

2020



LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

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Foreword

As Chair of the Police, Fire and Rescue Sub Committee it gives me great pleasure to endorse the Dumfries and Galloway local Fire & Rescue Plan for 2020.

We are fortunate within our region to have such a responsive and proactive Fire & Rescue Service and the impacts of Covid -19 have tested resources and partnership working like never before.

It is testament to the strong Community Planning arrangements that we have in place for our region that effective collaboration and community involvement is at the heart of all we do.

With this new plan capturing the views and priorities of our local communities it has helped to shape the seven clear priorities that are the foundation of the plan going forward:

- Priority 1 - Domestic Fire Safety
- Priority 2 - Unintentional Harm and Injury
- Priority 3 - Road Safety
- Priority 4 - Deliberate Fire Setting
- Priority 5 - Non-Domestic Fire Safety
- Priority 6 - Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
- Priority 7 - Operational Resilience and Preparedness

As a Police, Fire and Rescue Sub Committee we support the principles of risk prioritisation and early intervention and fully acknowledge the contribution that our Fire & Rescue Service make to improving community safety and health and wellbeing across our Communities. As a Committee we will continue to provide appropriate support and scrutiny to ensure the ambitions of this new plan can be achieved.

Councillor Dougie Campbell
Chair, Dumfries & Galloway Police, Fire & Rescue Sub Committee

Introduction

Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Dumfries and Galloway. This plan has been created with a focus on placing our communities at the heart of everything we do, and to improve local outcomes for the people of the Dumfries and Galloway. This plan is the mechanism through which the aims of the SFRS's Strategic Plan 2019-22 and the Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership's (CPP) Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017-2027 are delivered locally to meet the agreed needs of the communities of Dumfries and Galloway.

This Plan has been developed to support the delivery of agreed local outcomes for Dumfries and Galloway communities, working in partnership with community planning partners to improve community safety, to enhance the well-being of those who live, work in, and visit Dumfries and Galloway, whilst tackling issues of social inequality.

This plan sets out my priorities and objectives for the SFRS within the Dumfries and Galloway Local Area for 2020 and beyond, and allows Local Authority partners to scrutinise the performance outcomes of these priorities. SFRS will work closely with partners in Dumfries and Galloway to ensure we are all "Working together for a safer Scotland" through targeting the risks to our communities at a local level.

As a public service organisation and as a member of the CPP, SFRS recognises that the demographics of our society are changing which will challenge us to continually improve how we deliver our services to our communities. This Plan focuses on those areas of risk and demand to maximise the potential to work in partnership. By using our capacity flexibly, more effectively and innovatively, we can ensure we direct our resources to the point of need within our communities to protect those most at risk and harm. The demands placed upon the SFRS to respond to a wide variety of incidents challenges us to ensure our personnel acquire and maintain a range of skills to enable us to respond to emergencies. Through the identification and the management of risks within the area, we will continue to prepare for these responses. However, we recognise on many occasions this demand can be reduced through effective engagement and intervention measures and through our on-going involvement with local community safety groups in the Dumfries and Galloway Local Authority area, we will continue to develop our understanding of local needs and proactively seek out consultation opportunities with all sections of the community. Using this approach, we will ensure that the services we deliver are driven by consultation, in line with public expectations and help build strong, safe and resilient communities.

Early in 2020 we faced an unprecedented challenge in the form of a global pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we dramatically changed how we worked so that we could continue to deliver an emergency service whilst keeping our staff and the public safe.

The pandemic is expected to have a lasting effect on society and this will change the way in which we deliver services in the long-term. The full implications are not yet known and this makes it difficult to make any far-reaching plans with certainty. As such we will keep the priorities of this Plan under regular review to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.

Craig McGoldrick
Local Senior Officer

National Context

Scottish Ministers set out their specific expectations for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016. This provides the outline we should follow to ensure our resources and activities are aligned with the Scottish Government's Purpose and national outcomes.

Our [Strategic Plan 2019-22](#) has been designed to meet these national expectations. Set against a complex and evolving backdrop our Strategic Plan encapsulates our mission, values and our strategic outcomes and objectives.



