on the overall process has yet to be fully assessed, some firefighters and managers still described a general dissatisfaction, particularly with the testing and selection part of the recruitment process, and specifically with the use of what is seen as disproportionately difficult maths tests. We recognise that where there is an expectation that there will be a high number of applicants, employers may wish to sift the number of potential candidates by increasing the difficulty of the entry process. However, with RDS recruitment an over-abundance of applicants is unusual. We were told that on some occasions applicants had waited a considerable number of months to complete the whole process, despite passing the entry tests some months previously. We see scope for the SFRS nationally to refine its RDS recruitment process.

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. Although the vacancies do impact, 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, and are therefore 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. A review of the RDS was

commissioned in May 2014, but we are unsighted on the result of this review. It is strongly suggested that the outcome of this review should be progressed in order to meet the ever increasing challenges of maintaining availability and operational cover within the more remote areas of the Service.

Generally speaking, the contracts offered to RDS firefighters require an individual to provide either 120 hours availability, for a 100 per cent contract or 90 hours for a 75 per cent contract. These contracts restrict the ability to recruit crew who cannot offer as much as 90 or 120 hours a week. Someone who can only offer 40 hours might be a vital resource if those 40 hours include week days during the day time. We noted that 50 per cent contracts are available in the Moray area and we view this as a pragmatic solution to trying to improve appliance availability.

The RDS station establishment, (the number of firefighters), for the majority of single pump stations in the Moray area was 10. In other areas of Scotland we have seen a flexible approach to numbers on station, where they can vary above the usual 10 firefighters for a single pump, depending on the number of different availability contract personnel on station, we also see this as a pragmatic solution where available.

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. Often RDS members of staff might need either 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 the RDS service, by releasing their staff, often goes unrecognised.


## **Health and Safety**

Health and safety reporting is carried out using the RIVO Safeguard system. There has been a welcome reduction in the number of accident and injury incidents to four in 2016 from the seven reported in 2015. There is evidence that the RIVO system has been used to record near-miss incidents which have increased from one to five 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.

Although the reporting of near-miss incidents on station is being carried out, it was noted throughout the inspection that there is still a lack of understanding amongst personnel about the importance of reporting these types of events which occur on the incident ground as well as on-station. There was evidence of Managers taking action to address the number of low speed vehicle manoeuvre accidents. However, Managers need to increase a greater understanding of the need to report all incidents, particularly those from the incident ground.

Performance reporting of health and safety events to the LSO is carried out, although it was 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. Each station we visited had a COSHH folder containing details of the substances found at the station which may present a hazard to employees. We found a lack of evidence to suggest that these records had been regularly reviewed and were being adequately maintained. We also noted a lack of evidence to suggest that staff had received training in the hazards within the assessment. We suggest that the LSO ensures that personnel appropriately record the training that they should be in receipt of in respect of COSHH.

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 the stations we visited. The reports provided a varying level of detail and offered, to an extent, outline action plans to remedy any noted deficiencies. We mention earlier in this report the issue of non-recording of standard testing of equipment. Standard test records are specifically checked as part of a station audit. We observed that some stations still received an audit score of three, (no areas for improvement identified) for this item, despite acknowledging in the audit that no recording of standard tests was being done due to the failure of legacy electronic system. We would have expected that an area for improvement should have been noted in the audit to implement an interim recording solution.

One further observation we would like to make regarding station audits, is in relation to who conducts the audit. For the sample of audits we reviewed the officer completing the report was the supervisory officer responsible for the station. We would suggest that the LSO examines whether it would be possible to introduce a system where audits are carried out by officers other than those responsible for the particular station.

## **Training**

The duration of the training night for RDS stations in Moray is two and a half hours. Staff pointed out that there is inconsistency throughout Scotland with RDS personnel in some areas contracted to a two hour period and in other areas to three hours. The majority of RDS firefighters we spoke to, would like to see an increase in the duration of their training period. We were told that it was a challenge for RDS personnel to complete all that is required of them within two and a half hours and that demands on their time had increased. We acknowledge that SFRS is aware of this issue and that work is on-going to address inconsistencies in the terms and conditions of firefighters.

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. Some training for firefighters in the Moray area is conducted at the Service's training centre at Portlethen, south of Aberdeen.


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 they feel has resulted in a practical skills decay and has the potential to affect morale. Overall 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 RDS firefighters to record training and learning development, both from formal training and from continuous development obtained during actual incidents. But barriers exist: accessibility of electronic systems and a lack of time, make it difficult for RDS personnel to easily complete 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 and limited availability and speed of IT equipment.

