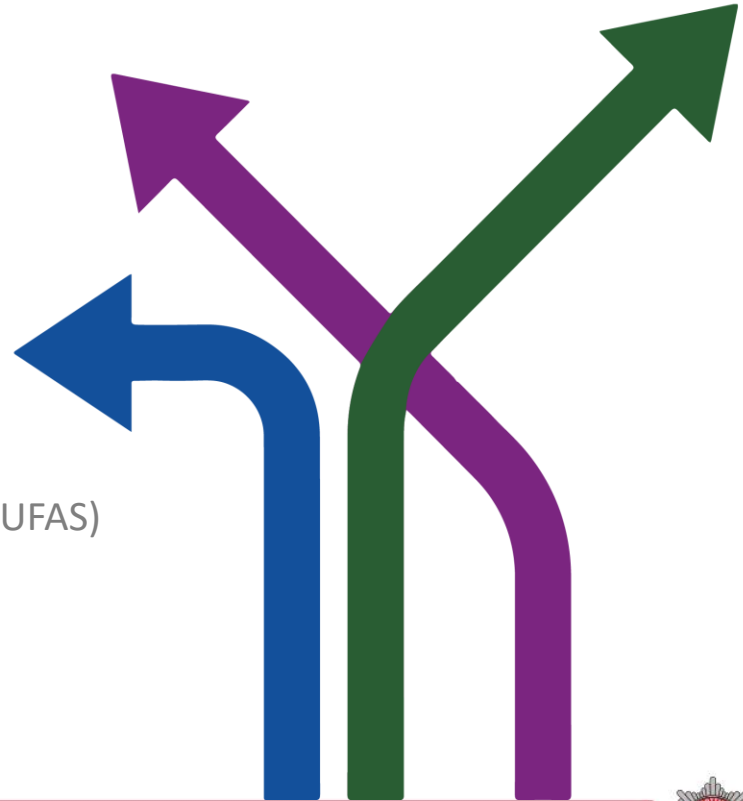


TIME FOR CHANGE

Reducing Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)

Consultation on Options for Responding
to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)



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What is AFA versus UFAS?

AFA

“An AFA (automatic fire alarm) is a system that warns people of a possible fire by automatic or manual means”.

This is very different to a UFAS.

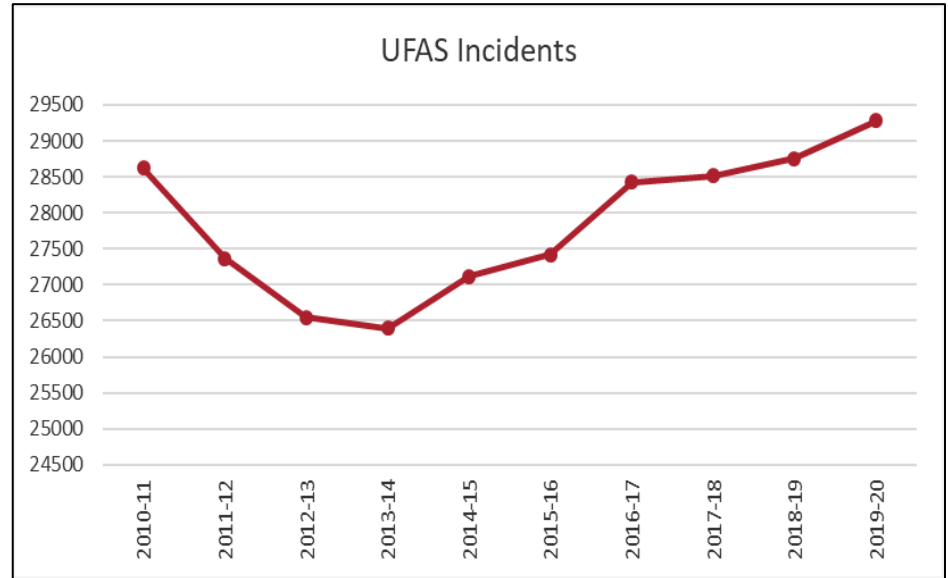
UFAS

“An unwanted fire alarm signal (UFAS) is a false alarm generated from an automatic fire alarm activation that the fire service responds to”.



The Case for Change

- Every year SFRS attends 28,479 UFAS that are caused by AFAs in the workplace
- UFAS makes up 31% of all incidents we attend
- UFAS levels have been increasing since 2013/14
- Any change **will not** affect how SFRS responds to:
 - AFAs that are confirmed fires
 - AFAs in private homes



The Case for Change

- AFA systems - a key part of any fire safety strategy.
- But, the vast majority of AFA activations are false alarms.
- If transmitted to the SFRS, they generate a UFAS and attendance of fire crews.
- In Scotland, **only 2 per cent** of calls initiated by AFA's in the workplace were to an actual fire related event.



