



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

Fire Fatalities Analysis Report

2018/19

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following report provides information relating to the fatal fire casualties in Scotland during the reporting period 2018/19. Due to the limited data sample and the relatively low numbers and fluctuations over a 12-month period, a longer time period is required to identify trends relating to fatal fire incidents. For this reason, the report will present 2018/19 data as well as the previous four-year data to provide a longer term five-year comparative analysis of fatal fire patterns and trends.
- 1.2 The data, and the subsequent identification of patterns and trends, should be used to inform how the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) directs and allocates resources. This will enable SFRS to focus prevention activity to target those most at risk, reduce fire casualties and fatalities, and support intervention activity designed to improve outcomes for our communities across Scotland.
- 1.3 The report is split in to two parts. Part A looks at the fire fatality data over the 2018/19 period and the longer term five-year period, capturing all the available information relating to the incidents where fatalities have been experienced. Part B will consider the information presented in Part A outlining appropriate actions and recommendations.

Part A - Fire Fatalities Data

2. Number and Geographic Location of all Fire Fatalities

- 2.1 All fatal fire data is based on fiscal year data. During the 2018/19 period SFRS recorded a total of 44 fire fatalities. This figure is equal to the number of fatalities recorded for the previous two years.
- 2.2 During the last five years a total of 218 people have lost their lives in fire incidents across Scotland. The total fatality figure of 44 over the 2018/19 reporting period is equal to the five-year average of 44.
- 2.3 This report analyses 2018/19 data and the previous five-year data, however, it is useful at this point to briefly review the longer-term data to gauge an understanding of the declining fatality profile over a longer ten-year period.
- 2.4 As can be seen in Figure 1 below, the number of fatalities over a ten-year period has reduced from a high of 62 in 2009/10, to the current level of 44. This ten-year period represents a sustained reduction in fire fatalities. The fatalities experienced over the 2018/19 period are in line with the downward trend over the last ten-year period.
- 2.5 The fatalities per Local Senior Officer (LSO) Area are shown below in Figure 2. This table shows the total number of fatalities in each LSO area over the five-year period and provides the 2018/19 and five-year fatality figure Per Million Population (PMP).
- 2.6 For the 2018/19 period, it should be noted that Dumfries and Galloway LSO Area had zero fatalities in the reporting period, and Highland LSO Area experienced the highest fatality rate PMP for 2018/19.

Year	Number of fatalities	Trend against previous year	Above or below ten year average	Above or below five year average
2018/19	44	↔	Below	Equal
2017/18	44	↔	Below	Equal
2016/17	44	↓	Below	Equal
2015/16	45	↑	Below	Above
2014/15	41	↑	Below	Below
2013/14	31	↓	Below	
2012/13	46	↓	Below	
2011/12	59	↑	Above	
2010/11	52	↓	Above	
2009/10	62	↓	Above	

Figure 1

LSO	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Total	2108/19 Per Million population (PMP)	2014/15 -2108/19 Five year average Per Million population (PMP)
Aberdeen City	3	1	2	3	2	11	0.04	0.48
Aberdeenshire and Moray	3	2	3	2	2	12	0.08	0.34
Perth & Kinross, Angus and Dundee City	3	3	2	0	3	11	0.1	0.26
Argyll & Bute, East and West Dunbartonshire	2	1	2	4	1	10	0.04	0.35
Stirling and Clackmannanshire	1	1	1	1	2	6	0.14	0.41
Dumfries and Galloway	3	3	1	5	0	12	0	0.8
East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire	4	2	4	5	6	21	0.11	0.57
Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders	2	2	2	3	4	13	0.13	0.42
East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde	2	3	2	1	6	14	0.14	0.4
City of Edinburgh	4	4	3	1	2	14	0.06	0.27
Falkirk and West Lothian	0	3	2	2	2	9	0.06	0.26
Fife	3	1	4	2	2	12	0.05	0.32
City of Glasgow	2	4	8	7	4	25	0.03	0.4
Highland	5	6	3	2	4	20	0.17	0.85
Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland	0	1	3	1	1	6	0.14	0.83
North Lanarkshire	3	4	1	2	2	12	0.06	0.35
South Lanarkshire	1	4	1	3	1	10	0.06	0.31
TOTALS	41	45	44	44	44	218		

Figure 2

2.7 Over the five-year period, the fatality rate PMP for LSO Areas in Highland, Western Isles Orkney & Shetland and Dumfries and Galloway all experience a significantly higher rate of fatal fires than the other LSO Areas. A notable factor is the rurality of these LSO Areas. This disproportionate fatality rate will be considered later in Part B of this report.

2.8 The national (UK) fire statistics for 2017/18 show fire fatality rates in Scotland were the same as 2016/17 at eight fatalities PMP. A comparison with Wales and England for 2018/19 is shown in Figure 3.