To ensure we can prevent the worst from happening and to be fully prepared to respond should we called, we need to be aware of any new changing risks which threaten the safety of communities or the workforce. When developing our most recent plan, cognisance was given to: our changing population and the forecasted rise in over 75s; doing what we can to balance social and economic inequality; climate change and the devastating impact the inclement weather can have on peoples' lives and livelihoods; and the threat of terrorism.

Our Strategic Plan is supported by a three-year Strategic Plan Programme which provides details on all the activities we intend to carry out to successfully achieve our ambitions. The

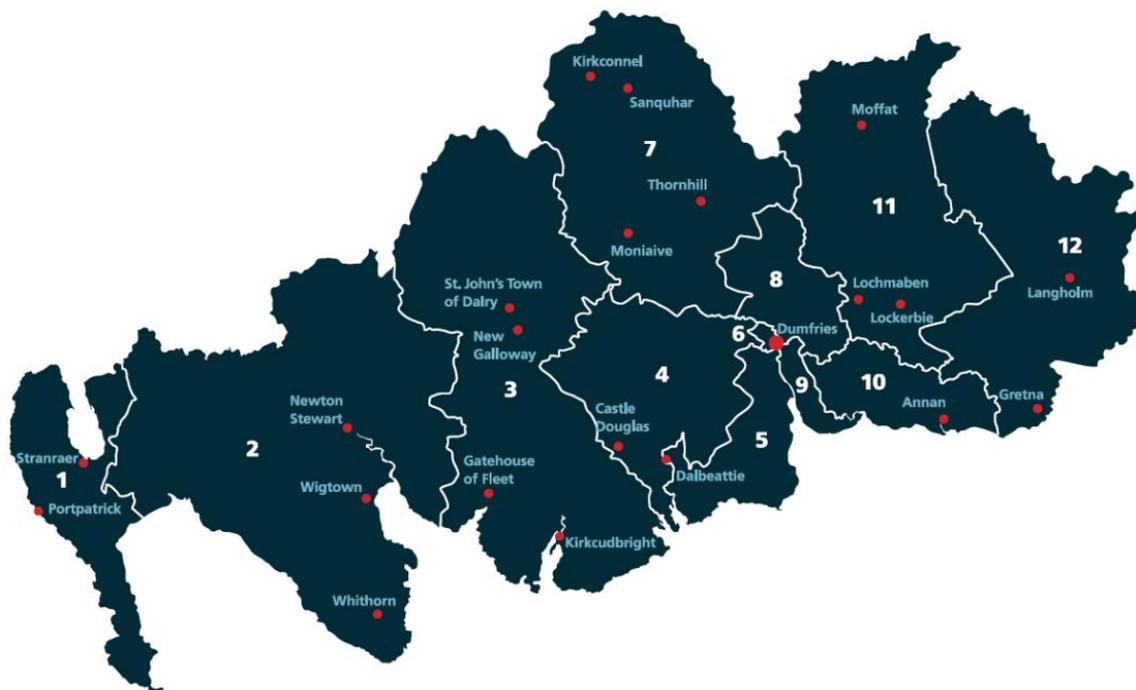
Programme informs our Annual Operating Plan, which provides specific detail on the actions we carry out each year, and from which our performance is scrutinised.

This Plan is a statutory Local Fire and Rescue Plan. It sets local direction to meet the strategic outcomes and objectives outlined above. It also demonstrates how we will contribute to Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs).

Local Context

The current population of Dumfries and Galloway, which is approximately 148,860 and constitutes 2.72% of the total number of persons living in Scotland, is predicted to decrease by *2.8% by the year 2028 (*percentage change from National Records of Scotland baseline year total for 2018).

However, during this same period the demographical aspect of the area suggests a projected significant increase in elderly residents by 23.7% for persons over the age of 75 whilst the number of people of working age and young persons are projected to fall by -16.8%. Infants and children age group up to 15 years of age is predicted to decrease by -14.2%.



