

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

COMMUNITY FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN FOR MIDLOTHIAN 2018



Midlothian 

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Introduction

Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Midlothian Community Fire and Rescue Plan. This Plan has been developed to support the delivery of agreed local outcomes for the people of Midlothian in conjunction with the national priorities contained within the SFRS Strategic Plan 2016- 2019. Our ambition is to work in partnership to improve community safety and enhance the well-being of those living in Midlothian whilst tackling issues of social inequality. This plan will set out our priorities in order to support this ambition.

This Plan recognises what we have delivered in the past but looks forward to what we aim to achieve over the coming years. The safety of our communities is at the heart of everything we do, whether it is responding to emergencies or providing preventative advice and measures. The Plan will highlight our resources in Midlothian, the changing risks to local communities, and how we aim to deliver our services to meet all the challenges we face.

As a public service and a statutory member of Midlothian Community Planning Partnership, we recognise that to be effective and efficient, we must work closely with our partners in order to identify and provide for those most at risk. By working this way, we will look to reduce duplication, share resources and information and make improvements. We will actively contribute to the shared Vision and Purpose set out in the *Single Midlothian Plan* and it is our intention that the Community Fire and Rescue Plan is viewed as an extension of this Plan.

Whilst we will continue to prepare for and respond to incidents such as fires and road traffic collisions, we must also ensure we are ready to deal with the changing risks society face, including an ageing population, the effects of climate change on the environment, and terrorism. This change in how and what we respond to has already been experienced in Midlothian with local crews responding to Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrests (OHCA), as a part of a wider pilot project, in support of our Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) colleagues. A separate initiative in Midlothian has seen our Home Safety Visits evolve into a more holistic approach, taking into account the risk of slips, trips and falls in the home as well as identifying those at risk from fuel poverty and other vulnerabilities. As we move forward, we will look to build on these innovative approaches whilst ensuring our staff are trained, equipped and located appropriately to respond to emergencies, promote prevention, and protect communities.

As the SFRS evolves, we will play a key part in public service reform and continue to identify new opportunities to broaden our role within society to ensure as a modern Fire and Rescue Service, we provide the appropriate protection for the communities of Midlothian.

Steve Gourlay
Local Senior Officer
Midlothian, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders

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 2016-19 has been designed to meet these national expectations. Set against a complex and evolving backdrop our Strategic Plan encapsulates our mission, values and strategic priorities.

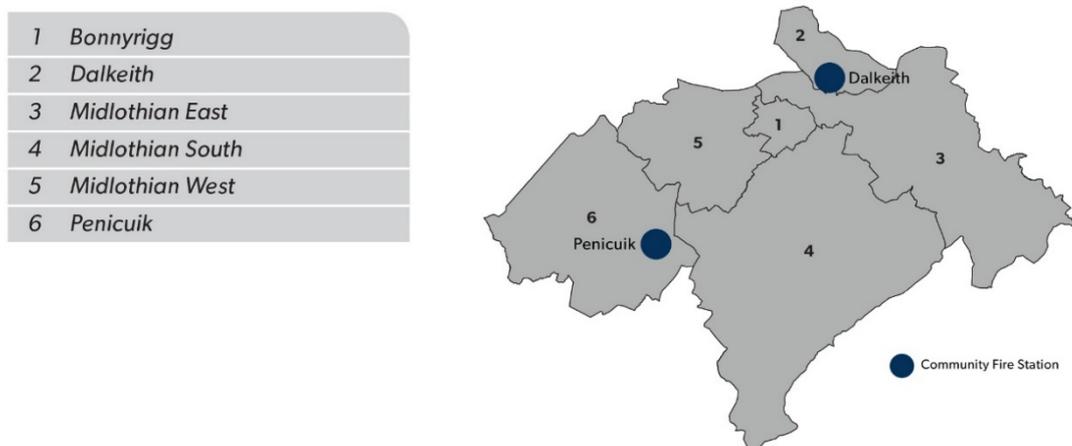


These have been shaped with due regard to the challenges we face and to what we need to achieve to be a highly effective, sustainable public service. Operating within a climate of significant financial uncertainty and public service reform means we need to transform how we operate. This will particularly include how we prepare for and respond to changing societal needs, the impact of climate change and the threat of terrorism.