Country	2018/19 Per million population (PMP)
Scotland	8
England	6
Wales	5

Figure 3

3. Property types

- 3.1 The types of property in which fatal fires occurred during the 2018/19 period are compared to the same property types over the five-year period in Figure 4 below.
- 3.2 It can be seen from the data that there is a spike for fire fatalities in caravan and mobile home type premises during the 2018/19 period compared to the five-year average. A total of six people died in caravan/mobile home type premises.

Property type	2018/19	5 year average
Dwelling, converted flat/maisonette - multiple occupancy 3 storeys or more	1	0.8
Outdoor, other outdoors (including land)	1	0.2
Outdoor, grassland, woodland and crops, private/domestic garden/allotment	1	0.2
Other residential, towing caravan in site (not on tow)	1	2
Dwelling, purpose built flat/maisonette - multiple occupancy 4 to 9 storeys	2	2
Road vehicle - car	1	2.6
Dwelling, caravan/mobile home (permanent dwelling)	5	1.4
Dwelling, bungalow - single occupancy	7	4
Dwelling, purpose built flat/maisonette - multiple occupancy up to 3 storeys	7	7.2
Building, dwelling, house - single storey	18	15.6
TOTAL	44	

Figure 4

4. Origin and Cause

4.1 The locations where fires have started over 2018/19 period, and the five-year period, are shown in Figure 5.

4.2 During the 2018/19 period, the living room area of 19 fatal fire premises has been determined as the area of origin. This room also accounts for the highest number of fatal fires over the five-year period. The hierarchy of living room, bedroom and kitchen recorded throughout 2018/19 also corresponds with the five-year period data.

4.3 The recorded causes of fires over the five-year period are detailed in Figure 6.

4.4 During the five-year period 49.1% of fires have been caused by smoking related actions. This trend has remained constant during the 2018/19 period.

Fire Start Location	2018/19	5 year average
Living room	19	13.8
Bedroom	7	10.6
Kitchen	4	6
Not known	6	1.2
Other	3	1.2
Bedsitting room	1	0.8
Open area	1	0.4
Conservatory	1	0.4
Understair cupboard	1	0.4
Engine	1	0.4
TOTAL	44	

Figure 5

Cause	Percentage
Careless handling of smokers materials - due to sleep or unconsciousness	16.7%
Smokers materials - others	16.2%
Careless handling of smokers materials - due to careless disposal	14.8%
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire) - (and vice versa)	10.0%
Suicide / attempted: setting fire to self	7.1%
Heat source and combustibles brought together deliberately	6.7%
Person too close to heat source (or fire)	4.3%
Overheating, unknown cause	3.3%
Cooking - chip pan / deep fat fryer	2.9%
Fault in equipment or appliance	2.9%
Vehicle crash or collision	2.9%
Cooking - other cooking	2.4%
Other intentional burning, going out of control	1.9%
Careless handling - due to knocking over	1.4%
Faulty fuel supplies - electricity	1.0%
Accumulation of flammable material	1.0%
Homocide/attempted: setting fire to other person/s	1.0%
Negligent use of equipment or appliance (heat source)	1.0%
Chimney fire	0.5%
Faulty fuel supplies - gas	0.5%
Faulty fuel supplies - petrol product	0.5%
Faulty leads to equipment or appliance	0.5%
Playing with fire (or heat source)	0.5%

Figure 6

5. Fire Fatality Demographics

- 5.1 Over the last five years, 52% of all fatalities were aged 60 years and over.
- 5.2 This year's figures show a marked decrease in the number of fatalities in the 20-39 age group compared to last year, and is the lowest number recorded over the five-year period.
- 5.3 Statistically, the older you are the more likely you are to become a fire fatality. As can be seen in Figure 7, the over 60 age group are the most vulnerable age group over the five-year period. In addition to age, other contributory factors such as living alone, smoking, reduced mobility and poor health affect all age groups. Circumstances surrounding all age categories are explored through the Case Conference Policy and these outcomes are shared to shape our strategies and tactics, ensuring trends are identified and acted upon.

Age range/Year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	5 yr Total
0-19	1	0	0	0	1	2
20-39	7	6	8	7	3	31
40-59	9	16	19	14	13	71
60+	24	23	17	23	27	114
TOTAL	41	45	44	44	44	218

Figure 7

6. Gender

- 6.1 Over the last five years, the gender breakdown of people who have died in fire related incidents is 61% male and 39% female. This is shown in Figure 8 below. For 2018/19, 66% of fire fatalities were male.

