



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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# THE FUTURE OF **LEADHILLS** COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

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**FORMAL  
CONSULTATION**

10 July – 18 Aug 2023

# THE FUTURE OF LEADHILLS FIRE STATION

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is holding a public consultation to seek views on the future of Leadhills Community Fire Station in South Lanarkshire.

Anyone wishing to participate will be able to submit their views between 10 July and 18 August, 2023 via the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's [website](#) where you can complete a short survey. You can also register to be kept updated on this and other public consultations.

**A formal public consultation meeting is being held on Tuesday 8 August from 6.30pm-8.30pm at Leadhills Hall.**

At the end of the consultation period, stakeholder submissions will be collated and analysed before a full report is prepared for the SFRS Board to consider in September, 2023.

A decision on the future of the station will be based on robust data, delivering community safety, best value for money and feedback from the community.

If you would like more information or require this document in an alternative format, please email [SFRS.  
publicinvolvement@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:SFRS.publicinvolvement@firescotland.gov.uk) or call 0774 782 7283.

## ABOUT LEADHILLS COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

Leadhills Community Fire Station serves the small rural village of Leadhills in South Lanarkshire, as well as nearby Wanlockhead in Dumfries and Galloway. The community fire station is a single-storey building that has been leased to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) by Hopetoun Estate.

Refurbishment to turn the property into a fire station took place in 2013 and included a working appliance bay, drying area and station office.

It relies on volunteer firefighters who give up their own time to protect their communities. We know they are extremely highly valued by the people they serve. Like their colleagues on the wholetime and on call duty systems, volunteer units work closely with fellow responders from other emergency services to maximise the chance of a positive outcome for casualties and others who find themselves in danger. Their skills include firefighting, road rescues and emergency trauma care.

# WHY IS LEADHILLS COMMUNITY FIRE STATION UNDER REVIEW?

## Recruitment challenges

Since February 2015, Leadhills Community Fire Station has not been operational. There are currently two volunteer firefighters, which falls below the required crewing level of four. Previous recruitment attempts in and around Leadhills have been unsuccessful. SFRS has an ongoing recruitment process for on call crews through the My Job Scotland website. To date there have been no suitable applications from Leadhills and surrounding area. Any new recruits would require to meet fitness standards, undergo training and a PVG assessment to achieve the required standard.

## Building maintenance

The lease on the current station building has now ended. The building requires to be upgraded to a suitable standard, which would require substantial funding and high ongoing maintenance costs.

## Best value

SFRS must ensure resources are used effectively and efficiently. The Service has to consider whether the continued costs of leasing, maintaining and reconfiguring a building that has not been used for more than eight years is the best use of public funds.

