

## REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 29 MARCH 2018

### SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE THEMATIC REPORT – UNINTENTIONAL HARM AND HOME SAFETY

#### 1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

**1.1 Consider and note the information provided in this report in relation to Unintentional Harm and Home Safety.**

#### 2 Introduction

2.1 A key priority within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire is Reducing Unintentional Harm and Promoting Home Safety.

2.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the committee information on this priority both in relation to past performance and how we intend to deliver against this priority in the future.

2.3 Unintentional harm in the home environment, and in particular, accidental fires, slips, trips, falls and burns/scalds to the very young and old, is now widely recognised as presenting significant issues to the health of the public, as well as the wider impact these injuries have on our public services.

Working with our community safety partners in Aberdeenshire and across Scotland, SFRS has a significant role to play in contributing towards identifying those at persons most vulnerable and/or at risk, the risks they are exposed to, and reducing those risks, either directly through SFRS, or indirectly through partner intervention. Our key aim is to improve safety, including fire safety and reducing injury and/or harm.

2.4 All staff within the area are committed to working in partnership to reduce unintentional harm within the home. To help deliver against this priority we have a dedicated Community Safety Action Team who work with partners and our station based personnel to reduce the risk of unintentional harm within the home. The current structure of our Community Safety Action Team is;

1 x Group Manager (Shared role between Aberdeenshire, Moray and Highland Area)