To enable the SFRS to plan and deliver on a proactive and reactive basis, it is important to understand where and how demand for fire and rescue resources may arise in the short, medium and longer term. As a local authority area, Dumfries and Galloway is constituted by 12 multi-member electoral wards covering a range of diverse urban and rural communities over approximately 6,426 square kilometres. Emergency response within the local authority area is provided from 17 locations comprising of one Wholtime station (permanently crewed) and 16 stations which operate on an 'On Call' basis.

Our continued focus is to attract further career opportunities to Dumfries and Galloway; this would build upon Dumfries as the administrative centre, already sharing accommodation with a number of national functional resources including HR, Finance and Strategic Planning.

A review of operational activity across Dumfries and Galloway indicates an upward trend in overall activity levels over the last four years. In terms of fire related activity, accidental dwelling fires continue on a downward trend with these fires reducing by over one quarter of the total number of the same fire category in 2017. The provision of early warning, community engagement and the majority of incidents being dealt with in their initial stages has reduced the severity of fires within the home. The protection of, and engagement with our most vulnerable members has also been key to these reductions.

Fire fatality rates within Dumfries and Galloway are extremely low with only one of the last three years reporting fire fatalities. The number of slight and serious fire casualties who are required to attend hospital due to their injuries shows a downward trend over the last three years although there was a slight increase in those taken to hospital in the last year. However, this should be taken in context with only one person requiring any treatment beyond a precautionary check-up.

Deliberate fire setting on average accounts for one in three of all fire related activity within Dumfries and Galloway. Figures indicate that although deliberate fires often fluctuate, these figures remain similar to those from previous years. Analysis identifies deliberate fire setting occurring on an ongoing basis with peaks identified during the springtime, bonfire season and during prolonged periods of dry weather. Most deliberate fires are classed as secondary in nature and on most occasions, occur in derelict properties and outdoor locations.

Whilst attendances at non-fire related emergencies on average account for around one in every five operational mobilisations and are slightly less than the number of fire related incidents, the number of fatalities and casualties are notably higher than fire related injuries (fatal and non-fatal). Whilst the majority of non-fire emergency casualties (fatal and non-fatal) are as a result of road traffic collisions within Dumfries and Galloway, another emerging trend has been identified in those persons requiring assistance from other organisations. This results in support being requested from the SFRS in the form of forcing entry into premises to render assistance to occupants or the provision of first responder (medical) assistance.



Whilst many incidents within Dumfries and Galloway are as a result of a confirmed genuine emergency, on average more than half of emergency responses made by the SFRS turn out to be false alarms. These alarms may be as a result of a genuine belief that a fire is occurring which subsequently is confirmed not to be the case or through malicious activity resulting in a report of fire being made knowing this report is false in its nature. There are also a number of warnings of fire generated by the fire alarm systems which, following an attendance and investigation, turn out to be false in their origin. Currently attendances to premises which

generate these false signals account on average for a quarter of all emergency responses within Dumfries and Galloway resulting in disruption to those within the premises in which the alarm activates and also to the SFRS who, on many occasions, are diverted from other activities to attend these incidents. The remaining quarter of all emergency responses to all other false alarms are attributed to calls for domestic dwellings following genuine calls from members of the public with concerns or through tele linked systems employed to protect the wellbeing of those residents living within.

Reducing service demand, whilst developing the role of the SFRS as part of the ongoing process of public service reform, presents both challenges and opportunities for us to become more integrated in the community planning partnership environment. The introduction of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 placed a statutory duty upon the SFRS to take on an enhanced leadership role in community planning and through its active participation within the Dumfries & Galloway Strategic Partnership and Community Planning Executive Group.

Through these forums the Service has participated in the development of Dumfries and Galloway's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and its eight outcomes:

Outcome 1: Everyone who needs help to work receives the right support.

Outcome 2: Learning opportunities are available to those who need them most

Outcome 3: Health and wellbeing inequalities are reduced

Outcome 4: There is affordable and warm housing for those who need it most

Outcome 5: The money available to people on benefits and low wages is maximised

Outcome 6: People are safe and feel safe

Outcome 7: People are well connected

Outcome 8: Individuals and communities are empowered.