The 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.

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 was particularly the case following staff absence due to leave or sickness. There is further difficulty when undertaking confirmation of knowledge exercises with the whole crew when one or more members have missed the input due to absence. This is a particular difficulty in relation to training for road traffic incidents, which we cover in greater detail below. We were told that there was little or no flexibility in when the training was to be delivered.

The training programme can also be impacted by the necessity to deliver training relating to the Service's national priorities, such as the roll out of the new BA sets. Whilst we recognise the importance of receiving training on certain national priorities, we believe that the delivery of training on national issues should be relative to their relevance at a local level and appropriate to the identified risks within an area. For example, the delivery of training in the SFRS's national high rise premises Standard Operating Procedure, will have limited benefit for crews who are unlikely to attend at high rise premises. This is a particularly important issue for RDS stations with training time at a premium.



In general, the firefighters we spoke to were of the view that the quality of training at Portlethen had declined from that previously delivered by the legacy service. Specifically the duration of training had reduced, for example, previously a fire behaviour training course would last three days, it is now a two-day course. Though a view was expressed that although the time has been compressed the content was broadly similar to that previously delivered.

There was general support for the quality and flexibility of delivery of training by local training officers from the RDS firefighters we spoke to. Local training officers are a resource used across the whole LSO area. We were told that the visits from training officers were now less frequent than they had previously been, with no predefined visit schedule. However, the Crew Managers based at the Portlethen training centre are not used for the delivery of station-based training. We suggest that the LSO work with his colleagues within TED to explore whether the Crew Managers based at Portlethen could be used to supplement the station training provided by local training officers.

One issue that was raised consistently with us at every station we visited is the impact that a lack of scrap cars was having on the ability to train for road traffic incidents. Each Moray RDS station is provided with one scrap vehicle per annum for the crew to practice on. Elgin is provided with one car for each of the four watches. Previously RDS stations had received a minimum of four cars per annum. Having access to only one car per annum can result in individual station personnel waiting more than a year if they are absent when this training is programmed.

The LSO Management Team has produced a business case to improve this training in order to maintain competence of personnel by linking stations together for training and produced a business case to provide for more vehicles where required. There currently is no contract in place for the provision of vehicles in the Aberdeenshire and Moray LSO Area as the previous contract has lapsed. The SFRS procurement department is centrally re-tendering a contract for provision of scrap vehicles.

### **Driver Training**

A number of firefighters raised the issue of the availability of driver training courses. After initial qualification, fire appliance drivers undertake periodic refresher training. A lack of training courses has the potential to impact on the number of drivers at a station and consequently the ability to crew an appliance. We were not aware of appliances being made unavailable due to a lack of a driver. We would expect Station Managers to continue to monitor this.

The appropriateness of the driver training was also raised with us. It is usually carried out in Aberdeen and therefore doesn't necessarily replicate the driving conditions experienced on the rural roads of Moray. We would encourage the LSO to explore this issue further and work with colleagues in TED to develop a course that is more relevant.

### **Continuous skills development and good practice sharing**

There is an appetite within the area to develop a forum for the sharing of good practice across the North SDA in areas such as prevention and protection. We would encourage the LSO to work with his other LSO colleagues to explore what could be done to facilitate such a forum.

One of the officers we spoke to, who was in a specialist function role, was working to ensure that, in addition to developing his specialist role, he continued to maintain his operational competency, by attending courses appropriate to his operational incident command role. This was a decision by the individual officer, supported by his management, for reasons of personal development and potential career progression. We feel that this is to be commended.

The SFRS has a number of operational staff across Scotland who fulfil similar specialist roles, such as fire safety enforcement or community fire safety. 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.

We met with a member of the North SDA Human Resources support function who advised us that there were no major areas of concern regarding staff absence. However, in relation to a return to work after a period of sickness, there can be a delay for RDS personnel being able to meet with a member of the Occupational Health team to agree fitness for return to work. The delay is primarily due to an inability to arrange a suitable appointment between a member of the Occupational Health team and the individual RDS member, who may have difficulty getting time off from their primary employment, particularly after a period of sickness.

### **Operational Risk Information**

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 statutory duty or through the writing of an operational policy, such as a Standard Operating Procedure for an incident type, it is made available to firefighters through the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) built into the fire appliance. There is no standard system for getting premises specific updated information added to the MDT. It is our view therefore, that there is an incomplete and therefore unsatisfactory system for creating and updating Operational Risk Information (ORI) within the area.