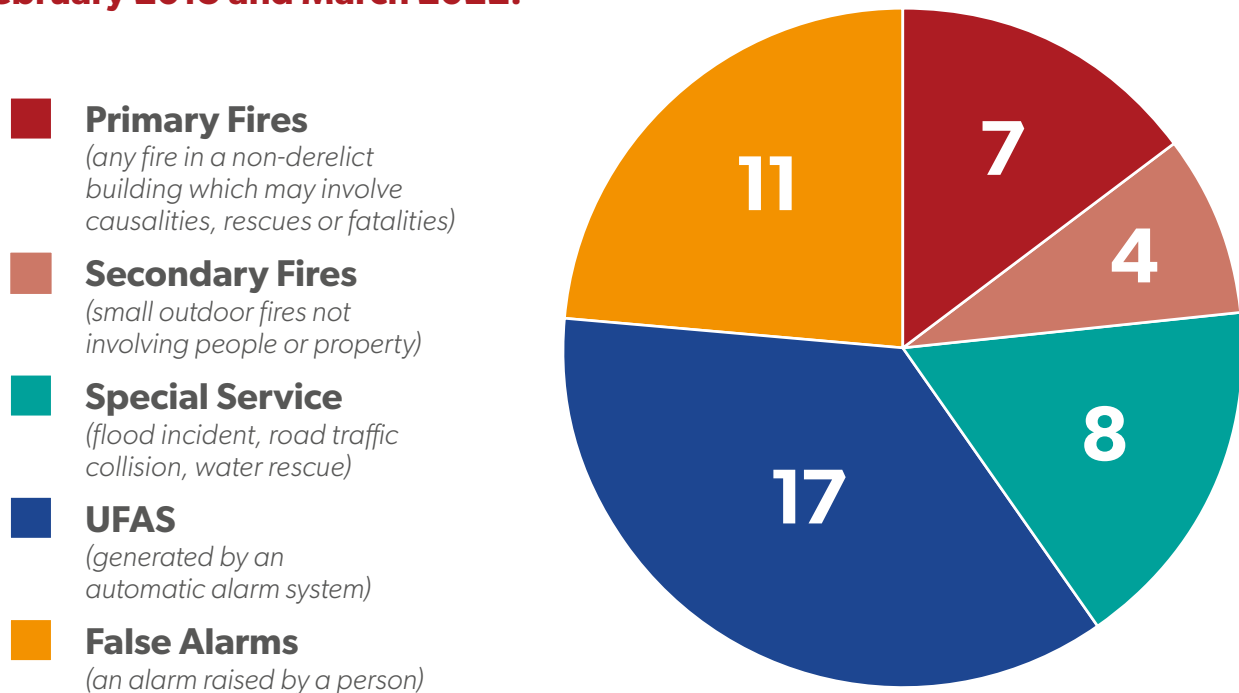
## Operational response

Over the past eight years, fire and rescue cover for Leadhills and Wanlockhead areas has been provided by Abington Community Fire Station in South Lanarkshire and Sanquhar Community Fire Station in Dumfries and Galloway. Appliances from other stations, including Douglas and Biggar, have also attended incidents in and around Leadhills in the recent past.

Data shows that between February 2015 and March 2022, the majority of Leadhills incidents, covered by Abington and Sanquhar, were unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS).

From 1 July 2023, SFRS will stop attending automatic fire alarm call outs to commercial business and workplace premises, such as factories, offices, shops and leisure facilities - unless a fire has been confirmed. Duty holders with responsibility for workplace premises should safely investigate a fire alarm before calling 999, as our control room operators will now be asking for confirmation of an actual fire, or signs of fire, before sending the nearest resource. This change does not apply to sleeping premises, such as hospitals, care homes, hotels or domestic dwellings which will continue to get an emergency response.

### Incidents in and around Leadhills between February 2015 and March 2022:



## Two Options

As part of our pre-consultation we engaged with stakeholders, including local residents, to gather views on two outline proposals: reinstatement of operations and the closure of the fire station. This was also an opportunity for the community to present any other suggestions to consult upon.

SFRS held a public information session on 4 July in Leadhills to capture feedback and note any views from local residents.

Our local area managers also engaged with key stakeholder partners such as Police Scotland, South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership, Safer South Lanarkshire Board and local councillors.

## PRE-CONSULTATION KEY FINDINGS

At the public drop-in session in Leadhills on 4 July, we asked local residents to let us know their priorities around the future of Leadhills Community Fire Station. Twelve people attended the drop-in session. This is what we learned:

- The main issue raised was in relation to recruitment, mentioned by eleven attendees. Attendees asked about how SFRS recruits on call firefighters.
- Six people said directly that they would like to see the fire station in Leadhills reinstated regardless of all other considerations (incident demand, recruitment difficulties, best value, etc.)
- Six people said that having a fixed SFRS presence in Leadhills village was either not important to them or they were neutral about it.
- Everyone we spoke with said nearby stations should still contribute to community safety in the local area.

- Everyone we spoke with said whatever happens to the fire station, home fire safety visits in the local area should continue.
- There were a number of queries over the future use of the current fire station building.
- There was a need for clarity around the role of SFRS and the need for proper risk assessment in local communities.
- There was one comment in relation to exploring alternative funding options from local private companies – e.g., local wind farm operators.

Following this process, we have concluded that we will formally consult on two options:

- Reinstatement of full operations
- Closure of the fire station

The preferred option for SFRS is the closure of the fire station. We are now inviting views on these options.

## Reinstatement of fire station\*

**Pros** – Leadhills will have a trusted SFRS presence within the community with local firefighters who can respond to emergencies such as firefighting, road rescues and emergency trauma care. SFRS staff will gain insights into emerging local risks potentially affecting the community.

**Cons** – Retraining of all personnel to achieve required standard. Incidents requiring breathing apparatus and rescue would still require a response from neighbouring stations trained in these skills. Financial investment needed to return site to suitable operational standards. Need to launch a recruitment campaign to attract new crews.

## Closure of operations\*

**Pros** – Neighbouring stations will continue to contribute to community safety in Leadhills and Wanlockhead. No further financial investment will be required to support maintenance of property and fleet.

**Cons** – SFRS won't have a fixed presence to respond to incidents. Delivering fire prevention work in the area will increasingly involve other community action teams to carry out activities. The costs involved in returning the site to suitable standards by terms of lease.

\* **Please consider these Options, including the Pros and Cons for each, and let us have your views as part of this survey.**

## REPORTING BACK

A final decision on the future of Leadhills Community Fire Station will be made in September 2023 by the SFRS Strategic Leadership Team and SFRS Board. This will be done after careful consideration of all relevant information, including community feedback, incident data, and best value considerations.

As a responsible employer, SFRS will liaise with employees who are directly impacted by any decision and representative bodies. We will also inform the local community, and key stakeholder partners.



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[firescotland.gov.uk](https://firescotland.gov.uk)

The Future of Leadhills Community  
Fire Station – Formal Consultation

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