Year/gender	Male	Female	Total
2014/15	24	17	41
2015/16	27	18	45
2016/17	28	16	44
2017/18	25	19	44
2018/19	29	15	44
Total	133	85	218

Figure 8

7. Contributory Factors

- 7.1 There are several other circumstances or factors that contribute to incidents occurring or, influence the incident outcomes. These are shown in Figure 9.
- 7.2 All 44 fatalities during 2018/19 period had one or more contributory factor. Revisions are being made for the 2019/20 period to ensure that FI record what lifestyle factors were generally present at the time of the fire. This will allow details of direct contributory factors to be included within the final FI report.
- 7.3 The contributory factors shown in Figure 9 feature across the 44 fatalities with many of the fatal fire victims having at least two contributory factors evidenced.
- 7.4 Alcohol/drug abuse and mobility factors clearly emerge as dominant contributory factors.
- 7.5 Additionally, an emerging trend during 2018/19 is the presence of emollient cream use confirmed in six (14%) of the fatal fires experienced. Emollient cream use is known to give rise to rapid fire development and a hot intense burn.

Medication	4
Mental health	5
Social isolation	2
Smoker	23
Mobility issues	12
Oxygen use	1
Emollient use	6
Care package provided	4
Suicide	3
Alcohol/drug abuse	18

Figure 9

8. Preventable and Non-Preventable Fire Deaths

- 8.1 Up to this stage the report has considered **all** fatal fires, consisting of both Preventable and Non-preventable fire deaths.
- 8.2 SFRS engagement activity primarily focuses on preventable fire deaths, where it is possible that the death could have been avoided with appropriate intervention by SFRS or other partner organisations before the fire event.
- 8.3 The non-preventable deaths, are those that have been caused by Road Traffic Collisions (RTC), incidents that involve intentional harm and, those where despite SFRS and partner organisation attempts to engage, access and opportunity to intervene has not been possible due to owner/occupier refusal for support.
- 8.4 Over the five-year period the average number of non-preventable fire deaths per year is nine.

During the 2018/19 period six non-preventable fire deaths and 38 preventable fire deaths have been recorded. This is the highest number of preventable fire deaths recorded since the formation of the SFRS.

- 8.5 To ensure SFRS and our partners identify appropriate actions to support a reduction of fire deaths, the report will now focus on the data relevant to the preventable fire fatalities to make recommendations to reduce the number of these.

9. The Causes of Preventable Fatal Fires

- 9.1 During the five-year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19, the single highest identified primary cause of preventable fatal fires is attributed to smoking materials, which accounts for 50% of all preventable fire deaths across Scotland. This can be seen in Figure 10 .