In some cases paper copy risk information is carried on the appliance and is used in preference to the MDT. However we noted that there were instances where the paper copies had also not been updated to reflect changes to premises, for example an extension to a local care home.

Some of the information gathered comes from the RDS firefighters themselves, through local knowledge. Where this is the case, it may be thought to be less of a concern that the information is not on the central MDT system, however, that presupposes that those firefighters with that personal knowledge will be in attendance at an incident. The same is true regarding paper copies of information, not every appliance has the same paper-based information on it and information is also not secure. This is an unsatisfactory arrangement.

It is the Inspectorate's understanding that a national project commenced in May 2014 to implement a single SFRS solution to support the provision of Operational Risk Information to MDT in appliances. Thereby improving the provision of risk information and contributing to firefighter safety. The project was originally expected to be implemented by June 2015, although we are unsighted on a revised implementation date. We expect that its projected outcomes will address our current concerns regarding the lack of a robust system.

For relevant risks within the Elgin area each of the watches at this fire station are allocated a number of premises to review and update risk information as required from a central list. The issues discussed above around the delay in getting updated information uploaded to the MDT, particularly building plan alterations, are the same for Elgin station risk information. However, the Wholetime watches at Elgin benefit from the time available to collect information compared to their RDS colleagues.

Following a serious incident in April 2014 when seven people, including three firefighters were injured by an explosion at a fire in a silo on an industrial site in Forres, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) conducted an investigation. The HSE made a number of recommendations for the SFRS relating to actions taken by personnel, including incident commanders, at the incident. The SFRS both nationally and locally has taken steps to address the specific points highlighted by the HSE. As a result all of the personnel within the Moray area have now successfully completed an online training package for silo incidents. Further, a programme of visits to known silos in the area was undertaken and site specific operational information was gathered. A silo training structure, previously located at the former Fire Services College in Gullane is being relocated to the Portlethen training centre.

### **Administrative Support Staff**

Administrative support is provided by staff from the North SDA pool, one of whom is based at the LSO HQ at Inverurie fire station. The member of staff we spoke to was not a direct employee of SFRS but provided through an agency service. The member of staff did, however, feel supported by management, and felt part of SFRS despite being located remotely.

### **Climate Change**

There is an extensive history, dating back to the 18th century, of flooding in the Moray and Aberdeenshire areas, and in recent years flooding events in Elgin have occurred in 1997, 2000, 2002 and 2009. As a result of these most recent events a flood alleviation project, the biggest scheme undertaken in Scotland to date, costing £86 million, was implemented and its completion was officially marked in March 2017.

There is a North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2016 – 2022<sup>14</sup> in place as a result of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009. The plan identifies potentially vulnerable areas within the three local authorities making up the North East – Moray, Aberdeenshire and the City of Aberdeen. Responsibility for flood risk management planning falls mainly to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), local authorities and Scottish Water. SFRS contributes to planning for flooding, and other emergencies, through its role as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which is coordinated through regional and local resilience partnerships. As highlighted earlier in this report, the SFRS has the ability

<sup>14</sup> North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2016 – 2022

to respond to events such as floods through the provision of water rescue and high volume pumping capability based at Elgin. The flood management plan area extends from the Outer Moray Firth in the north to the central and eastern Grampians in the south. It has an area of approximately 6,500km<sup>2</sup> and a coastline with a length of approximately 220km. There are 23 Potentially Vulnerable Areas in the North East Local Plan district. There are approximately 13,000 residential properties and 3,600 non-residential properties at risk of flooding within the Plan area, some of which are in the Moray Council area. The main source of flooding is from rivers which accounts for approximately 81% of the Annual Average Damages.

### **Workforce**

The above strategic priority expects SFRS to be an organisation that is more representative of the community it serves. The SFRS national workforce statistics don't publish a gender breakdown for employees at a local authority level. The Moray population, recorded at the 2011 census was 50.8% female and 49.2% male. Nationally, the Service report that 94% of the RDS workforce are male and 6% female, it would be unlikely therefore that the RDS workforce in the Moray area will be representative of the Moray population, and from our meetings with personnel we can confirm that it isn't. It should be noted however, that 35.4% of the Moray population is under 14 or over 65 years of age so therefore unlikely to be able to work for SFRS.