Strong leadership, supported by sound governance and management arrangements are at the very core of our foundations. These arrangements will direct and provide assurance that we comply with our statutory responsibilities. In addition, they will provide Local Senior Officers with supporting mechanisms to deliver services specifically tailored to local needs.

Local Context

Midlothian has a population of just over 87, 000 people who reside within areas ranging from towns such as Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg and Penicuik to single dwellings in remote rural locations. The diagram below outlines the electoral ward boundaries whilst highlighting the locations of our 2 Community Fire Stations.



Over the past five years, the SFRS responded to 5866 incidents within Midlothian. The Key Performance Indicator table below details our operational response over the same period by incident type.

Key performance indicator	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Dwelling fires	88	62	56	60	75
All fire casualties and fatalities	20	35	20	10	13
All deliberate fires excl. dwellings	181	308	260	276	394
Special Service - RTCs	41	36	46	47	39
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals	271	270	251	306	379

Reducing Dwelling Fires, Fire Casualties and Fatalities will continue to be at the heart of our prevention activities, over the last two decades, similar to the rest of the UK, we have seen a gradual decrease in the amount of dwelling fires we attend. Dwelling fires accounted for around 6% of our operational activity, whilst fire casualties have averaged around 18 over the last five years, sadly including four fire fatalities over that period.

Prevention will continue to be a core activity for SFRS staff in Midlothian. Our Home Fire Safety Programme, which commenced well over a decade ago has proved successful in terms of reducing dwelling fires and associated casualties whilst providing thousands of homes with early warning smoke detection. Approximately 1000 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) are generally completed every year in Midlothian by operational crews or dedicated community safety staff.

Our Living Safely in the Home Pilot has proved to be very successful and we will look to build on this whilst adapting how we deliver Home Safety Visits. Our visits will become more holistic and take into account a range of risks in the home including, slips, trips and falls, fuel poverty, frailty and dementia amongst other vulnerabilities.

Deliberate fires (not including dwellings) are often, but not always, of a malicious nature. Deliberate fires accounted for approximately 24% of our operational activity over the last five years and typically involved refuse, grass, wood and scrubland. Increases in this type of incident activity are generally seasonal and often linked to anti-social behaviour.

Deliberate fires of a malicious nature place an unnecessary demand on SFRS and partner resources and often affecting communities socially and economically.

Responding to Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's) has remained a clear focus of our operational and prevention activity over the past five years, although in general terms we have seen a slight decrease. RTC's accounted for approximately 4% of our operational activity in Midlothian.

The term "Special Service" is used to describe non-fire related incidents and includes RTC's, Flooding, OHCA, Water Rescue and Hazardous Materials incidents amongst others. Throughout the last 15-20 years, Fire and Rescue Services across the UK have seen a significant increase in attendance at these types of incident whilst domestic property fires decrease. During 2016-17, Special Service incidents accounted for 12% of all emergency calls in Midlothian.

Due to the location and skills sets of our community-based resources, and the remote nature of much of Midlothian, we have been able to provide assistance to our partners, such as Police Scotland and the SAS, on an increasing basis and for a variety of reasons including medical co- response, effecting entry and professional advice.

By assisting our SAS colleagues we aim to not only increase an individual's chances of survival but also improving their longer term recovery outcomes.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) have accounted for over 25% of our operational incidents in Midlothian over the last five years. Similar to other operational activities, this type of incident demand is not unique to Midlothian, with the UK as a whole facing challenges in relation to reducing UFAS. With disruption to local businesses, schools, healthcare facilities and others, these unwanted calls can have a significant impact across the Midlothian area. Following national policy and using local initiatives we will continue to prioritise the reduction of UFAS whilst engaging with key stakeholders, partners and those with responsibilities for the premises involved.

Our two Community Fire Stations include one Wholetime station at Dalkeith with one Retained Duty System (RDS) station in Penicuik. Wholetime stations are permanently staffed 24/7 throughout the year whilst our RDS staff operate on an "on call" basis and are alerted by pager for emergency calls.

Frontline staff are supported by a team of local and national officers from Training and Employee Development (TED) Directorate. The local TED officers are based at Dalkeith Community Fire Station and provide dedicated support to operational crews in terms of acquiring new skills, maintaining existing skills and ensuring role competency.