Cooking fumes
e.g. burnt toast



Steam
e.g. showerrooms,
industrial processes



Smoking materials
e.g. cigarettes, matches,
candles and incense



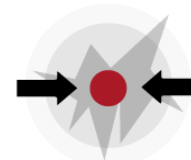
Dust build up
e.g. poor housekeeping,
lack of preventative measures
for dusty work



Hot work
from cutting and welding



Aerosol sprays



Accidental or malicious
damage to a
'Break Glass' point



Testing or maintenance
without having/following
process to manage this

UFAS Causes



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The Case for Change

Legal Responsibilities

- No legal requirement for SFRS to respond to calls originating from an AFA system to establish if there is a fire.
- This responsibility rests with the duty holder
- Duty holders are required to ensure safety of relevant persons by implementing appropriate procedures
- Appropriate procedures include investigating the cause of the alarm and informing the fire service, if an actual fire

The Case for Change

Impact of UFAS

On SFRS

- Diverts essential services from real emergencies
- Unnecessary road risk – every year around **57,000** unnecessary blue light journeys impacting on firefighter and public safety
- Disruption to training and community safety activities – over **64,000hrs** of productive time lost to UFAS
- Opportunity costs of UFAS – around **£3.5 million** every year.

On Communities

- Disruption to businesses and critical services delivered by our partners
- Causes complacency
- Impact on the environment - estimated **575 tonnes** of carbon emissions every year as a consequence of UFAS
- A drain on public finances



The Case for Change

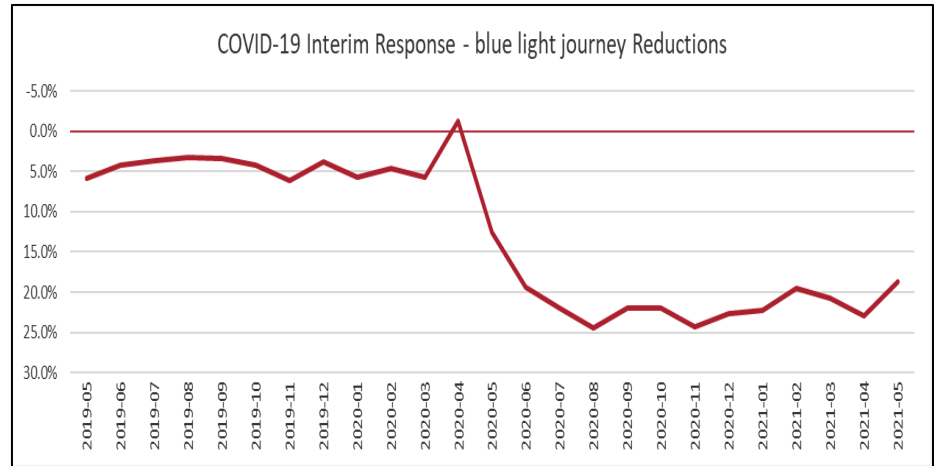
Target Set to Reduce UFAS

- Scottish Government set a strategic priority for tackling UFAS.
- In response we set a target to reduce UFAS by 15% between 2017 and 2020.
- During this period UFAS increased by 3% despite efforts of the Service and its partners to reduce them.
- Scottish Government has an ambition of achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2045.
- Reducing UFAS and unnecessary blue light journeys will support this ambition.

The Case for Change

Impact of COVID-19

- During the pandemic, to help minimise risk of exposure to the virus, we've reduced our AFA response to one fire appliance.
- As of April 2021, we have reduced blue light journeys by almost 10,500 = 40,000 possibilities of firefighters being exposed to the virus.
- A review found no evidence of any negative impact.
- Review highlight - 14 fewer vehicle accidents, a drop of 29%. A positive impact on reducing road risk and improving firefighter safety.