Again using the 2011 census, 98.9% of the Moray population is 'white', we would say that locally the Service is reflective of that demographic.

### **Property Maintenance**

Overall the stations appeared to be in a satisfactory condition with no major maintenance issues being observed or brought to our attention. As part of its property assets strategy, a station condition survey has been carried out nationally by the Service.

## **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 Moray 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 Moray area. In particular, we recognise the effort made by an individual officer in a specialist role, who, supported by his local managers, is continuing to maintain his incident command competency.

The standard testing of operational equipment within the area has been fragmented following the loss of key personnel, system hardware faults, and ultimately the termination of the contract with the system supplier. This has resulted in the loss of continuity of test records for equipment in the area. A temporary paper-based system has been implemented as a stopgap until a new SFRS national system is introduced. However, we feel that the interim measure introduced is inadequate to ensure that accurate records are maintained to provide assurance of equipment testing. The LSO should ensure that this situation is rectified to ensure that all equipment is appropriately tested.

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 EASE equipment.

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:

- *We would encourage the LSO to raise his profile within the Community Planning Partnership by making greater personal attendance at its meetings. This would benefit the collective and overall decision-making process.*
- *The LSO should look to confirm, document and re-circulate a structure to ensure all partnership meetings are attended by the appropriate Officer to meet the needs of the area. This structure should be shared with the partners to ensure continuity and consistency of attendance.*
- *The LSO should be working towards a comprehensive performance system where individual contributions to the Service's overall performance can be linked and demonstrated.*
- *The LSO should conduct a review of the Group Manager role within Prevention and Protection in conjunction with the Aberdeen City LSO and the Prevention and Protection Directorate. This role currently covers three local authority areas over a large geographical area. The review of this position should consider comparing the job size for this position against other Prevention and Protection Managers within the Service.*
- *The LSO should conduct a review, in conjunction with the Prevention and Protection Directorate, of the provision of resources for the Moray area within the Prevention and Protection function. The staff performing this role for Moray also carry out the same role for the other part of the LSO area, Aberdeenshire, making the overall geographic area quite challenging.*

- *The LSO should ensure that the servicing schedule of vehicles is communicated appropriately to station personnel so that crews could contribute more in making any concerns known. It would also enable better planning of training on station if crews knew when appliances are planned to be removed for servicing.*
- *The LSO should ensure that robust records for the standard testing of equipment are maintained. This should include a review of available data from the previous Miquet system to ensure that a 'cradle to grave' record of equipment is available. A consistent format for all stations should be put in place until the new national system is implemented, ensuring that comprehensive records are kept for all equipment.*
- *The LSO should review, in conjunction with colleagues in SFRS's asset management function, the BA cylinder/recharging arrangements for the more remote stations so as to ensure that the opportunity for BA training or operational availability is not impeded by the lack of, or delay in obtaining charged replacements.*
- *The LSO should monitor the implementation plan for EASE equipment created by colleagues in Response and Resilience making representations as necessary so as to ensure that it becomes operational as soon as possible.*
- *Where appropriate we would encourage the LSO to promote the wider use of fire stations by the community.*
- *The LSO should review the management of UFAS calls, assess the impact of the change to PDAs and take action to reduce the vehicle movements, the burden on fire crews and the issues raised by primary employers. Thereafter we would encourage the LSO to continue to monitor UFAS performance and effect of designating a UFAS 'champion' in order to provide evidence of any improvement.*
- *We would encourage the LSO to reassess the local performance framework and, if possible, refine or adapt targets to meet changes in local community risks.*
- *The LSO should continue to provide encouragement to staff to appropriately report health and safety near-misses, particularly near-misses occurring at incidents.*
- *We suggest that the LSO ensures that personnel appropriately record the training, that they should be in receipt of, in respect of COSHH.*
- *We would suggest that the LSO examines whether it would be possible to introduce a system where station audits are carried out by officers other than those responsible for the particular station.*
- *The LSO should discuss with colleagues in the SFRS Training and Employee Development (TED) department how the new training planner can be adapted to recognise the competing demands on RDS staff.*
- *We suggest that the LSO work with his colleagues within TED to explore whether the Crew Managers based at Portlethen could be used to supplement the station training provided by local training officers.*