Preventions and Protection (P&P) officers are located at Dalkeith Community Fire Station. They consist of Fire Safety Enforcement Officers who deal with legislative matters including the auditing of relevant premises and officers who carry out a community engagement role through a diverse and wide reaching range of preventative activities. In addition to this, a SFRS Local Area Liaison Officer acts as a coordinator for engagement activities whilst liaising with external partners.

An Area Manager, or Local Senior Officer (LSO), has overall responsibility for discharging the functions of the SFRS within Midlothian. Day to day management of resources is devolved to the Midlothian Group Manager (GM) and Station Manager (SM) responsible for Service Delivery. The Senior Management team also consists of a further GM and two SM's who have responsibility for P&P and TED across the LSO area of Midlothian, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders.

Working in Partnership to achieve better outcomes for the people of Midlothian

This Plan and its priorities reflect a partnership approach whilst sharing the vision and themes that will lead to improved outcomes for the communities of Midlothian. The examples below highlight some of the ways in which we aim to contribute to the Single Midlothian Plan and the Community Safety and Justice Strategy. The list is not exhaustive and we will continually look for innovative ways to help improve outcomes.

Midlothian Priorities

How we plan to contribute

Midlothian Priorities	How we plan to contribute
<i>Home Safety and Unintentional Harm</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will provide a range of preventative advice and measures through holistic home safety visits with the aim of keeping people safe in their homes.• We will explore opportunities to work closer with our Health and Social Care colleagues in order to reach those most vulnerable in our communities whilst contributing to longer term health outcomes.• Our holistic Home Safety Programme will aim to reduce Unintentional Harm in the home within the under 5-year-old age group.• As an active member of Public Protection we will carry out a range of preventative and intervention measures. This will include addressing social issues such as, reducing Domestic Abuse, identifying those at risk from Drugs and Alcohol, Fuel Poverty, Frailty and Dementia.• Our holistic Home Safety Programme will aim to reduce Unintentional Harm in the home within the 65 + year old age group. By reducing slips, trips and falls in the home we can contribute to older people living independently whilst alleviating financial and resource pressures on our Health and Social Care partners.

Anti-Social Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By consolidation and where possible, we aim to develop existing youth engagement initiatives such as the Cooldown programme. By participating in these programmes, younger people will acquire new skills, practical and theoretical, learn to work within a team and build self-confidence. The programme will promote better citizenship whilst potentially improving opportunities for employment. • In partnership we will provide opportunities for young people in Midlothian. • In partnership with Police and other partners we will prioritise the reduction of anti-social related Deliberate Fire Setting (excluding dwellings) through a range of prevention, intervention and diversionary activities.
Death and Injury on Midlothian's roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through active participation as a member of the Midlothian Road Safety Forum. • By contributing to prevention initiatives such as "Tomorrow's Driver" and continuing our "make it or break it" programme that highlights the consequences of RTC's to new and potential young drivers.
Crossing Cutting Outcomes	
Community involvement in setting and delivering Community Safety Outcomes and feeling safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will provide a range of preventative advice and measures through holistic Home Safety Visits with the aim of keeping people safe in their homes. • We will explore opportunities to work closer with our Health and Social care colleagues in order to reach those most vulnerable in our communities whilst contributing to longer term health outcomes.
Re-offending (Community Justice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By continuing to make a positive contribution to the Community Justice agenda.
Safeguarding Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our operational crews will continue to be a vigilant partner and report suspicions surrounding counter terror and organised crime.

Local Priorities

As part of a Community Partnership approach, we will make people safer in their homes.

Traditionally, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have focussed on reducing the risk of fire in the home through advice and providing domestic smoke detection. We will never lose sight of this crucial element of our work in the community however we recognise that we can also contribute to safety in other ways. Unintentional Harm in the home, however minor, can have far-reaching and long-term effects on individuals, families and service providers.

With people living longer, risks in the home have evolved and whilst we have reduced the number of dwelling fires and associated casualties, the amount of persons suffering a fall in their home requiring medical attention has increased. Evidence suggests that young children, particularly under 5's are at risk from Unintentional Harm ranging from choking to trapping fingers in doors. Other vulnerabilities include conditions or dependences such as Dementia, Frailty, Drugs and Alcohol and Fuel Poverty.

By adapting our approach to home safety and assessing risk holistically, in partnership our aim is to reduce a wide range of Unintentional Harm in the home extending beyond fire. This can be achieved by preventative advice, physical measures or referral to SFRS or an appropriate partner agency.