The SFRS are committed, in partnership, to addressing these key issues and the delivery of local outcomes that make a positive contribution across Dumfries and Galloway's communities. In developing this Local Fire and Rescue Plan, the SFRS will seek to ensure its activities compliment and support the locality planning process. Operationally, working closely with the 12 Ward Officers and D&G Community Safety Team, the Service will be better able to undertake an assessment of community risk, identify and responding to their needs at a local level. Assurance that all of this is being managed effectively will be achieved through engaging closely within the D&G Area committee structure.

With the development of the Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) within Dumfries and Galloway following the introduction of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, the SFRS will ensure, as a statutory partner within the Dumfries and Galloway Community Justice Partnership, its resources contribute to support the delivery of the CJOIP.

The delivery of shared outcomes is embedded within Dumfries and Galloway through its range of community planning approaches. Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership is committed to the delivery of its vision of working together "to create an ambitious, prosperous and confident Dumfries and Galloway where people achieve their potential".

The SFRS takes an active role in the delivery of these priorities and their intended outcomes through participation and engagement across the partnership arena. Supporting the delivery of Anti-Social Behaviour, Adult and Child Protection, Health and Social Care including Alcohol and Drug strategies are examples of where the SFRS can collaborate in the delivery of these priorities at a local level whilst pursuing the key priorities of this Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

Performance Scrutiny

Overseeing the performance of the SFRS at local level is the responsibility of the Dumfries and Galloway Police and Fire Sub Committee. Within this forum the Sub Committee undertakes the process of scrutiny to monitor against the priorities within Dumfries and Galloway's Local Fire and Rescue Plan and also engages with the Local Senior Officer in matters arising on a regional or national basis.

Local Priorities

In identifying the priorities for this Plan (listed below), we engaged with communities and stakeholder in Dumfries and Galloway. The engagement process involved asking the views of citizens in relation to what the SFRS priorities should be in the local area, what additional work SFRS should undertake and asking if SFRS should target those most at risk. This proved valuable in ensuring that the services SFRS delivers meets the needs and expectations of the local community.

- Priority 1. Domestic Fire Safety**
- Priority 2. Unintentional Harm and Injury**
- Priority 3. Road Safety**
- Priority 4. Deliberate Fire Setting**
- Priority 5. Non-Domestic Fire Safety**
- Priority 6. Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals**
- Priority 7. Operational Resilience and Preparedness**

SFRS Local Area Plan Priorities	Priority 1 Domestic Fire Safety	Priority 2 Unintentional Harm and Injury	Priority 3 Road Safety	Priority 4 Deliberate Fire Setting	Priority 5 Non- Domestic Fire Safety	Priority 6 UFAS	Priority 7 Ops Resilience & Preparedness
LOIP Outcomes							
Outcome 1 Everyone who needs help to work receives the right support				✓	✓	✓	✓
Outcome 2 Learning opportunities are available to those who need them most	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outcome 3 Health and wellbeing inequalities are reduced	✓	✓	✓				✓
Outcome 4 There is affordable and warm housing for those who need it most	✓	✓					
Outcome 5 The money available to people on benefits and low wages is maximised							✓
Outcome 6 People are safe and feel safe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outcome 7 People are well connected			✓			✓	
Outcome 8 Individuals and communities are empowered	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓

1. Domestic Fire Safety

Fire safety within the home is a key prevention strategy for the SFRS as the consequence of fires within the home can result in a range of impacts on individuals, families, social landlords and communities. For organisations, the requirement to respond, intervene and deal with the aftermath of domestic fires places demand on its resources. To reduce this demand, it is essential approaches to prevention are evidence based in order to maximise and focus resources to make the biggest impact to safeguard those most at risk of fire.

Analysis of accidental dwelling fire data identifies cooking as the most common cause of fires within the home in Dumfries and Galloway and also the most prevalent cause where fire related injuries are sustained by occupants. Distraction has been identified as the main contributory factor where accidental dwelling fires and/or injuries occur. Those who are deemed at risk from fire may also have other vulnerabilities and impairments due to age, health or mobility reasons and they may also be receiving support from other partners. The scope therefore exists to work more closely together to protect those most at risk from fire through effective information sharing.