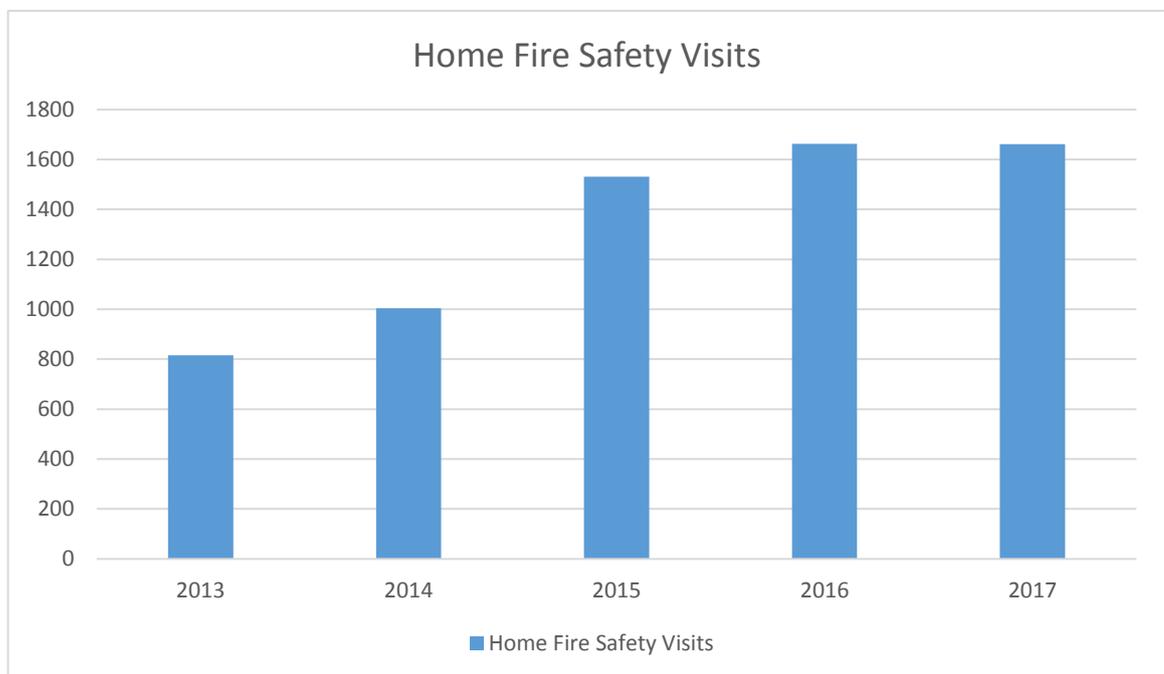
1 x Station Manager

1 x Local Authority Liaison Officer

1 x Assistant Local Authority Liaison Officer

4 x Community Safety Advocates

- 2.5 In addition to our Community Safety Action Team we have also worked with Aberdeenshire Council and the Community Planning Partnership on an innovative approach to sharing a resource in the way of a Community Support & Safety Officer (CSSO). The CSSO is currently placed in Marr and the purpose of the role is to identify, engage and educate individuals and communities who are most vulnerable or at an increased risk of harm. To support service delivery in terms of improving safety within the area. Partnership working is a key element of the role and the CSSO has also supported thematic areas of work including road safety, working with children and young people and engaging with older persons.
- 2.6 The promotion and delivery of free Home Fire Safety Visits remain a priority theme for the SFRS locally across Aberdeenshire and these visits will be expanded to include home safety and through a targeted approach delivered to those most vulnerable and at risk from fire and/or harm in the home.
- 2.7 The chart below shows the progress that has been made in Aberdeenshire in the delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits since the beginning of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, chart shows visits delivered between 1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> December for each respective year;

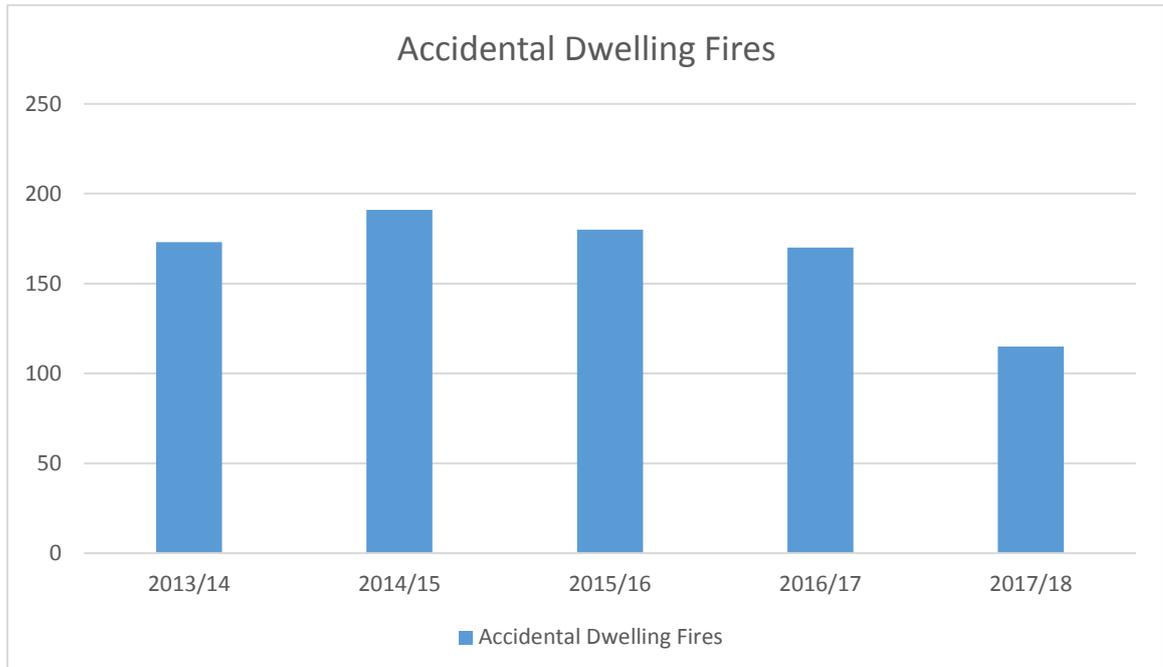


- 2.8 While these visits have been effective we will use service transformation to further develop the visits to cover wider Home Safety issues and provide an even better service to local communities.