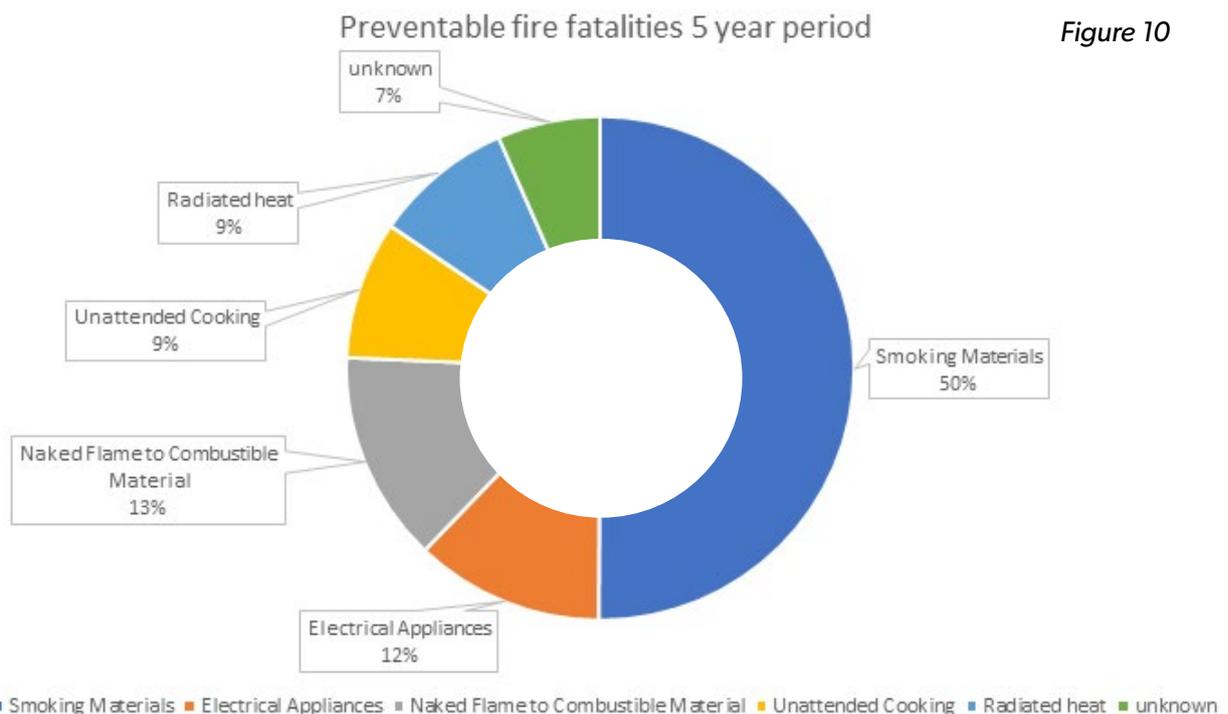


Figure 10

Fire Fatalities by Month, Day and Time of Day

10. Fire Fatalities by Month

10.1 The data presented below in Figure 11 shows that, over the five-year period, November is the month in which most preventable fire deaths occur, with 25 people having lost their lives in this month. This is closely followed by February, March and December with 22, 22 and 21 respectively. These figures demonstrate that the winter months through to the start of spring months have a higher likelihood of experiencing fire fatalities. This coincides with the clocks changing and may be due to other seasonal factors including-

- Increased periods of individual isolation during the colder, darker months when British Summer Time (BST) ends,
- More time spend inside rather than outside,
- Increased use of heating equipment/fuel poverty,
- Increased cooking activity,
- Single room confined space living.

10.2 During 2018/19, the month of March experienced eight fire fatalities, the highest number of fire fatalities for the year but the second highest monthly rate recorded over the five-year period (the highest was nine in November 2017/18).

10.3 In general the monthly fatality rates fluctuate, however, the warmer months from April to October experience lower numbers of fire fatalities than the winters months and this trend remains consistent across the five-year period.

Month	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	5yr Total
April	2	3	1	3	2	11
May	3	2	2	0	1	8
June	1	3	1	0	1	6
July	1	2	3	5	2	13
August	1	2	2	3	4	12
September	1	1	3	1	1	7
October	0	1	3	6	1	11
November	5	2	2	9	7	25
December	2	5	5	5	4	21
January	5	4	2	2	1	14
February	5	4	5	2	6	22
March	3	6	4	1	8	22
Total	29	35	33	37	38	172

Figure 11

11. Fire Fatalities by Day of the Week

- 11.1 The table below in Figure 12 shows that the highest number of preventable fire deaths over the 2018/19 period occurred on Thursdays and Sundays.
- 11.2 The highest number of preventable deaths over the five-year period occur on a Thursday with 31 being recorded. This is closely followed by Friday, Sunday and Saturday on 27, 27 and 26 respectively. Mondays clearly demonstrate a much lower fatality rate both over the five-year period and during the 2018/19 period.

Day	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	5yr Total
Monday	1	3	4	5	3	16
Tuesday	4	5	2	5	6	22
Wednesday	4	3	5	6	5	23
Thursday	7	10	4	3	7	31
Friday	4	4	7	7	5	27
Saturday	4	4	6	7	5	26
Sunday	5	6	5	4	7	27
Total	29	35	33	37	38	172

Figure 12

12. Fire Fatalities by Time of Day

12.1 It can be seen in Figure 13 below that during 2018/19, 12 fatalities occurred in the afternoon period (12:00 to 17:00), nine in the early evening period (17:00 to 22:00), 14 during night-time hours (22:00 to 06:00) and three in early morning (06:00 to 09:00).