In order to reduce the potential for fires from occurring, influencing positive change in occupant behaviours through raising fire safety awareness will be at the forefront of our preventative activities. By increasing the ownership of working smoke detection, the means of giving early warning of fire will also contribute to mitigating the severity of fires and fire related injuries within the home. By using assistive technology such as 'Telecare', the opportunity exists to further enhance the safety of those who are at risk from fire.

We will seek to reduce accidental dwelling fires and fire related injuries within the home by:

- *Promoting and undertaking Home Fire Safety Visits to those deemed at risk from fire.*
- *Working with our partners in Dumfries and Galloway to share information where fire risks within the home have been identified and to provide solutions to protect those who are at risk.*
- *Focusing engagement activities in those areas where Service demand has been identified.*
- *Supporting the provision of assistive technology within the home to increase occupant safety.*

We will monitor our progress in promoting our domestic safety strategy by:

- *Reducing the number of accidental dwelling fires and their severity.*
- *Reducing the number and the severity of fatal and non-fatal fire related injuries.*
- *Increasing the presence of working smoke/heat detection within homes of the most vulnerable.*

By achieving a reduction in the frequency and severity of accidental dwelling fires and fire related injuries we will:

- *Support the safety and wellbeing of Dumfries and Galloway residents.*
- *Support the independent living of vulnerable members within our communities.*
- *Reduce the social and economic cost of fires and fire related injuries.*
- *Reduce demand on the SFRS and its partners.*
- *Make our communities safer.*

2. Unintentional Harm and Injury

It is not uncommon for those at risk from fire to also be at risk from other injuries within the home, in particular from injuries arising from slips, trips and falls. Requests to the SFRS to provide assistance directly through a first responder role or to provide support to other agencies are increasing. Analysis of data indicates falls are a common cause of accidental deaths and injuries and account for a significant proportion of admissions to hospital. Those persons injured through falls may often be affected by other medical conditions such as dementia. The SFRS has a role to play in contributing to the protection of those at risk from injury and harm within the home. Through operational attendances and delivery of home fire safety visits, we have the opportunity to identify those at risk and through an assessment of such risk, refer individuals to partner organisations for additional support.

Out of the domestic environment, the SFRS respond to a range of non-fire related emergencies. We respond to flooding and water related incidents throughout the region. We will continue to develop our staff to meet local needs including undertaking preventative measures such as water safety inputs to children as well as working with our Local Resilience Partners and other key groups to minimise the risk. To maximise impact and safety within our communities our resources are continually reviewed to make sure they are in the correct locations.

Due to the increase in number of non-fire related incidents now attended by the SFRS and the increased emphasis being given to road safety within Dumfries and Galloway, road safety is now included within priority area 3. – Road Traffic Collisions.

We will seek to reduce the impact of unintentional injury and harm by:

- *Utilising our Home Fire Safety Visit programme to assess for non-fire related risk and refer those deemed at risk from injury and harm to partners to provide additional support.*
- *Raising awareness of fire and rescue service personnel as to those factors that increase the risk of unintentional injury or harm.*
- *Focusing resources where demand has been identified and deliver key safety messages.*

We will monitor the effectiveness of our intervention strategies by:

- *Reviewing the number of requests for assistance from other agencies and for the provision of medical and first responder support.*
- *Reduce the number of other non-fire related emergencies and the frequency and severity of injuries arising from these incidents.*

By achieving a reduction in the frequency and severity of unintentional harm and injuries we will:

- *Reduce the social and economic cost of unintentional harm and injury.*
- *Support vulnerable members within our communities to live independently within their communities.*
- *Ensure the safety and wellbeing of those living, working and visiting Dumfries and Galloway.*
- *Make our communities safer.*

3. Road Safety

The most common non-fire related incident type attended within Dumfries and Galloway out with the domestic environment are Road Traffic Collisions (RTC). This incident type also accounts for the majority of all fatal and non-fatal injuries from any of the incident types. Consequences of RTC's can have a serious impact on those involved, their families and the predominantly rural communities they live in.

The number of people seriously and slightly injured on the regions roads has dropped considerably and is in line with Scottish Government expectations. Although the number of people killed has reduced over the years, this is still short of our local ambitions. Improvements in this priority area are due to ongoing education programmes, encouragement, enforcement, road improvements and advances in car technology. A single road death is still one too many and, as an organisation, we will continue to work towards 'zero' road deaths on the region's roads.