### 3 Accidental Dwelling Fires

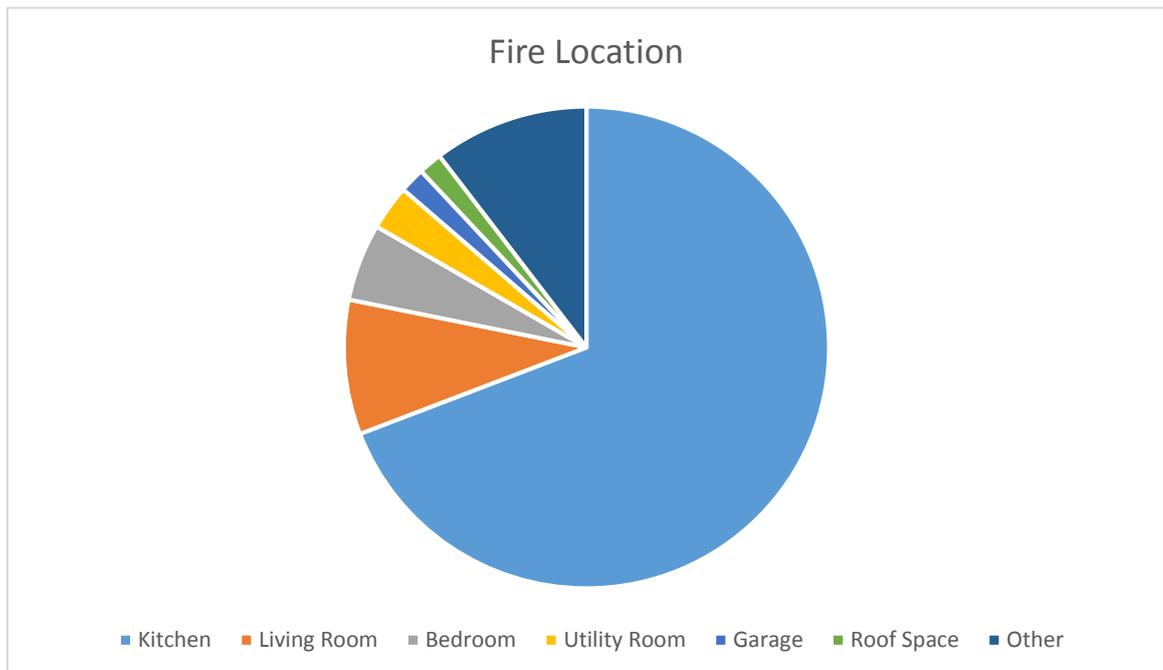
- 3.1 The reduction in the number and severity of Accidental Dwelling Fires is a key performance indicator for this priority and we will supply both quantitative and qualitative information on these indicators.

3.2 The chart below shows the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires that have occurred within Aberdeenshire from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 – 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2017;



*\*Note 2017-18 figures are from 1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> December*

3.3 Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service responded to 830 Accidental Dwelling Fires within the Aberdeenshire Area. The chart below shows the room of origin for these incidents;



As can be seen from the chart below fires starting in the kitchen account for 69% of all accidental dwelling fires that occurred within the area.

- 3.4 Out of 830 accidental dwelling fires attended, at 546 incidents no firefighting action was required other than removing the item from the heat source and providing the occupiers with reassurance and community safety advice.
- 3.5 Partnership working and information sharing are key to reducing unintentional harm within the home and we are focused on developing our referral process to ensure that early interventions take place for those that are most vulnerable in our communities. Examples of partnership working initiatives that we have carried out in this area are;
- Safe and Sheltered Housing Initiative (Partnership with Aberdeenshire Council)
  - Hanover Housing Initiative
  - Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks priority reconnection initiative.