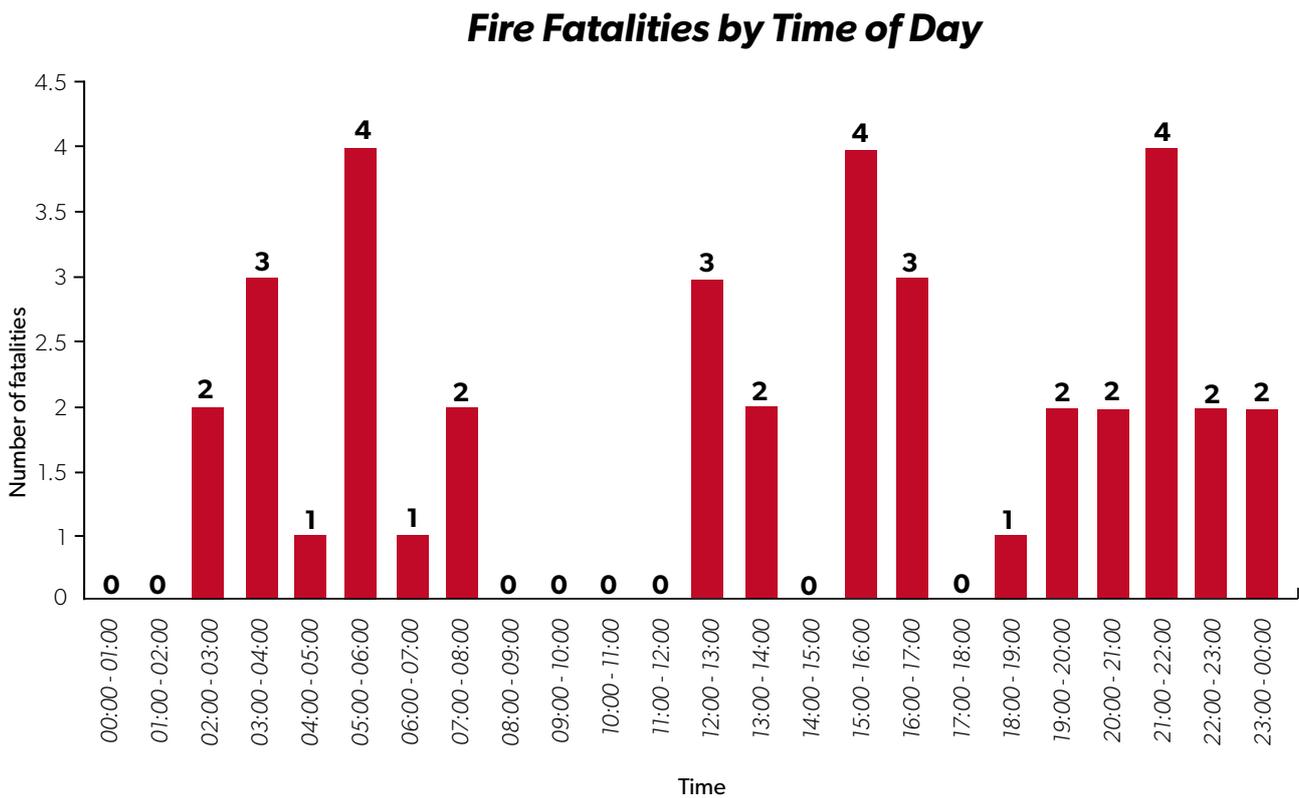


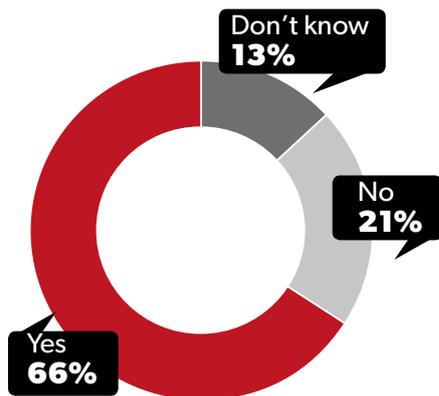
Figure 13

13. Smoke Detection

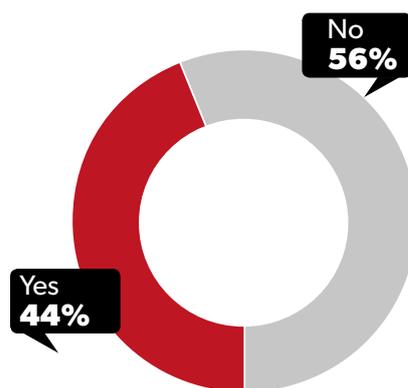
- 13.1 During the five-year period, of the 189 fatal fires in buildings, 128 (66%) of the premises were known to have smoke detection fitted, and 44% of these successfully raised the alarm.
- 13.2 It should be noted that fire within premises may have been detected by other means prior to alarm actuation.
- 13.3 SFRS strive to identify those most at risk and undertake a Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV). Further targeted prevention work is required to promote the use and provision of smoke detection in homes.
- 13.4 Also of concern are those premises where detectors are fitted but may not have raised the alarm. More needs to be done to educate individual occupiers to test/check smoke detection equipment and ensure that any organisation that interacts with vulnerable individuals recognise the best practice regarding the appropriate quantity and positioning of smoke detectors aligned to the risk presented.

Figure 14

Were alarms present?



If present, did alarm system raise alarm?



(Five-year period)

Part B SFRS Considerations, Conclusion and Recommendations

14.1 Part B of the report discusses the data presented in the sections contained in Part A and will suggest considerations relevant to each of the sections. These considerations will then be used to make specific recommendations to support new and ongoing work so that SFRS and our partners can develop and improve existing prevention activity across the country. The recommendations will help to create, influence and champion innovative work streams designed to reduce fire fatalities and improve community safety prevention activity.

14.2 NUMBER AND GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF ALL FIRE FATALITIES

The data shows that the high population LSO areas of City of Glasgow (CoG) and East, North and South Ayrshire (ENSA) both experienced over 20 fatalities over the five-year period. Highland LSO Area although much lower in terms of population, also experienced 20 fatalities over the same period.

The fatality rate PMP figures highlight that the three LSO Areas of Highland, Western Isles Orkney & Shetland and Dumfries and Galloway experienced a disproportionate fatality rate over the five-year period. These relatively low population areas have experienced a higher fatality rate over the longer period.