Responding to RTCs is a statutory duty for the SFRS, however a collective approach is required amongst community planning partners to support risk reduction measures. As a partner, the SFRS will support the education of young drivers who are considered to be an 'at risk' group and support other initiatives intended to reduce the instances and impact of RTCs within Dumfries and Galloway. We will continue to support and drive forward initiatives through our membership of the Dumfries and Galloway Road Safety Partnership.

We will seek to reduce the number of Road Traffic Collisions and resulting fatal and non-fatal injuries on the regions roads by:

- *Working in partnership to deliver targeted road safety programmes to young drivers.*
- *Working in partnership to deliver targeted road safety programmes and messages to 'Priority Focus Areas' including speed and motorcycles, vulnerable road users, and age.*
- *Working with and leading Dumfries and Galloway Road Safety Partnership to analyse data, identify action areas and create initiatives to reduce deaths and injuries, to meet the Scottish Government's ambition of zero deaths on Scotland's roads.*
- *Working with our partners in Dumfries and Galloway to share information where RTC trend patterns have been identified to assist with remedial work and reduction strategies.*

We will monitor our progress in promoting road safety by:

- *Reducing, year on year, the number of fatalities and casualties from RTC's in Dumfries and Galloway.*

By achieving a reduction in the number of Road Traffic Collisions and the severity of those injured we will:

- *Make our communities safer. Support the independent living of vulnerable members within our most rural communities by having access to safer roads.*
- *Provide empowerment opportunities for communities and individuals.*
- *Reduce demand on the SFRS and its partners.*
- *Reduce the number of hospital admissions, and the associated costs to the NHS and other organisations due to RTC related injuries.*
- *Encourage young drivers and other groups to be responsible road users through active engagement and education.*

4. Deliberate Fire Setting

Deliberate fire setting accounts for a significant number of operational incidents with Dumfries and Galloway and takes various forms. Whilst a small proportion involves occupied buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures (primary fires), the majority of deliberate fires are classed as secondary in nature and on most occasions occur in outdoor locations.

Analysis of incident data identifies deliberate secondary fires occurring throughout the year, however peak activity is noted in the springtime, during the bonfire season and when prolonged periods of dry weather arise. Deliberate fire setting is regarded as anti-social behaviour and is also criminal in nature. These acts can lead to serious consequences such as personal injury, damage to property and the environment. Dealing with instances of deliberate fire setting also diverts fire and rescue resources from other meaningful activities.

Working in partnership, we will seek to combine our information to identify those parts of our communities that are being affected by anti-social behaviour in order to reduce such instances whilst tackling the underlying causes of such behaviour. On some occasions the SFRS will work with Police Scotland to investigate deliberate fire setting to determine the cause and if possible, those responsible for such acts. Diversionary and engagement activity is regarded as an important approach in tackling anti-social behaviour and will continue to be part of our approach to raise awareness of the impact of this unwanted activity.

We will seek to reduce the instances of fire related anti-social behaviour by:

- *Identifying those parts of Dumfries and Galloway's communities affected by deliberate fire setting to share this information with our partners.*
- *Utilising our Firesetters and school's education programmes to raise awareness of the impact of fire related anti-social behaviour.*
- *Working with partners to develop joint strategies to reduce the risk posed by deliberate fire setting and to mitigate its impacts.*

We will monitor the effectiveness of reducing fire related anti-social behaviour by:

- *Reduce the number and type of deliberate fire setting incidents within Dumfries and Galloway.*
- *Evaluating the effectiveness of our young engagement programmes.*

By achieving a reduction in fire related anti-social behaviour we will:

- *Enable the SFRS to divert its resources towards other community-based activities.*
- *Protect the natural and built environment.*
- *Support the promotion of active and responsible citizenship across Dumfries and Galloway's communities.*
- *Support our communities in feeling safe from crime, disorder and danger.*

5. Non-Domestic Fire Safety

In general, all workplaces and businesses are classed as non-domestic premises and as such come within the scope of Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (the Act) which places duties on persons responsible for these premises to comply with the Act and its associated regulations. The SFRS has a statutory duty to promote fire safety and where required enforce compliance with fire safety legislation. To discharge this duty and to secure compliance, the SFRS has adopted an approach utilising advice, education and where required formal enforcement powers.