The Case for Change

Benefits of Reducing UFAS

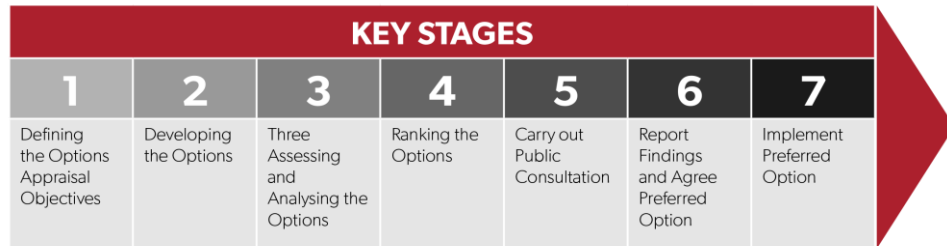
- Upskilling and training
- Less impact on key staff
- Increased prevention work
- Improved safety
- More agile and resilient
- Improved business productivity



Developing the Options

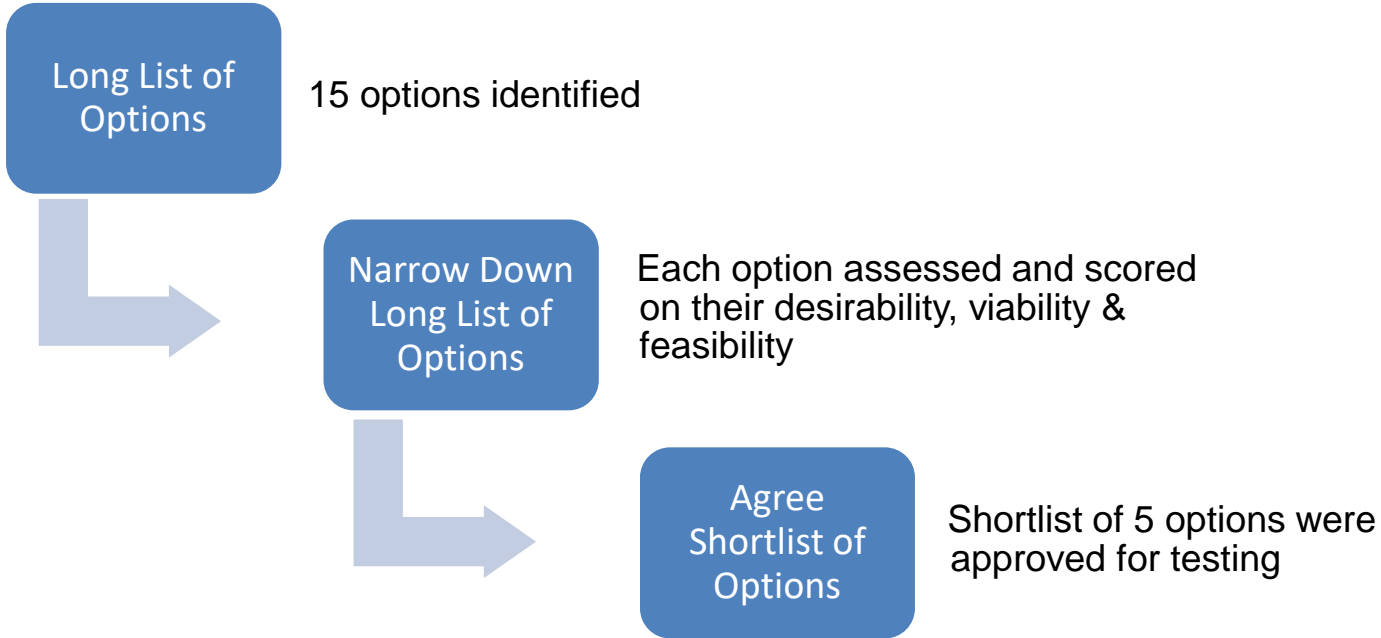
Where we are

- We have been following an options appraisal process to get us to this consultation stage
- Staff and stakeholders have been crucial in influencing the options we are consulting on
- **There is no preferred option**
- The outcome of the consultation will form the basis of a final business case



Developing the Options

How we got here



Developing the Options

The Staff & Stakeholder Workshop

- During February 2021, staff and stakeholders tested the shortlist of 5 options during an options appraisal workshop.
- The workshop involved discussing, assessing and scoring the options on the balance of benefits and risks.
- The results of the workshop were reviewed, to deliver an overall scoring and ranking of the 5 options.
- The Service approved a recommendation to consult on 3 options.

Staff	Stakeholders
SFRS UFAS Champions	Duty Holders
Retained and Voluntary Duty System (RVDS)	Fire Industry
Operations Control (OC)	Insurance Industry
Wholetime Watch Based	FBU
Prevention & Protection (P&P) Local Managers	National Associations