Scotland has the highest PMP fatality rate in the UK at 8 PMP.

Considerations –

- Community Safety resources in the three LSO areas that experience 20 or more fatalities over the five-year average should be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate and engaged in meaningful preventative work,
- The same review of Community Safety resources should also be undertaken in the LSO areas with a high PMP.

- Directorate engagement with these LSO areas should be prioritised to identify the specifics relating to fatal fires experienced over the period and focus future engagement actions targeted at those most at risk and develop effective partnership working and referral arrangements,
- Campaign action and specific thematic action plans should be introduced to these areas designed to target the known risk profile,
- Additional resources from neighbouring LSO areas could be redirected to support prevention activity in high risk areas where available,
- New and existing partnership working arrangements should be prioritised, reviewed and developed to ensure information regarding individuals most at risk is identified and shared so that appropriate actions are taken.

14.3 PROPERTY TYPES

This section provided information relating to types of property where fatal fires have occurred. Reviewing the 2018/19 data, an emerging trend shows an increase in the amount of fatal fires which occurred in caravan type premises. This may be due to demographical change as the aging population seeks to downsize and live in more affordable accommodation. A caravan offers little in the way of compartmentation and the risk to older people with mobility issues is greater in fire than within a domestic building.

Considerations -

- Review fire safety guidance for caravan premises and ensure legislative responsibilities are clear and enforced,
- Ensure campaign messaging targets and educates those living in caravan type premises,

- Direct LSO areas to work with partners to identify those most vulnerable living in caravan type accommodation,
- Work with site owners to improve caravan dwelling safety,
- Fire Safety Enforcement to identify sites where employees stay in provided accommodation (including caravans) that are relevant premises and ensure appropriate advice is delivered.

- Improve processes to ensure that 'Telecare Enabled Technology' is fitted where the risk represented justifies installation,
- Improved fire detection in the room(s) of origin may support a reduction in the fatal fires attributed to living and bedroom areas. The new Tolerable Standard Guidance (link below) should help to address this over the coming years. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-tolerable-standard-guidance/>

14.4 ORIGIN AND CAUSE

Using the five-year data, the living room is the most common room for a fire to start that results in a fatality. This may be due to lifestyle factors that result in single room living. It may also be the room where the majority of people spend most of their time. Single room living can be coupled with a chaotic lifestyle and may also be linked with mobility issues, mental health issues, smoking and drug/alcohol use.

Considerations-

- SFRS and partners to identify and refer individuals living in a single room scenario and effectively share information to ensure a reduced risk,
- Training and guidance should be provided to care providers to raise fire risk awareness,
- Improve partnership working arrangements to ensure a robust information sharing process identifying those most at risk to effectively target actions,
- Improve mechanisms to provide better detection installation guidance to reflect HFSV outcomes and encourage SFRS personnel to fit detection within living room where an elevated risk is present,
- Improve access to, and mechanism for, obtaining and installing portable suppression equipment for vulnerable individuals in high risk single room living environments,

This section also provided information relating to ignition sources with smoking related actions as the ignition source responsible for 50% of fatal fires over the five-year period. The act of smoking introduces many potential ignition sources to an individual's home.

Those with mobility issues are most at risk and those with severe mobility issues are likely to use emollient creams which increases the risk to themselves even further due to increased ignitability of clothing and bedding, confined space living and inability to move themselves away from a fire in its incipient stages.

A campaign to publicise the risks associated with emollient cream use will be delivered during 2019/20. The campaign will have multiple strands designed to educate the public, ensure our crews identify usage/provide appropriate advice during HFSV and, ensure that our FI teams take cognisance of its use and record and share information to improve safety of those who use the product.

Considerations-

- Develop and deliver improved, sustained, national campaigns to highlight the increased risk to individuals who smoke and are subject to the use of emollients. Particularly those who are deemed to be vulnerable,
- Provide targeted education delivered and

accessible to those most vulnerable in society,

- Develop and improve working arrangements with partners to encourage and reinforce existing referral arrangements with a view to increase the number of targeted referrals successfully acted upon,
- Provide guidance and training for care providers to recognise fire risk in these environments, ensuring they understand effective steps to be taken to immediately reduce the risk,
- Promote the use of fire retardant aprons and bedding where there is evidence of previous near miss fire events but the individual is unwilling or unable to change their behaviour,
- To support the emollient cream campaign, instigate an emollient cream testing project where the outcomes can be used to train SFRS personnel and partners in ensuring risk fully understood and thereby reduced,
- Improve access to and mechanism of obtaining and installing portable suppression equipment for vulnerable individuals in high risk single room living environments.
- Improve processes to ensure that Telecare Enabled Technology is fitted where the risk presented justifies installation.
- Improved fire detection in the room(s) of origin may support a reduction in the fatal fires attributed to living and bedroom areas. The new Tolerable Standard Guidance (link below) should help to address this over the coming years. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-tolerable-standard-guidance/>

14.5 FIRE FATALITY DEMOGRAPHICS

52% of all fatalities over the five-year period were in the over 60 age group. This age group is more likely to be a fatal fire victim than any other age category. The increasing year on year trend for the over 60 age group over the last two years is cause for concern. This may be due to the population increase of over 60s living longer lives, but other lifestyle factors such as isolation, mental health issues, mobility and medication use are factors impacting on individual's safety.