Given the variety of premises which come within the scope of the Act, the SFRS has developed a fire safety enforcement framework which is based on the principal of risk combined with historical fire data across occupancy groups to create the fire safety audit programme. Those premises which present a higher degree of risk from fire are subject to regular fire safety audits to verify compliance.

The impact of fire can have a devastating impact on business, employment, the provision of critical services and also our heritage. Evidence suggests that premises affected by a serious fire experience a high failure rate. The SFRS will undertake its audit programme to support Dumfries and Galloway's ambition to grow its economy during this challenging period following Coronavirus, and seek to safeguard its culture, heritage and continuation of employment opportunities.

We will seek to reduce the instances of fires within non-domestic property by:

- *Undertaking our fire safety audit programme in accordance with the SFRS Enforcement Framework.*
- *Engaging with duty holders to promote responsible fire safety management of premises that come under the auspices of Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.*
- *Working in partnership to ensure the appropriate provision of fire safety standards are incorporated in new premises under construction or premises undergoing material changes.*
- *Working in partnership with other enforcement agencies and organisations to support legislative compliance.*

We will monitor the effectiveness of reducing fires in non-domestic premises by:

- *Reduce the number of fires in non-domestic premises and the type of premises involved in fire.*
- *Reviewing the number and types of fire safety audits carried out across Dumfries and Galloway.*
- *Reviewing the outcome of fire safety audits carried out in non-domestic premises.*

By achieving a reduction in fires within non-domestic premises we will:

- *Enable the industrial, commercial, and service sector to maintain business continuity and employment across Dumfries and Galloway.*
- *Reduce the potential for loss of life and injury.*
- *Protect Dumfries and Galloway's culture and heritage.*
- *Protect the natural and built environment and reduce the impact of fire on our communities.*

6. Unwanted Fire Alarms

Fire protection within premises can be viewed as a holistic approach for the purposes of safeguarding life and/or property by inhibiting, growth and spread of fire. The design and use of premises will influence the extent of the fire protection required to be incorporated within it. In developing a fire protection strategy for the various premises' types and for that strategy to be successful, a key component is the provision of early warning of fire. The provision of early warning enables those within premises sufficient time for them to exit the building to a place of safety in the event of fire.

Whilst a small number of fire alarm signals generated are due to confirmed fire conditions being present, there are an even greater number of signals generated, which when investigated, have occurred when no fire conditions have been present. On such occasions these are known as 'Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals' (UFAS) and is defined as 'an event which has required an operational attendance by the fire and rescue service due to the unwanted actuation of a fire alarm system'. On these instances the signal may originate from a monitoring/call centre as a result of an automatic activation of the fire alarm system or a person activating the fire alarm system either maliciously or with good intentions believing a fire was occurring within a nondomestic premises.

The impact of responding to UFAS incidents causes disruption to the premises working environment and to the range of activities the SFRS undertake. Unnecessary blue light journeys also create additional risks and hazards to firefighters and to the public whilst responding to UFAS incidents and also have a detrimental impact on the environment through additional carbon emissions. Active and positive engagement with occupiers to take responsibility in limiting the number of UFAS incidents within their premises is integral to reducing these impacts.

We will seek to reduce the instances of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals by:

- *Investigating every cause of alarm and engaging with those responsible for fire warning systems following an operational attendance at a UFAS incident.*
- *Analysing our UFAS attendances at those premises that give cause to frequent generation of false alarms to identify trends and support occupiers to develop demand reduction plans.*
- *Instigating where required, formal fire safety enforcement measures to ensure appropriate demand reduction action is taken by those responsible for premises generating unacceptable levels of false alarms.*

We will monitor the effectiveness of mobilising to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals by:

- *Reduce the number of attendances at non-domestic premises and review the type of premises generating unwanted false alarm signals across Dumfries and Galloway.*
- *Evaluating the outcomes of occupier's demand reduction plans to review progress and identify and share good practice.*
- *Reviewing our attendances at UFAS incidents to ensure our attendances are based on an assessment of risk and demand.*

By achieving a reduction in Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals, we will:

- *Minimise the disruption to business and service continuity across Dumfries and Galloway.*
- *Increase the capacity of the fire and rescue service to carry out other activities.*
- *Reduce the risk to firefighters and public whilst responding to UFAS incidents.*

7. Operational Resilience and Preparedness

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire (Additional Function) (Scotland) Order 2005 defines the duties and responsibilities for the SFRS in relation to responding to emergencies. It is essential our firefighters possess the skills, knowledge and expertise to respond to incidents which, by their nature, can be varied in both their type and complexity. It is important our firefighters understand the risks across their communities to ensure the level of risk is matched by an appropriate level of operational response. In gathering this knowledge, appropriate training can be carried out to safeguard firefighter safety and to ensure any such response results in an effective and efficient deployment of our resources.

Emergency responses across Dumfries and Galloway includes firefighters operating within the Retained Duty System (RDS). Working within this duty system our RDS firefighters respond from home and/or primary work locations and is based on an 'On-Call' provision. Given the dynamic nature of this duty system and to support a balance between primary, personal and firefighting commitments, each RDS Station requires a sufficient number of RDS firefighters to ensure this vital resource is available when required.

There will also be occasions whereby the nature of an emergency will require a combined response by emergency services and other organisations to deal with such a major event. To ensure a co-ordinated response occurs, additional duties are placed upon the SFRS under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to prepare and be able to respond to deal with major emergencies. The scope of such preparations will include responding to adverse weather events including flooding, natural disasters, pandemics, chemical incidents or major transport incidents. The threat of terrorism also compels the SFRS to ensure it can also respond alongside other partner agencies should such an event occur.

As an emergency responder, the SFRS needs to ensure it has the capability and capacity to plan, prepare and respond to major emergencies. Working in partnership at a local and national level, the multi-agency joint approach requires to assess these risks to develop appropriate integrated response plans. Following development, these plans require to be tested to support a return to normality following a significant event and subsequent disruption.

We recognise the potential for the role of the SFRS to evolve which provides scope to further protect those members of our communities from harm in the event of an emergency. Assisting other agencies in emergency situations, such as responding to 'Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrests' is one example where resources can be combined to maximise the potential for positive outcomes for those requiring assistance. Out with emergency responses the opportunity also exists to promote and support community resilience in dealing with adverse weather events and to improve the survivability rates from cardiac arrests through active engagement and education across Dumfries and Galloway communities.

We will seek to ensure operational response and preparedness within Dumfries and Galloway is maintained by:

- *Fulfilling our statutory duties in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act.*
- *Ensuring all known risk information is obtained, communicated and exercised.*
- *Working locally with partner organisations and agencies to ensure effective response plans are developed for identified risks.*
- *Ensuring our training, staff development and equipment is fit for purpose to meet our current risk profile and adaptable to changing circumstances.*
- *Continually reviewing our response arrangements.*
- *Adapting and evolving our response and service delivery models to meet future emerging risks.*

We will monitor our effectiveness against the following:

- *We will visit high risk premises on a regular basis to ensure our staff are aware of the hazards and risks posed by these premises.*
- *We will participate fully in all multi agency training and exercising events.*
- *We will use internal SFRS reporting systems to monitor the operational competence of our personnel.*

In doing so we will add value by:

- *Keeping members of the public and our staff safe, should any incident occur.*
- *Reducing the financial burden and disruption caused to our communities when emergencies do occur.*
- *Protecting the wealth and prosperity of our area.*
- *Proactively helping the wider community by preventing emergencies and planning to mitigate their effects when they occur.*

Review

To ensure this Local Fire and Rescue Plan remains flexible to emerging local or national priorities a review may be carried out at any time but will be reviewed at least once every three years. A review may also be carried out if the Scottish Minister directs it or if a new Strategic Plan is approved. Following a review, the Local Senior Officer may revise the Plan.

Contact Us

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