#### **4 Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties**

- 4.1 The reduction in the number of Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties (both Fatal and Non-Fatal) is a key performance indicator for this priority and we will provide both quantitative and qualitative information on these indicators.
- 4.2 Fatal fire analysis highlights that there are often multiple contributory factors when investigating fire deaths. Evidence provided by SFRS Fire Investigation for the 2014-15 period indicates there were 28 accidental dwelling fire fatalities recorded in Scotland. Of these, 23 were aged 60 and over (82%). Of the 28, half (14) of the incidents were caused by smokers' materials. Contributory factors included e.g.; living alone (17), health issues including dementia and mobility problems (13) and alcohol (7).

Fatal accidental dwelling fires occur predominantly in the living room, usually the main habitable room, and there are clear links to lifestyle issues including the use of alcohol and smokers' materials. Early detection is of vital importance when any fire occurs and consideration should be given to the placement of fire detection in principle habitable rooms, as well as circulation spaces, as per Scottish Building Standards, which are interlinked to other detectors in the home.

- 4.3 In Aberdeenshire there have been 8 Fatal Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 as shown in the table below;

2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
3	2	0	2	1

All Fatal Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties have been 50+ years of age.

A further breakdown of the ages of fatal accidental dwelling fire casualties is provided in the table below;

50 – 59	60 – 69	70 – 79	80 – 89	90 – 99
2	2	2	1	1

There was equal split in the gender balance of casualties with there being 4 males and 4 females.

Of the 8 fires that resulted in fatalities 6 of them started in the Living Room, 1 in the bedroom and in one instance the location of origin was unable to be determined.

Smoking materials was determined to be the cause in 4 out of the 8 incidents that resulted in fatalities.

Smoke Alarms were present in 7 out of the 8 fires, on three occasions the alarms did not operate highlighting the need for the necessity to regularly test smoke alarms.

- 4.4 In relation to Non-Fatal Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties there have been 110 casualties as shown in the table below;

2013 – 14	2014 – 15	2015 – 16	2016 – 17	2017 – 18
28	30	18	17	17

The greatest number of Non-Fatal Casualties occurred in the 40 – 49 age group, a further breakdown of casualty's ages is shown in the table below;

0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	Not Known
4	1	12	7	21	8	17	11	6	5	18

For every casualty that occurs in an accidental dwelling fire we carry out a case study, the purpose of this is to record details of the circumstances relating to the casualty and to identify trends for future interventions.

Of the 110 casualties, 63 of these were male and the remaining 47 were female.

The main causation of Non-Fatal Fire Casualties was cooking related fires that accounted for 40 casualties.

Smoke Alarms were present in 61 (55%) of instances that resulted in a casualty. The fitting and correct sitting of Smoke Alarms remains a priority for the area.

## 5 Moving Forward

- 5.1 Prevention and early intervention of unintentional harm within the home is a key priority for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service within the Local Fire

Plan. We will continue to work with partners and communities to maximise our contribution to preventing unintentional harm and promoting home safety.

- 5.2 As part of Service Transformation we will develop our Home Fire Safety Visits into Home Safety Visits to have a more holistic approach to reducing unintentional harm in the home.
- 5.3 We will continue to refine both our inward and outward referral processes to ensure that the right information is shared regarding people at risk of harm and our most vulnerable people.
- 5.4 We will focus our engagement activities in areas where service demand has been identified and evidence identifies trends.
- 5.5 We will target our resources to the most vulnerable, and high priority targeted homes.
- 5.6 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

## **6. Scheme of Governance**

- 6.1 The Committee is able to consider/comment on this item in terms of Section D.1.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to matters concerning the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.

## **7 Implications and Risk**

- 7.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because this report refers principally to advice to members on the performance of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service for the relevant periods. There will be no differential impact, as a result of the report, on people with protected characteristics.
- 7.2 There are no specific staffing or financial implications arising from this report.
- 7.3 There are no Risks directly identified in respect of this matter in terms of the Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers as the Committee is monitoring the performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as required under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 however links to the Corporate Risk of [Working with Other Organisations](#).
- 7.4 There is no Town Centre Impact associated with this report.

**Ritchie Johnson**  
**Director of Business Services**