Considerations-

- Continue to focus on this age group across all Community Safety Engagement activity,
- Champion and promote partnerships where this age group are stakeholders,
- Campaign to highlight the important role that family, friends and neighbours can play to safeguard and refer individuals to SFRS and partner organisations and improve the safety of individuals within this age group,
- Provide guidance and train care providers and family members to recognise fire risk in these environments and ensure they understand what effective steps can be taken to reduce the risk,
- Deliver local training courses for this age group to help them keep themselves safe from fire.

14.6 GENDER

This section provided information relating to gender. Over the five-year period males were more often fatal fire victims. This figure has increased over the last two years from 2017/18 where 57% of fatalities were male rising to 66% in 2018/19.

Considerations -

- Continue to focus on this age group giving emphasis on the indicated increased risk to

males,

- Champion and promote partnerships where the male gender within this age group are stakeholders,
- Provide guidance and train care providers to recognise fire risk in these environments and ensure effective steps can be taken to reduce the risk.
- Deliver local training courses for this age group to help them keep themselves safe from fire.

14.7 CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

It is evidenced that at least two contributory factors were present at the majority of all the fire fatalities for 2018/19. Each contributory factor must be recognised by SFRS, our partners and those people who interact with individuals (family, friends, neighbours). This recognition and the correlation to risk will result in appropriate steps being taken to refer an individual at risk so that action can be taken by SFRS and our partners to improve the individual's situation and reduce the risk.

Considerations-

- Highlight contributory factors as early warning signs,
- Provide guidance and train care providers to recognise contributory factors and the related fire risk in these environments and ensure effective steps are taken to reduce the risk and refer to SFRS,
- Develop and deliver a campaign to highlight the important role that family, friends and neighbours can play to refer individuals to SFRS and partner organisations and improve the safety of individuals with two or more known contributory factors,
- Improve fire investigation reports and recording of the contributory factors present,

and clearly document those which directly contributed to a fire situation in the final fire investigation report,

- During this fiscal year, (2019/20), focus on incidents involving emollient creams. All Fire Investigation Officer led Level two and three fire investigations will identify where emollient cream has been in use and consider how the presence of the substance has contributed to fire ignition, growth and spread.
- Deliver a program of training for operational crews. This will support the published Awareness Briefing that details how SFRS Level one fire investigations, carried out by operational crews, should recognise emollient cream use and, ensure they record it properly on the Incident Recording System. The improved data will support future campaigns to educate emollient cream users, care providers and SFRS staff and partners.
- Care providers will be invited to an SFRS led seminar to recognise the presence of contributory factors, review the circumstances for the previous years' fatal fire incidents, workshop identification of risk at the "Safe House" and emphasise the dangers of smoking and the elevated risk of smoking and emollient cream use.

14.8 PREVENTABLE AND NON-PREVENTABLE FIRE DEATHS

Although the main focus of SFRS is on preventable fire deaths, the Service should seek opportunity to reduce the non-preventable fatalities.

- 14.9 In terms of other non-preventable fire fatalities such as those involving RTC incidents, continued road safety education may support this to encourage safer driving styles and reduce overall RTC numbers.

Considerations

- Activities such as engaging with suicide groups, training SFRS staff and partners to recognise an individual that may be a suicide risk and, nurturing effective robust referral pathways to suitably experienced and qualified partner agencies, may all support a reduction in the number of people using fire as a tool to end their lives,
- Close partnership working with Police Scotland, local schools, youth groups and the promotion of referral to the Road Safety Scotland advice and training information may support a reduction in these types of fire fatality.

14.10 FIRE FATALITIES BY MONTH, DAY AND TIME OF DAY

Over the five-year period, November is the month that has the highest fatality rate. Across the five-year period, the months from October to March, when BST ends (the winter months), all demonstrate higher fatal fire figures than the other months of the year. This may be due to reduced ambient temperatures, increased use of portable heating appliances (as evidenced in Fire Investigations), more time spent indoors, social isolation and single room living in response to fuel poverty.