This priority supports the *Single Midlothian Plan 2017-18* and the *Community Safety and Justice Strategy 2017-18*.

We will achieve it by:

- *Providing a highly skilled, well trained and appropriate firefighting response*
- *In Partnership, proactively identifying those most at risk from Unintentional Harm in the home*
- *Conducting holistic Home Safety Visits that assess a range of risks within the home including fire, slips, trips and fall and other vulnerabilities*
- *Exchanging risk information with partners including referrals.*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting the number of accidental dwelling fires and associated casualties and fatalities*
- *Reviewing and reporting the number of home safety visits conducted and smoke detectors fitted/issued*
- *Reviewing and reporting the number of home safety visits that have provided advice or measures with the aim of reducing unintentional harm and injury in the home*
- *Reviewing and reporting how many occasions we have referred and received partner referrals for persons vulnerable to unintentional harm and injury in the home.*

Expected Outcomes:

- *Support the independent living of vulnerable people within Midlothian*
- *Reduce the social and economic cost of Unintentional Harm in the Home including fires and slips, trips and falls.*

We will promote Community Resilience whilst contributing to improved outcomes for people involved in non-fire emergencies.

“Special Service” is the term given to non-fire related emergencies including Road Traffic Collisions (RTC), Rescue from Water, Flooding, Height, Confined Space, Structural Collapse, Hazardous Material incident and Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OCHA) co-respond with the Scottish Ambulance Service. Unfortunately, when incidents of this type occur it often involves casualties and sometimes fatalities.

Midlothian has a diverse range of Special Service risks including busy ‘A’ and ‘B’ class roads that are used regularly by work commuters and tourists, the Borders rail link, extensive waterways and many commercial businesses.

On average, 16% of all SFRS incidents each year in Midlothian are Special Service calls. As SFRS explore opportunities for assisting our partners through emergency intervention there is a potential for associated casualty figures to continue to rise as we attend more Special Service incidents.

We will look to improve existing preventative strategies with Community Partners whilst ensuring that should we need to provide emergency response, we can do, effectively and efficiently, in order to improve outcomes for all Special Service Casualties.

We will achieve it by:

- *Being an integral component of Midlothian Community Planning and championing an effective partnership approach to risk reduction*
- *Education and awareness aimed at high-risk groups within our communities.*
- *Training our staff and locating our resources in order to provide an effective and efficient emergency response*
- *Building on our relationships with other emergency services and improving how we work together through prevention and intervention.*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting on the number of Special Service Casualties including OHCA, RTC, Water/ Flood Rescue, and effecting entry*
- *Monitoring and evaluating SFRS participation in community events and initiatives designed to enhance community resilience.*

Expected Outcomes:

- *Improved outcomes for persons suffering an Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest in Midlothian*
- *Reduce the social and economic cost of Special Service Casualties*
- *Where capacity exists, reduce the demand on community partners through prevention and intervention activities.*

Together with our Community Partners, we will contribute to making the roads in Midlothian safer.

Whilst Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's) and associated casualty figures in Scotland have reduced over the previous twenty years, RTC's still occur on an all too frequent basis in Midlothian. Although accounting for only 4% of our non-fire emergency calls last year, they have a significant impact on families, the community, our partnership role is to reduce this impact through education.

As well as providing an emergency response to accidents on our roads, SFRS have a key role to play in reducing RTC's through education and raising awareness in partnership with our Community Partners. By using experience and statistical evidence we will identify those most likely to be involved in a RTC in Midlothian, with these groups being the focus of attention for prevention activities based on risk.

We will aim to build on existing local prevention initiatives and in partnership look to utilise our resources innovatively, efficiently and proactively with the ultimate aim of making the roads in Midlothian safer.

This priority also supports the Single Midlothian Plan theme, *Death and Injury on Midlothian's roads*.