Developing the Options

The Options for public consultation

A	<p>Call challenge all AFA's from non-domestic premises. No response is mobilised, if questioning confirms there is no fire, or signs of fire. Sleeping risk premises are exempt from call challenging and will receive the following immediate response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential Care Homes receive 2 fire appliances regardless time of day.• All other sleeping risks receive one fire appliance between 0700-1800hrs and two fire appliances out-with these hours.	61% UFAS Reduction
B	<p>Call challenge all AFA's from non-domestic premises. No response is mobilised, if questioning confirms there is no fire, or signs of fire. No exemptions to call challenging apply (i.e. all AFA calls received are call challenged, regardless of premises type and caller).</p>	85% UFAS Reduction
C	<p>Non-attendance to all AFA's from non-domestic premises, unless back-up 999 call confirming fire, or signs of fire is received. Sleeping risk premises are exempt from non-attendance and will receive the following response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential Care Homes receive 2 fire appliances regardless time of day.• All other sleeping risks receive one fire appliance between 0700-1800hrs and two fire appliances out-with these hours.	71% UFAS Reduction



Option A - Call challenge all AFAs. No response is mobilised if questioning confirms no fire or no signs of fire. Sleeping risk premises are exempt and will receive an automatic response based on premises type and time of day

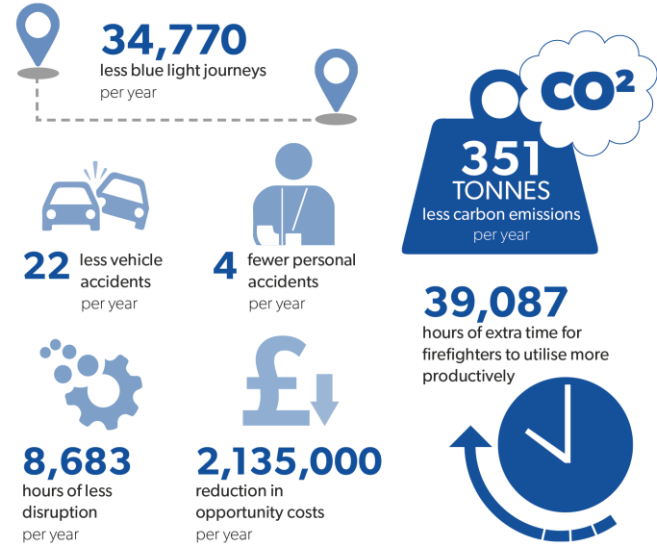
Key Benefits

- Improved firefighter and community safety through the reduction of blue light journeys
- Improved availability of resources and more time to focus on upskilling, training and prevention work
- Reduced response costs
- Reduced fleet carbon emissions
- Least risk of all option
- Automatic response to AFAs where people are sleeping

Key Risks

- Increased risk of building damage
- Increased risk to building occupants
- Increased risk to firefighter safety
- Fire and rescue reputational damage
- RVDS retention and recruitment issues

What does a **61% reduction** look like?



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Option B – Call challenge all AFAs. No response is mobilised if questioning confirms no fire or no signs of fire. No exemptions to call challenging apply

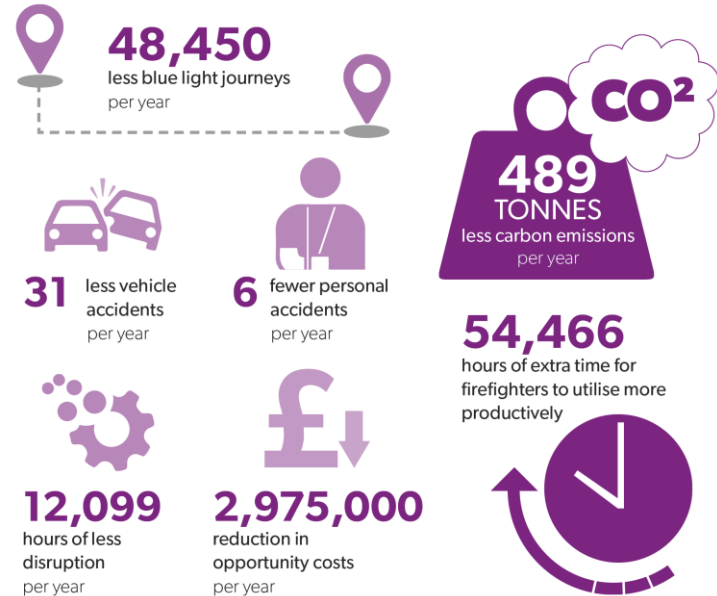
Key Benefits

- Improved firefighter and community safety through the reduction of blue light journeys
- Improved availability of resources and more time to focus on upskilling, training and prevention work
- Reduced response costs
- Reduced fleet carbon emissions
- Highest reduction in UFAS attendance

Key Risks

- Increased risk compared to Option A of building damage
- Increased risk compared to Option A to building occupants
- Increased risk compared to Option A to firefighter safety
- Fire and rescue reputational damage
- RVDS retention and recruitment issues

What does a **85% reduction** look like?