Considerations-

- Review the seasonal Thematic Action Plans (TAP) and extend the Winter TAP across the entire winter period, focusing on targeting those most at risk,
- Sustain a specific, targeted educational campaign across the full period to encourage family, friends, neighbours and carers to refer individuals at risk,
- Ensure SFRS personnel involved in

engagement activity recognise the elevated risks at these times of the year, and take cognisance of this when delivering Home Fire Safety Visits, ensuring that appropriate follow up action is instigated,

- Champion and promote partnerships throughout the summer months to identify and engage with those most at risk during the winter period,
- Provide guidance and train care providers to recognise fire risk in these environments and ensure effective steps can be taken to reduce the risk.

14.11 SMOKE DETECTION

Section 13 provided information relating to smoke detector provision and the number of times it effectively raised the alarm. By cross referencing the data provided in this report that considers age, contributory factors, type of property, room of origin and ignition cause, we can establish that the location and provision of smoke detection remains key to early warning. Where smoke detection is not operational or has not operated the reasons for this need to be explored and actioned. The new smoke detection standard should address these issues for the majority of new builds and retro fitting, however, existing detection provision inadequacy still needs addressed.

Considerations -

- Enhance training for SFRS personnel to take recognition of single room living and provide and site appropriate detection devices,
- Train and educate partner agencies to review smoke detection provision to ensure it is appropriate to the risk,
- Continue to deliver educational campaigns that encourages home owners/occupiers, family, friends and neighbours of the most

vulnerable in society to test and maintain smoke detection equipment,

- Provide guidance and train care providers to recognise different fire risks individuals have and ensure effective steps can be taken to provide appropriate detection,
- Provide guidance and training to Linked Alarm/Telecare providers who will often have first alert and contact with individuals in a fire situation,
- Improve partnership working capability to provide local low-cost portable suppression equipment where the factors present in a home impact on the available escape time in the event of fire, regardless of detection provision.

15 CONCLUSIONS

- 15.1 The number of fire fatalities recorded for 2018/19 remains the same as the previous two years at 44. Although this figure could be interpreted as “stability”, SFRS are committed to reducing the number of fire fatalities. SFRS and our partners must redouble our efforts to strive towards the goal of zero fire fatalities.
- 15.2 SFRS must work in close partnership with other organisations across all sectors and ensure that our combined resources continue to target those most at risk. It is widely understood that as a Service we cannot achieve this alone. As such the emphasis for the coming years must be to work closely with existing partners and forge effective working relationships with new ones.
- 15.3 The key to successful engagement rests with those agencies who are frequently in contact with the most vulnerable in society. SFRS must continue to seek out and engage with these agencies, otherwise the opportunity to intervene and reduce the risk to such individuals will be missed. Partnerships should strive to identify those most at risk and ensure that robust mechanisms are in place to refer individuals to the organisation best equipped to improve the safety of these individuals.
- 15.4 The Fire Investigation led Serious Fire Task Group (SFTG) has a remit to review all Case Conference returns for each fire fatality experienced. Although the 2018/19 Case Conference returns are incomplete at this time, a recurring theme within the returns so far is that, more often than not, one or more agencies have had dealings with a fatal fire victim before the incident date. This indicates a missed opportunity and suggests that perhaps more could have, and should have, been done to safeguard the individuals involved.

15.5 To reduce the number of fatal fire victims we need to continue focusing on prevention activity, prioritising those most at risk and support action to ensure that messages contained in our campaigns highlight the safeguarding role that the carers, family, friends and neighbours can play in identification and referral of those individuals who are most vulnerable in our society.

15.6 By continuing to learn from previous prevention activity through robust evaluation processes, SFRS and our partners can sustain delivery of the high-quality prevention work already in place, and develop new and innovative methods of identifying those most at risk.

16 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations come from the main considerations and conclusion of this report.

1. Consider community safety structures within LSO areas based on this Fatal Fire Analysis.
2. Local LSO Areas to review all partnership relationships and ensure that effective arrangements are in place to share information. Referral processes must be two-way and the information flow between partners must prioritise those most at risk.
3. Consider wider and improved access to funding streams for preventative measures such as technology enabled care packages, fixed and portable suppression systems and enhanced fire detection.
4. Local P&P Plans to take account of the finding of the Fatal Fire Analysis.
5. Use SFRS evaluation processes to support continuous improvement of community safety activity.
6. Continue with sustained campaign messaging targeting the at-risk age groups and carers, family, friends and neighbours, focusing on the risks identified in the Fatal Fire Analysis –
 - smoking related actions
 - fires in caravan type premises,
 - safe use of emollient creams.
7. Deliver a regular seminar aimed at care providers. The seminar will review the previous year's fatality information, outline the crucial interaction care providers have and the important risk reduction role they can play. SFRS will use the day to train attendees on risk recognition at the SFRS Safe House, and consider case studies and best practice and guidance.



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