We will achieve it by:

- *Working with our partners within Midlothian to identify those groups most at risk*
- *Delivering the appropriate prevention activities to those most at risk whilst being proactive and where possible innovative*
- *Continued support of Midlothian Community Safety and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Road Safety Forum*
- *Encouraging young drivers and other groups to be responsible road users through active engagement and education.*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting on the number and type of Road Traffic Collisions within Midlothian*
- *Reporting and evaluating the effectiveness of our partnership prevention activities.*

Expected Outcomes:

- *SFRS to have contributed towards reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in Midlothian*
- *SFRS to have contributed to the reduction of Road Traffic Collisions within Midlothian*
- *SFRS to have contributed to reducing the consequences and associated community impacts of RTC's.*

As part of a Community Partnership, we will challenge Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour can manifest itself in many ways and often has a significant detrimental effect on communities for a number of reasons.

The SFRS generally experience anti-social behaviour through Deliberate Fire Setting which can sometimes manifest into physical or verbal violence to our crews. Thankfully, the latter is a rare occurrence in Midlothian, however, the figures relating to Deliberate Fire Setting are not so positive.

There is often a close link between deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour and predominately involves malicious ignition of refuse, grass, woodland. Incidents of this type accounted for approximately 24% of our operational activity over the last five years. Due to the sporadic and random nature of many deliberately started fires, prevention activities are often reactive.

As a Service, we recognise our responsibility in reducing anti-social behaviour and its impact, this extends to not only fire related instances but includes other social issues such a Domestic Abuse.

This priority also supports the *Single Midlothian Plan theme, anti-social behaviour*.

We will achieve it by:

- *In partnership, identify those parts of Midlothian affected by deliberate fire setting, whilst delivering effective prevention activities*
- *Acting as role models to promote good citizenship, especially with those who have or are likely to become involved in deliberate fire setting*
- *Continued support of Midlothian Community Safety and the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in relation to Domestic Abuse*
- *Exploring opportunities to lead and participate in innovative projects.*

We will monitor the effectiveness of prevention and intervention activities by:

- *Reviewing and reporting on the number and type of deliberate fire setting incidents within Midlothian*
- *Evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of our youth engagement/intervention programmes and monitoring our attendance at MARAC's.*

Expected Outcomes:

- *Support the promotion of "People and Place" across Midlothian.*
- *Support our communities in feeling safe from crime, disorder and danger*
- *Reduce the number of attendances to fires of a deliberate nature, particularly secondary fires*
- *Reduce the adverse effects and negative impacts which deliberate fire setting has on people's lives within Midlothian.*

In partnership, we will aim to reduce the occurrence and impact of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) are defined as incidents where an automated fire alarm system activates and results in the mobilisation of SFRS when there is no fire. Whilst a small number of fire alarm signals generated are due to confirmed fire conditions, the vast majority are “false alarms”.

With UFAS accounting for over 25% of our incident activity it's clear that this places a significant burden on the SFRS in terms of resources, time and associated costs.

The impact of UFAS in the wider community can be very significant in terms of business disruption, effects on health care premises, education establishments and any other non-domestic premises effected by this. The level of unnecessary blue light response journeys also increase road risks and hazards to firefighters and to the public 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 achieve it by:

- *Investigating the cause of each UFAS call and documenting the information gained*
- *Engaging with duty holders and those responsible for fire safety management of premises to examine causes of UFAS calls and provide advice to prevent re-occurrence*
- *Look to reduce the number of fire appliances mobilised using a risk based approach to responding to automated fire alarms*
- *Maintaining a dedicated UFAS champion within the Midlothian area to oversee performance and best practice approaches to UFAS reduction.*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting on the number of UFAS calls in the Midlothian area*
- *Reviewing and reporting on risk based reductions in the SFRS weight of response to premises with automated fire alarm systems.*

Expected Outcomes:

- *Reduce the demand on SFRS from UFAS*
- *Reduce the economic cost to commerce in Midlothian from disruption from UFAS*
- *Reduce the impact on education premises and health care facilities from UFAS*
- *Reduced vehicle movements, increasing capacity for other activity, improved road safety and reduced carbon footprint.*

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

We are fully committed to continually improving the service we provide to our communities and recognise that to achieve this goal we must listen and respond to the views of the public and our partners.

We use all feedback we receive to monitor our performance and incorporate this information into our planning and governance processes in order to continually improve our service. We are proud that the majority of feedback we receive is positive and we are keen to hear examples of good practice and quality service delivery that exemplifies the standards of service that we strive to provide for the communities of Scotland.

If you have something you'd like to share with us or you would like more information, you can get in touch in a number of ways:

Write to: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
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Visit our website: www.firescotland.gov.uk

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