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Option C – Non-attendance to all AFAs, unless back-up 999 call confirming fire or signs of fire is received. Sleeping risk premises are exempt and will receive a PDA based on premises type and time of day

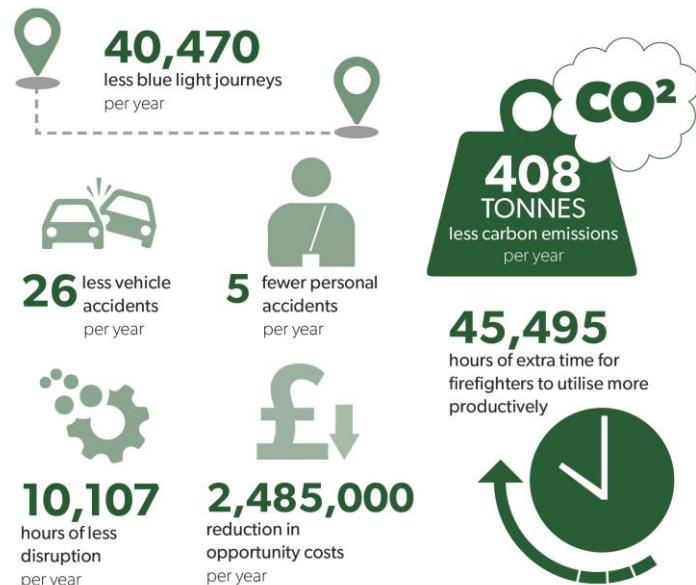
Key Benefits

- Improved firefighter and community safety through the reduction of blue light journeys
- Improved availability of resources and more time to focus on upskilling, training and prevention work
- Reduced response costs
- Reduced fleet carbon emissions
- Automatic response to premises where people are sleeping

Key Risks

- Greatest risk of building damage
- Greatest risk to building occupants
- Greatest risk to firefighter safety
- Fire and rescue reputational damage
- Retained and Volunteer Duty System (RVDS) retention and recruitment issues

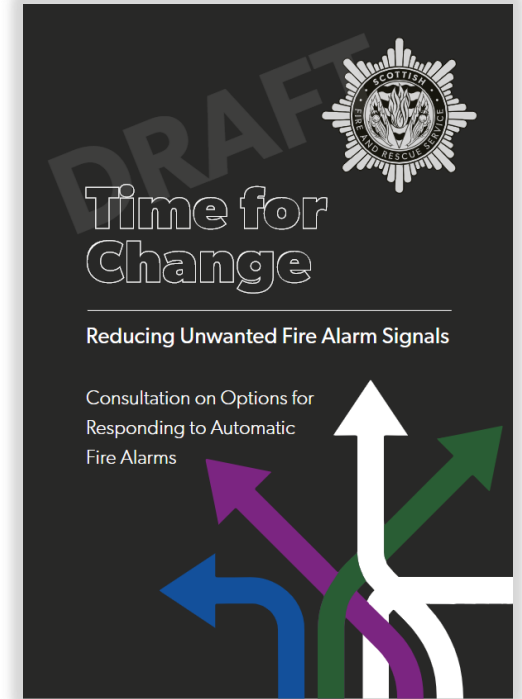
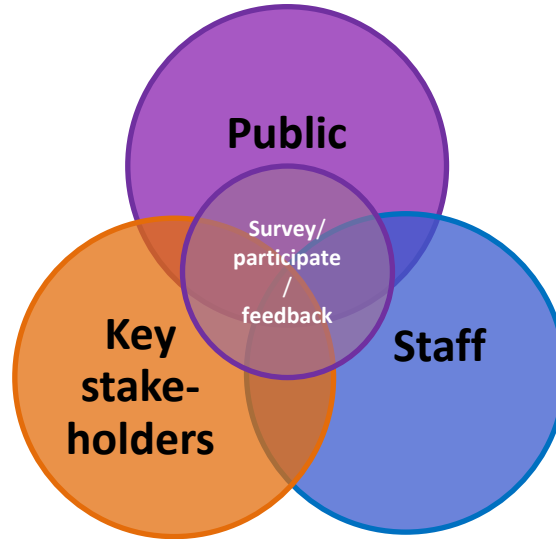
What does a **71% reduction** look like?



Mitigating the Risks

- Comprehensive set of measures for mitigating the risks can be read in the Consultation Document
- Any change will be underpinned by a risk management strategy
- SFRS commitment to working with affected stakeholders, to ensure they are prepared for any changes we make
- Feedback from the consultation will help shape our plans for mitigating the risks.

Public Consultation



Enquiries/feedback : SFRS.UFASConsultation@firescotland.gov.uk

ANY QUESTIONS?



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