- *We would expect the LSO to ensure Station Mangers continue to monitor the impact on station availability caused by insufficient drivers, due to a lack of training courses. More widely, we would encourage the LSO to review, in conjunction with colleagues in TED, the appropriateness of the content of the driver training to develop a course that is more suited to the rural roads in the area.*
- *In order to assist in the promotion of good practice we would encourage the LSO to work with his other LSO colleagues to explore what could be done to facilitate a forum for the exchange of examples of good practice.*
- *We would encourage the LSO to explore the possibility of utilising staff who normally fulfil a specialist role, such as fire safety enforcement, to augment the number of available RDS firefighters, during their normal work routine, where possible.*
- *The LSO should investigate the provision of risk information and mapping, and take steps to ensure that comprehensive site-specific operational risk information is available to crews through the appliance MDTs.*
- *The LSO should, in conjunction with his colleagues in HR, assess what the potential benefits and costs may be of a change to the leave process, allowing personnel, particularly RDS, to take leave in increments of less than whole days.*

## Gordonstoun School



Photo: The Gordonstoun appliance pumping out flood water.

Gordonstoun School is located eight miles from Elgin and was founded in 1934 by Dr Kurt Hahn. Dr Hahn fled Germany in 1933 under threat from the Nazis for standing firm in the face of aggression.

Perceiving decay in the society of the day, he aimed to foster in young people the qualities of skill, compassion, honesty, initiative, adventure and a sense of service to their fellow beings. His philosophy was based on encouraging young people to develop both as individuals and within communities and this philosophy still stands true today.

One of the four pillars of a Gordonstoun education is Service, the others being Challenge, Responsibility and Internationalism. The purpose behind the pillar of Service is to help students develop a sense of social responsibility and sensitivity to people from different backgrounds and circumstances, putting others before self. This pillar sees students regularly working in, and with, the local community and become members of one of the School's 12 services, one of which is the Fire Service.

The Fire Service based at Gordonstoun owes its origin to a former senior pupil who, in 1942, formed a one man firefighting unit when the national fire service was hard-pressed during the second world war.

To be a member of the Gordonstoun Fire Service a student has to intend to be a member of the School for at least two years, be fit and in a good state of health. After two terms of training a student will take a (mainly) practical test to qualify as a member of the unit. In addition to the students who form the largest part of the unit, members of the school's staff also dedicate their time to the running of the unit. Similar to managers of any other volunteer or retained unit, this is done in addition to their normal duties at the school.

The SFRS takes its responsibility for the safety and training for the unit members seriously. Consequently the LSO undertook a critical examination and review of the unit, which will be the subject of continued monitoring. The content and delivery of the training is overseen by SFRS local training staff. Training officers have developed an appropriate training planner for the unit covering the development of skills in line with the unit's expected role. Although students don't

maintain a record of their training using the SFRS national PDRPro system, a manual record is kept for each unit member. The supervision of training is undertaken both by the unit's Watch and Crew Managers, and local training managers.

On the day of our visit to the school, members of its crew were hosting a community education visit from pupils and staff of a local special needs school. Education and prevention are cornerstones of today's fire and rescue service in the drive to improve community safety. We see the school's involvement in this type of activity as particularly welcome as we see a benefit in having young people directly engaged in its delivery, as they bring a different perspective to it.

As we did at our visits to other stations in the area, we reviewed a sample of record types, in the case of Gordonstoun these were manual records relating to Unit member's PPE and individual training. Additionally we reviewed standard test records relating to the equipment and appliance. We found that regular recording of tests and checks had been carried out. The Unit's appliance, despite its age, appeared in good condition.

During our visit members of the Unit confidently demonstrated their skills using pumps, ladders and backpack sprayers. Operationally, members of the Unit have been involved in the response to a variety of incidents over its history, from fires to road traffic accidents. In recent years, as could be expected, the increase in regard to health and safety has affected the type of incidents and the role the unit would be expected to carry out when mobilised. This was being done on a risk-based approach with the Unit able to positively contribute to the successful resolution of incidents. Nonetheless, we believe the Unit can continue to provide a valuable asset to the SFRS and the local community, either through contributing to the delivery of community education or operationally in areas such as the ever increasing response required to wide area flooding or wildfire incidents.

We would finally like to commend all those involved in leading and supporting the unit, both past and present, for the enthusiasm and dedication to serving the community of Moray.



Photo: students using a portable pump.

## 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
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
UFAS	An event in which the SFRS believe they have been called to a reportable fire or special service incident and then there is no such incident.
2005 Act	The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005

<b>Key</b>	<b>Local Authority Name</b>	<b>Key</b>	<b>Local Authority name</b>
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







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